



WETLAND'S GAZETTE

Volume 3, Issue 3
December 2007

“Wind Wise” Activity comes to the Mead Article by Patrice Eyers

This year the Mead Wildlife Area received an educational grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB). The WEEB funds were used for the development and implementation of a hands-on renewable resource activity called “Wind Wise”. The program is designed to increase the “hand-on minds-on” component of the renewable resource education session.



Prior to the Wind Wise activity, the renewable resource session consisted of a tour of the buildings and a verbal introduction to renewable resources. The session lacked activity and it was hard to hold the attention of groups throughout the entire gathering. The lack of a hands-on activity really set the renewable session apart from the other sessions that were being offered.

The WEEB grant allowed Mead to purchase 10 Kid Wind turbine kits. Each kit consisted of PVC piping, various tinker toys, necessary wires, clamps, a small motor, and amp meter. Using the purchased kits and adding various blade construction material, hot glue guns, rulers, scissors, safety glasses, and blade design photos -10 self contained wind turbine activity kits were created. An instructor's kit and lesson plan were also created. The lesson plan involves giving the students a brief background on harvesting wind energy, then divides the students into groups of 3 or 4 individuals informing them that they are “blade engineers” and it is their job to design the most “productive” set of blades for a wind turbine company. Students can experiment with different blade material, different sizes and shapes, the number of blades, the weight, and the pitch. Blades can be tested inside by using a box fan or outside on windy days. Productiveness is measured using the amp meter.

The “Wind Wise” kits will soon be available for loan. Teachers, scouting leaders, and others will be allowed to check out the kits for their own programs. The Mead faculty is looking forward to using “Wind Wise” in the upcoming education season and is sure this program will be a big hit.

Friends of Mead- McMillan

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Update on Fund Raising for the Mead Wildlife Area Education Trust

Article by Kent Hall

On August 1, 2007, we received the final pledge to reach the \$500,000 target for the Mead Trust, only 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ months after our fund raising began in mid-February and 1 year, 5 months sooner than our goal of December 31, 2008. You will recall that this is the amount of money we had to raise in order to receive a matching grant of the same amount from the Mead Witter Foundation, Inc. As a result, the selection process for the new Mead Educator has been initiated (see the article by Tom Meier).

As of Dec. 1, the amount raised and pledged had grown to \$588,081.70. A total of only \$71,750 remains to be paid in pledges in 2008, so our fund raising efforts have yielded outstanding results. In my opinion, our results can be traced to these facts: 1) people are very impressed with our new building and can visualize how it will become a superior educational facility, and 2) the Friends Board members have been highly active in the fund raising process. As a whole, our Friends Board of 14 members have made personal donations totaling \$48,450. In addition, most of them have approached other funding sources as well.

Key contributions arranged by Friends Board members included: \$50,000 from the Seramur Family Foundation, Inc. (John Shippy); \$12,844 from the Sportsman's Auction (Doug Aziz & Don Furo); \$3328 from the Family Festival at the Mead (Nancy Stevenson, Sally Overholt & Sue Hall) & \$2400+ from the Auburndale School District (Beth Clouse).

A pledge has been received from the B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation of Wausau for \$50,000 to hire an educator while interest is earned for the educator's salary by the Mead Trust.

The Friends will continue taking donations to the Mead Trust until mid-April. We will then write a \$500,000 check to the Mead Trust and close the option of names being placed on the Recognition Board (to be put up near the Education Room in the Mead Center). All donations made to the Mead Trust will be included in this check.

Trustees for the Mead Trust Board have been chosen. They are Susan Feith, representing the Mead-Witter Foundation, Inc.; Ruth Schuette, representing the Wausau area; and Doug Aziz, representing the Friends (see the article by Doug Aziz for details of the first meeting of the Mead Trust Board).

I would like to finish on a personal note. It has been my good fortune to coordinate two major fund raisers for the Mead property: 1) \$1,600,000 for the Mead Center, and 2) \$600,000 for the Mead Trust. I have reached out to hundreds of people asking them to support projects that I felt were worthwhile. Many obviously agreed with me, none more so than my wife, Sue. For Sue and all other donors, I thank you for your support. You and the Mead Staff were the "wind beneath my wings".



