



# WETLANDS GAZETTE

Volume 4, Issue 1

May 2008

## **FRIENDS PANCAKE BREAKFAST A SUCCESS!!**

**By Don Furo, Friends board member**

I recently worked, along with the help of several of the Mead Staff, dedicated neighbors, and members and board members of the Friends, on the preparation of the Friends's first "Prairie Chicken Festival-Pancake Breakfast". I never realized how much preparation and work was involved in pulling something like this together, (in other words, I bit off more than I could chew) but it really came together nicely. This event was held on April 19th, from 7:30am to 10:00am, and was dedicated to raising the awareness of local landowners, agricultural operators and the general Central Wisconsin Neighborhood on the value of grasslands to so many species of birds, mammals and insects. Many of these species are in grave danger, and there is a lot that can and needs to be done to protect these species.



Ralph Albert, Tom Meier, and Bob Solinski share a conversation at the pancake breakfast.

(Photo courtesy Sue Hall)

The breakfast was \$6.00 per adult, children six to twelve \$3.00, and under six, free. The breakfast included buttermilk and sourdough pancakes with pure maple syrup, grassfed pork and beef summer sausage, Wisconsin cheese, applesauce, coffee, cranberry juice, white and chocolate milk, and ice cream cups for dessert. The event was successful, with over 130 people attending the breakfast.

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## **Friends of Mead-McMillan**

### **Officers**

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- *Sally Overholt*
- *John Shippy*
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- *Jim Yulga*

### **DNR Staff on board:**

- *Tom Meier, Project Manager  
Mosinee 693-7336*
- *Brian Peters  
Stevens Point 344-7924*

### **Editor:**

- *Dave Grabski  
dgrabski99@gmail.com*



## **FRIENDS PANCAKE BREAKFAST A SUCCESS!! (continued from page 1)**

The following businesses and individuals generously donated food and beverages to the breakfast. Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Weber Farm Store, Golden Guernsey, Caldwell Farms, Good Earth Farms, Mike, Deb and Ben Hansen, Owners, Maple Grove Cheese Inc., Wood Duck Acres, Woody Gruber, Owner, Pete's Market, Winch LP Gas, Ruesch's Central Maples, Junction City Lions Club, Phil Offer and Allen Stange.

A special thank you goes out to all of them for supporting us in this special event. I also want to thank everyone else who volunteered to help make this breakfast a success. I apologize if I unintentionally missed anyone.



Tony Geiger, and Don Furo at the helm.  
(Photo courtesy Sue Hall)

Will we do this again next year? Maybe. We would like your input.

Thanks again!

Don Furo

## **Retiring Friends Board member Dan Belter**

**by Kent Hall, Friends board member**

Dan Belter works for Wausau Papers for his "day job". But he has a long history of volunteerism to the Friends of Mead-McMillan Assoc., Inc.. Dan has been one of the longest serving Board members in "Friends" history. He served from 1996-2007, taking off one year due to work responsibilities.

Dan is best known for his contributions to birding on the Mead property. He served several years as President of the Wausau Bird Club and continues as an active member of that organization. He has led countless birding field trips on the Mead SWA for the Wausau Bird Club, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and functions of the Friends.

But Dan is best known for his "Checklist of the Birds of the George W. Mead Wildlife Area". This is a handsome publication which is very popular with those that visit "the Mead". A total of 267 species had been recorded on the property when Dan prepared this document. Last year, Dan recorded a 268<sup>th</sup> species, the Varied Thrush. This bird list ranks among the tops of any of the 100+ state wildlife areas in Wisconsin.

We thank Dan for his countless hours of dedication to the Friends and to "the Mead".



## **Retiring Friends Board member Nancy Stevenson**

**By Sally Overholt, Friends board member**

Retiring from the Friends' Board has been a difficult decision for Nancy Stevenson, especially with the Friends urging her to continue. But other circumstances of her life, including an aging father out East, have persuaded her to prioritize her commitments. So with reluctance, we must abide by her decision.