Educator Update and More

Article by Tom Meier, Project Manager

We have made major progress in our efforts to acquire a permanent educator at the educational center. With the great news that the Friend's fundraising efforts for the position were close to their goal, we initiated efforts to begin the process to fill the position. In October the position description was completed and approved by the Departments Human Relations Staff in Madison. A request to fill the position was filed in early November and the position was posted, within the Department, in mid-November for lateral transfer. This procedure allows a current educator first chance at moving into the position. This period ended on November 26th with no applicants. We now have approval to move to the next step which allows us to advertise both within and outside the Department for the position. This is an exciting opportunity, for it will allow us to interview prospective candidates and ultimately select the most qualified individual to further develop and lead our educational programs here at the Center. I suspect that this step will take up to 4 months to complete, but we fully expect to have our new educator on board by next spring's busy season.

In the field we are also making great strides. Five major dike maintenance projects are under way and we will continue on these throughout the winter. We are also logging several tracts on the property and will be cutting trees and brush that have encroached on our dikes and open wetland / grassland habitat. In addition, in late summer we completed the resurfacing of over 5 miles of internal roads and walking trails on the property.

All of us at the Mead thank you for your support in all the work that we do and we warmly wish all of you a safe and happy Holiday Season.

Friends of mead-McMillan annual meeting January 19, 2008

The Friends Board of Directors will have our annual meeting on Saturday, January 19th beginning at 9:00 at the Mead. We would like to invite everyone to come to see what's new at the Mead, enjoy each other's company and enjoy our general meeting. Election of officers will take place, as well as an update on what's happening at the Mead. We look forward to seeing you all there.



Students from PJ Jacobs Junior High, Stevens Point visit the Mead Wildlife Area
(Photo courtesy Dave Grabski)



Mead Education Program Update

Article by Pam Stange

The Mead's educational programming for 2007 started off with a couple of firsts, thanks to Beth Clouse's 4th grade class from Auburndale Elementary. This class was the first school group for the year, the first to use the Mead Education Center during the winter time, and the first to experience and explore one of the Mead's unique winter habitats. The children were bussed down the road to the parking lot off of County Line Road. They unloaded and started their journey to the bog. Traveling first past an old farmstead on a hill, then through a frozen tag alder swamp, the students finally reach their destination. The students were very surprised at how windy the hillside had been when compared to the stillness of the air once they were in the bog. We had explained to them that the bog offers the wildlife at Mead a natural shelter against the elements. We had also told them to keep their eyes open for signs of wildlife as they walked. Many of the students were able to spot animal tracks, such as rabbit, mice, deer, and possibly wolf prints in the snow. After the students were in the bog they learned about the different kinds of plants that could only be found there because of the plant's need for high moisture and acidic soil. Back on the bus the students were very glad their visit was during the winter time. It allowed them to experience a unique habitat which is very difficult to reach during the regular spring educational program times because of the impassable tag alder swamp.



4th Grade class from Auburndale Elementary
(Photo courtesy Beth Clouse)



Butterfly Garden
(Photo courtesy Pam Stange)

The regular spring educational programming started April 20th and ended June 6th. Some of this Spring's highlights was the expansion of our Renewable Energy session, by using a hands-on activity called "Rethink Your Trash" scavenger hunt the students learned about the importance of recycling. Students in our Wetland session were also able to use new high-powered microscopes or new creature scopes depending on their age group. Joan Dickrell's 5th graders from Saint Vincent DePaul planted a beautiful Butterfly Garden, using native prairie plants, by our outdoor Amphitheater.

The summer educational programming started June 12th and ended August 27th with the first Teacher In-Service by the Auburndale School District. Some new lessons we incorporated into our sessions with the students were Nature Journaling and exploring native prairie plants along the Audubon Nature Trail. Dragonfly Pond became our new Wetland study site. We also received new bird, wildflower, and tree field guides which was made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation of Portage County, written by Sue Hall. The Smokey Hill observation deck, the Wilderness benches, and the birdfeeders all received a new coat of sealant thanks to the great effort by students from Crossways Summer Camp.



Mead Education Program Update (continued from page 4)

The fall educational programming started September 15th and ended November 5th. Some highlights of the Fall Session were some new school groups from the Wausau school district and the Wittenberg Home school group. Our off-site programming also increased this fall. We visited the Madison Elementary School in Marshfield for their Wisconsin Days, the Elderhostel group at the Best Western in Marshfield, and Marathon High School for their Solarwise dedication ceremony.

The Mead Education and Visitor Center is still just beginning to see its full potential. In its second full year of educational programming, the Mead Center has serviced on-site 3,147 pre-K-college students and 402 adults from 36 schools in 15 school districts and off-site 1,532 K-college students from 9 schools in 7 school districts. Overall, this year's educational programming has been a great success, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Tom Meier and the Mead staff, the educational volunteers (Marlene Furo, Ginny Johnson, Russ Zimmerman, and Larry Ruhde), and the huge financial support from the Friends of Mead-McMillan in obtaining new educational materials. If you would like to help with the educational programming next year contact Tom Meier or Pam Stange at 715-457-6771.

Auburndale Supports Mead Educator

Article by Beth Clouse

On Monday, November 5th, Tom Meier (Project Manager from the Mead), his owl Mobley, and Dr. Kent Hall - (Fundraising Chair of the Friends of Mead), visited the students of Auburndale Elementary to kick off a fund raiser, "Coins for Mead." Students were thrilled to see Mobley again! Tom Meier explained to the students how important it is to educate everyone, students and adults alike, on the importance of our natural resources. Mobley entertained the 499 students by saying hello to them, waving good-bye, and putting on a fantastic wing display for the finale. Dr. Hall thanked the students for their continued support, first with the building and now with the educator. The students were excited! They can't wait to start bringing in their pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters for the next two and a half weeks for the "Coins for Mead."

Mrs. Tammie Willfahrt and Mrs. Norma Sabel, representatives for the Auburndale PTO, presented a check for \$500.00 to Tom Meier and Kent Hall. The PTO had raised money through a raffle of camping gear at a family night last spring.

The Auburndale Education Association has also worked hard to raise money for the Mead educator. Last spring the AEA held a bake sale at the FFA Pancake Feed and during the summer they held four days of brat fries at Festival Foods. With these two projects, along with some personal donations, the Auburndale Education Association was able to donate \$2169.77. Teacher Mrs. Beth Clouse presented this check at the assembly also.

The Friends of Mead is raising money for a \$1,000,000 trust to pay the salary of a full time educator. The DNR will pay the benefit costs for the employee. Over time, this trust will generate enough inter-



est to pay for the educator's salary plus supplementary materials for educating students and adults using the Mead Center. The position of educator will enable Friends of Mead to enrich the education program and take the burden off the DNR staff hired to maintain the grounds.

Most of our students have had the chance to visit the new Mead Visitors Center on field trips. Through activity-based educational programming, our students have been able to: experience the wildlife and their associated habitats (wetlands, grasslands & forests); learn about the heritage of the area; see the renewable resources that are used at the Mead; and to experience these things in a beautiful setting. The Auburndale staff was fortunate to start out the school year by having their first day of professional development held at the Mead Education and Visitor Center.

Auburndale Teachers at Mead
(Photo courtesy Tony Geiger)



The students, parents, and staff of Auburndale are proud to support the Friends of Mead in their efforts to raise money to hire a full time educator at the Mead. We hope with the contributions made by the Auburndale school district these goals will soon be reached.

Sportsman's Auction

Article by Doug Aziz

The Sportsman's Auction was held on Saturday, August 11, 2007, at the Mead Wildlife Area (MWA) and it exceeded all expectations.

On behalf of Don Furo and myself, thanks again to all who participated in making it a success. A special thanks to our generous donors, everyone that worked on the day of the auction and, of course, to all of the bidders who opened their checkbooks in support of Mead Wildlife Area.

Believe it or not, just 89 donors contributed slightly over 600 items for the auction which sold that day for just under \$13,000. In addition, the deer hunt that was generously donated by Midwestern White-tails, Inc. was subsequently sold for \$2,000 and for that we want to again thank Woody Gruber for being a great neighbor and friend of MWA.

Also, the expenses we incurred promoting the auction were covered by a grant from Thrivent Financial, so essentially all of the funds generated by the auction itself will eventually go directly to the Mead Wildlife Area Trust. Thank you Thrivent Financial.

As the auction neared and the pile of donated items grew and grew, both Don and I became a little nervous about the venture we found ourselves involved in. Don worried about the weather and whether enough bidders would show up to make the auction a success. I, on the other hand, wondered how in the world we could auction off all of the "stuff " we had amassed. I kept asking Dale Pagels, our auction-



Sportsman's Auction (continued from page 6)

eer, if he thought he could do it. Each time I asked, he confidently replied that he would sell everything..... and he did - silly me. I was still concerned and decided I would provide some incentive, so I offered to take Dale, Don, and their wives out for dinner if we somehow sold everything. Well, the dinner was good! Thanks again Dale and Kay for all your advice and hard work on the day of the auction. I didn't know anyone could talk that much.

If you think about it, the potential of the Sportsman's Auction as an ongoing fundraiser is enormous. When only 89 individuals from the area encompassing Wausau, Stevens Point, Marshfield, and Wisconsin Rapids can come up with over 600 items, I conclude that we didn't remotely approach our potential insofar as donors are concerned.