Some of you may recall Nancy's March, 2006, Gazette article recounting her family's long relationship with the Mead dating back to the 1960's. Included was a favorite family walk along the dike between Berkhahn Flowage and the Little Eau Pleine, with plenty of wildlife to keep three sons occupied. For the past 25 years Nancy has applied her remarkable birding skills to the USGS Breeding Bird Survey on her assigned route through the heart of Mead, and has conducted additional population density surveys in other Mead areas. Data from these studies has been utilized by the Mead staff in habitat management planning. Her oldest son is currently involved in his third year of frog surveys at Mead; grandchildren visit, as well, on family outings, and her youngest grandson has attended programs at the new Education Center.

Nancy joined the Friends of Mead-McMillan Board of Directors in January 2004 and has applied her knowledge and wisdom of the area to the work that we do. Her enthusiasm for any Mead activity is contagious. She has been a strong supporter for bringing a wildlife educator aboard. The silent auction of nature-inspired art by local artists at our recent Family Festival at the Mead was originally Nancy's idea, and it was her relationship with local artists and leadership that made it a first-year success.

We will miss Nancy's wonderful spirit, wisdom and unique contributions to the Board. But the good news is that she continues to be a member of the Friends organization and we will continue to have access to her many talents. She is currently a Volunteer Greeter, has expressed interest in another Family Festival and art show, and hopes for an opportunity to assist with the prairie gardens and the butterfly garden around our new education center. Thank you, Nancy!

**Did you know that next year, 2009,  
marks the 50th anniversary  
of the Mead Wildlife area?**



## **Retiring Friends Board member Dennis Dieringer**

**By Sue Hall, Friends board member**

Dennis Dieringer is truly a "man for all seasons". He has been described as an organizer, writer, farmer, as well as a compassionate and outdoor enthusiast. Dennis was one of the original organizers of a committee who met in Marshfield over 13 years ago to discuss the possibility of a bike trail in the McMillan Marsh area.

Dennis later joined the "Friends of Mead/McMillan" organization to assist the Dept. of Natural Resources at the Mead Wildlife area with their environmental endeavors and wildlife management practices on the 30,000 acres. Dennis with the help of board members Greg Schneider and Sue Adams were instrumental in writing stewardship grants to build a bike trail and kiosk at the McMillan Wildlife Area. The kiosk displays the history of the area with pictures of artifacts that have been found to tell a story of the region.

As an avid hunter and outdoor enthusiast, Dennis organized a snow shoe race originally held at the Riveredge Golf Course in Marshfield in 1998 sponsored by the Friends group.

The next year, he moved it to the Mead Wildlife area where it was held until the past few winters when snow was not always present and had to be cancelled.

Dennis continued to be on the Friends board of Directors as an officer and secretary up to his retirement from the board. He has participated with the fund raising for the Stanton W. Mead Education and Wildlife Center building project as well as the Mead Trust to hire a permanent educator. His contributions to the Friends have been vast and greatly appreciated. Although retiring from the board of directors, Dennis has indicated he will remain involved with activities at McMillan and the Mead. Thank you, Dennis for your many contributions.



Dennis Dieringer at the McMillan Wildlife Area kiosk.

(Photo courtesy Brain Peters)

**Visit The George W. Mead Wildlife Area Online**

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



## KEEP class

by Beth Clouse, Friends board member

On Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, the Friends of Mead -McMillan helped sponsor a KEEP (K-12 Energy Education Program) class. The class was held at the Stanton Mead Education Center. The name of the class was Doable Renewables: Renewable Energy in the Classroom. The focus of the class was on renewable energy, because of our *Green Building* status, the class was held at the Mead Education Center. Tehri Parker whom is the Executive Director of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association was the instructor. She was very knowledgeable about renewable resources. This was due in part to her living "off grid" for the last 14 years.

There were 16 participants in the class. Most of the participants were classroom teachers ranging from primary to high school. Some participants came from as far away as Eagle River. Other participants included Pam Stange, a Boy Scout leader, and two representatives from the Renewable World Foundation (this company goes to schools in Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin and teaches students about renewable resources). All of the participants received a wealth of materials including a KEEP resource book-Doable Renewables, a Renewable Energy DVD, a poster, and bookmarks.