Likewise, the day of the auction wasn't the best from the standpoint of weather, so it is likely we could have had an even better turnout of bidders if the weather had cooperated a little better. Also, it's likely that future auctions would be better attended simply because of 'word-of-mouth' advertising from this years' participants.

I would be interested in hearing from anyone willing to actively work on planning and pulling off another Sportsman's Auction for the benefit of the Mead Wildlife Area Trust. I can be contacted by email at az54455@yahoo.com or by phone at 715-693-3491.

Tidbits from McMillan Marsh

Article by Brian Peters

There was no shortage of water at McMillan this fall, in fact it was high for a period of time as extra was released to the river. Waterfowl use of the area was good and I believe that hunters did well. Some pheasants were released and hunters with their dogs searched the cover for the roosters. I'm sure several pheasant dinners were the result.

The problem of dumping has reared its ugly head. Appliances, furniture, trash and deer carcasses show up in the parking lots. Does this happen at other public properties near cities, or is Marshfield unique? Something is motivating people to use McMillan as a dumping ground. Enforcement is difficult unless you see the violation. If you see it happening, please get a license number off the vehicle involved and contact the Conservation Warden at 715-457-2740. Thanks to all those citizens who do pick up your trash when you leave the area. Your help is appreciated!

Visit The George W. Mead Wildlife Area Online

<http://meadwildlife.org/>



Hunting the Mead

Article by Ken M. Blomberg

For thousands of years, hunters have gathered along the land bordering the Little Eau Pleine River valley. With an abundance of game and plant food sources, use of the area we now know as the George W. Mead Wildlife Area has a long and storied history.

As the third largest wildlife area in Wisconsin, the nearly 30,000 acre Mead offers today's hunting community a wide variety of opportunities. Topping the list is its waterfowl hunting options. With an abundance of flowages and miles of river and streams, the choices are endless. Puddle and diving ducks abound and resident and migrant Canada geese populations continue to grow. The Mead has become a premier waterfowl production area and is considered a showcase for the state. This notoriety has drawn an abundance of waterfowl hunters over the years - to the point that Mead staff and area hunters have formally met to look at ways and means to improve and enhance waterfowl production and hunting opportunities into the future.

Over the years, as the white-tailed deer population expanded across the landscape, the Mead area followed suit. As the biggest piece of public land in north central Wisconsin that is open to hunting, it accommodates a large deer hunting crowd. Bow hunting for deer from September to the end of December is also popular and due to the size of the property, top-quality hunting experiences can be had by dedicated archers.



Pictured — Karl Blomberg
(Photo by Ken Blomberg)

A new wildlife resident to the Mead is the wild turkey. An expanding population roams the oak ridges and farm field edges in numbers that attract hunters in both the spring and fall. This relatively new hunting opportunity has provided both adult and young hunters many additional hours in the woods.

The uplands surrounding the river valley are home to game birds like ruffed grouse and woodcock. Hunters and their pointing and flushing dogs gather in

the fall to seek out the same birds that have made Wisconsin a destination state for bird hunters across the country. During the off-season, Mead offers these same hunters a first class dog training and trial area on the east side of the wildlife area off County Highway O.



Pictured — Karl Blomberg
(Photo by Ken Blomberg)



Hunting the Mead (continued from page 8)

And finally, rabbit and squirrel hunters take advantage of ample populations of both species. The upland habitats, as well as the alder-marsh edges, are ideal environments for these popular game animals. Many a young hunter, including my two sons, cut their teeth - so to speak - hunting rabbits and squirrels on the Mead.

With all the prospects for hunting on this state wildlife area, it's no wonder the property is so popular. The monetary support generated through licenses, stamps and permits, as well as federal excise tax on firearms, gear and ammunition makes hunters a major player and partner in the history and future of the Mead.

Mead Trust

Article by Doug Aziz

The inaugural meeting of the trustees of the Mead Trust was held on Friday, November 9, 2007, at the Mead-Witter Foundation headquarters in Wisconsin Rapids. In attendance were: Susan Feith, representing the Mead-Witter Foundation; Ruth Schuette, representing the public; and Doug Aziz, representing the Friends of Mead-McMillan Wildlife Area; George Mead; Cynthia Henke; Denise Sanger, from the Mead-Witter Foundation; and Kent Hall, Lead Fundraiser for the Friends of Mead-McMillan.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to map out the strategy for moving forward on establishment of the Trust as well as providing an opportunity for the trustees to get to know one another.

Kent Hall reported that the Friends of Mead-McMillan have exceeded their goal of raising the \$500,000 of matching funds required to qualify for the Mead-Witter challenge grant and would transfer those funds to the Trust as soon as it has been established.