KEEP class participants partake in a demonstration.  
(Photo courtesy Beth Clouse)



KEEP class participants.  
(Photo courtesy Beth Clouse)

As part of the class, each participant did a Peer teaching lesson for the class on the second Saturday. These Peer teaching activities were also given to all the participants for them to use in their classrooms. An individual project is also required to complete the requirements for the class.

The information from this class will go out to many students at many different age groups in our state and beyond. This class is just another way that the Friends of Mead McMillan is helping to educate the public and touching the future.



## **Educator Update and More**

**Tom Meier, Mead Project Manager**

Progress is being made in our efforts to acquire a permanent educator at the educational center. Having had no applicants for a lateral transfer within the department, we thought we were on our way for the next phase; however a state freeze on hiring within the DNR prevented us from going forward. This has now been lifted and we have completed an Achievement History Questionnaire which will be used in the initial application process. Applicants will go on line and complete the questionnaire which will be used to screen potential candidates for personal interviews. The position will hopefully be announced within the next 3-4 weeks. When we do personal interviews, we will be looking for the most qualified individual to further develop and lead our educational programs here at the center. We appreciate all the efforts on the part of the Friends for their fundraising and all of the many donors who have supported this endeavor. We hope to have the interview process completed by early summer so our new educator can be on board for the busy fall season.

Our field work has gone very well this past winter with over 2 miles of dike repair close to completion. Even with lots of snow, the winter was good to us and a lot of work was accomplished. A new dike is being planned within Berkhahn flowage to divide the flowage into two sections. The work is scheduled to be undertaken this summer.

Water levels are very high at present and many dikes on Mead and McMillan wildlife areas are under water. Muskrat holes are the main culprit for once the water gets high, water begins to run through them. When this happens it is very easy for the dike to wash away. We certainly do not want this to happen so we are watching everything very closely. With all the water though, we will be entering the summer with the best water conditions in years! Have a great spring and come out and all the wildlife that is so visible this time of year.



Students from Auburndale  
Elementary School.  
(Photo courtesy Pam Stange)



## Meet the Mead Wildlife Area Staff

By Pam Stange, Mead

The Bureau of Wildlife Management within the Department of Natural Resources manages the state owned George W. Mead Wildlife Area. There are five full-time employees and three-limited term employees that work out of the offices located within the new Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center. One of our main goals is to make each visitor a better environmental steward, through education about wildlife and natural resource values and issues.



**Tom Meier** lives in Mosinee with his daughter Megan who is a senior in high school, his two dogs Cubby and Butch and of course Mobly the Owl. His son JT is attending college at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. Tom graduated from Stevens Point with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1974 majoring in Biology, and then again in 1980 with a Masters degree in Wildlife Management. Tom has been employed with the DNR for 32 years and has been at the Mead since 1981 as the Project Supervisor of the Mead/McMillan Wildlife Work Unit. His main job duties are overseeing and planning all operations on the unit from acquisition to habitat and facilities development. A job he says that could not be accomplished with out the dedicated and competent staff that work at the Mead.

**Favorite Educational programs:** Heritage.

**Most memorable or humorous time working at the Mead:** Several items come to mind, but putting dozers through the ice or fighting a breakaway fire seem to stand out. "I love seeing the smiles and excitement of children learning about wildlife and our environment." I also enjoy the tremendous friendships with and support we receive from our neighbors and friends.

**Hobbies:** Downhill skiing, fishing, hunting, stained glass.

**About me:** I love to travel to out of the way places, that have very few people, to just enjoy the wonderful natural places that we have been gifted. I also greatly enjoy the Great Lakes and spend a lot of time in the UP on the shores of Lake Superior with my children and family. I like all music except, polka, hard rock, and opera, thus you might say I am a country man.



**Tony Geiger** lives in Merrill. He graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 1976 majoring in Natural Resource Management and Biology with minors in Soil and Water. Tony has been employed at Mead since November 1980 as a Wildlife Technician-Advanced. His main job duties are the creation and maintenance of wildlife habitats, the designing, planning and implementation of major habitat renovations, and surveys and population dynamics.