The first step in establishing the Trust is the development of the Trust Document which will be undertaken by the law firm associated with the Mead-Witter Foundation. There was also preliminary discussion regarding the selection of a financial institution to manage the principal of the Trust but no action was taken in that regard pending the completion of step one.

As it stands now, it will likely be late in the first quarter or early in the second quarter of 2008 before the Trust will be in position to accept the funds from the Friends of Mead-McMillan and the Mead-Witter Foundation and begin earning the interest that will be used to support its varied activities. In the meantime, the money which has been donated to the Friends for the Trust is already earning substantial interest due to the astute management of our treasurer Sue Hall.



Mead Volunteer Coordinators' Corner

Article by Stephanie Haka – Volunteer Coordinator

Calls were made and the many Friends of the Mead responded!

What started out as a test project grew into a very successful 2007 Volunteer Greeter program. The Mead was looking for individuals that might be interested in greeting the public on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. during the months of July through October. The primary job skill required was friendly people oriented individuals who were willing to share the Mead's mission and its bountiful recreational opportunities with the visiting public.

Once again, our awesome volunteers stepped up to the plate and we recruited the following group of eager individuals: Barbara Altmann, Hana Beckel, Joan Dickrell, Merideth & Dennis Hess, Betty Ptacek, John Schilling, Linda Vogen and Russ Zimmerman. A schedule was developed that encompassed 4 hour sessions on Saturdays from July 21st through October 27th so these awesome volunteers could man the Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center.

Once the recruits were in place the Volunteer Greeter Program was kicked off by providing the recruits with a tour of the building and its grounds, a training session, and an overview of the comprehensive volunteer greeter manual developed for them. The manual was designed as a resource for potential questions greeters might receive from the public. The Mead also made follow-up phone calls to each volunteer after their shifts were completed. The great feedback we received from these calls has been invaluable and will assist us in making improvements for the 2008 Volunteer Greeter Program.

Now, every new adventure has small bugs that need to be worked out but, the many positive aspects of the greeter program support its value. The following statements were made by our greeter volunteers when they were asked about their experiences:

Betty Ptacek from Marshfield said, *"I just loved being out here today at the Mead. It was a beautiful day and I really enjoyed talking with all the visitors. Today we had two different families whose children had visited the Mead Wildlife Area in the spring for an educational school program. The children tugged at their parents arms and pulled them from one area to another showing them all they had learned when they visited the Mead. It was just great to see and hear their enthusiasm."*

Merideth Hess from Junction City said, *"I just love it out here at the Mead! I have so much fun talking with all the visitors that stop out. You get to hear so many neat comments about the many recreational opportunities offered at the Mead."*

Russell Zimmerman from Stevens Point said, *"I really enjoyed my experience as a volunteer greeter! I like the opportunity to explain what people can do at the Mead. They often ask ques-*



Mead Volunteer Coordinators' Corner (continued from page 6)

tions about the hiking and biking trails. I really enjoy hearing where they are from, what they do, and what kinds of wildlife they were able to see while visiting."

Volunteer programs thrive when both old and new friends share in the mission of the center they support. The Friends of the Mead-McMillan organization recently generously agreed to provide funding to purchase professional greeter name tags that will identify the volunteers to visitors of the Mead. Plus, due to the networking done by our greeters, we've added many new friends to our list of volunteers. So when the phone rings in February or March and you're asked to help, please collect your ticket and hop on the train for a great 2008 spring, summer, and fall volunteer greeter opportunity out at the Mead!

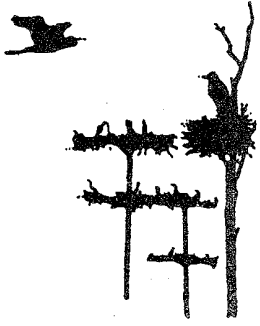
The Mead Wildlife Area, which is managed by the Department of Natural Resources, understands and appreciates the value of great volunteers. Please join our team by contacting Stephanie Haka - Volunteer Coordinator at the Mead Wildlife Area office at 715-457-6771 regarding your availability to help. Plus, check out the web site at www.meadwildlife.org for an overview of the Mead's many recreational opportunities offered to the public.



Students from Crossways Summer Camp stain the observation deck at Smokey Hill
(Photo courtesy Pam Stange)

Students from Madison Elementary School, Marshfield, enjoy a Heritage Activity as an outreach program from the Mead Education Center.
(Photo courtesy Pam Stange)





**Friends of
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Association, Inc.
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Mailing Address Label

Wetland's Gazette



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