**Favorite Educational programs:** Wetlands and Bird Watching.

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**Meet the Mead Wildlife Area Staff, continued from page 7.**

**Most memorable or humorous time working at the Mead:** the kids saying thank you at the end of a program and sending thank you cards by mail.

**Hobbies:** Hunting, fishing, anything outdoors, and wildlife photography.

**About me:** Born-1953 and raised in Merrill, I have four brothers and five sisters. My parents still live in Merrill. I was married for 36 years to Roxanne, who passed away in 2007. I am busy raising my son Ben who is sixteen and driving. My passions are traveling and photography. I have visited most of the 50 states including Alaska. I have been to Africa twice and to Canada and Mexico many times. My favorite places are the Aleutian Islands in Alaska, Sedona in Arizona, Jeffries Bay in South Africa, and Churchill in Manitoba, Canada.



**Brian Peters** lives 5 miles west of Stevens Point. He graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 1979 majoring in Wildlife Management and Biology with a minor in Environmental Law Enforcement. Brian has been employed at the Mead since May of 1984 as a Wildlife Technician-Advanced. His main job duties are Timber Sales administration, Sharecropping administration, McMillan Marsh property management, and budget records and invoices.

**Favorite Educational programs:** Forestry and Renewable Energy

**Most memorable experience at Mead:** Good Experience: seeing a wolf and a bobcat, Bad Experience: breaking through the ice with the Logan Marsh vehicle.

**Hobbies:** History; shooting and reloading; woodworking; Civil War reenacting; and hunting.

**About me:** I have been married for 24 years to my wife Lucy. I have two children; my daughter Angela is 22, and my son Ian is 21. I am currently the Wisconsin Department Commander in the Sons of Union Veterans. My favorite places are anywhere with scenery and sights or sounds of nature. I like several types of music and enjoy singing in the church choir.



**Thomas H. Weber (Tom)** lives in the town of Grand Rapids-"Sand Country". He attended the Milwaukee School of Engineering and received 90 credits between Electrical Engineering and Electronic Communications Engineering Technology. Tom has been employed at the Mead since November 1989 as the Auto Equipment Technician Master. His main job duties are to fix it and build it.

**Most memorable or humorous time working at the Mead:** Getting the 550 dozer stuck out on the dike and the time I saved the Ford tandem dump truck from turning over by hanging off the side.

**Hobbies:** My old trucks, which are collector items, my most prized truck is "Johnny Cash" because it was put together like his song-"One Piece at a Time", but not stolen.

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**Meet the Mead Wildlife Area Staff, continued from page 8.**

**About me:** I have one daughter-Karla in college. I enjoy visiting old steam train museums and listening to old country and old blue grass music.



**Bill Hirt** lives in Sherry. He graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 2000 majoring in Resource Management with minors in Forestry and Conservation Biology. Bill has been employed at the Mead since October 2001 as a Wildlife Technician-Advanced. His main job duties are carrying out field activities related to habitat restoration and enhancement in the Wood and Portage county regions of the Mead Wildlife Area.

**Favorite educational program:** Orienteering.

**Most memorable:** Participating in the rebuilding of the Mead Wildlife Area during the weeks following the June 2002 flood.

**Hobbies:** Hunting, fishing, dog training, and shotgun shooting sports.

**About me:** When not at work, I spend a lot of time working on habitat projects on my property in the town of Sherry. I also enjoy hunting and fishing trips with my family. Some of my favorite destinations include the Manitoba prairies, where some of this continent's best waterfowling can be found and Lac Seul-near Ear Falls, Ontario, an exceptional walleye fishery. Finally, no matter what I am doing or where I am going, my yellow lab-Maggie is always with me. She is my best friend and "Partner in Crime".



**Patrice Eyers** lives in Marathon City. She graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 2007 with a major in Water Resources. She volunteered at the Mead from 2002-2005. Patrice has been employed since April 2005 as an LTE Wildlife Technician and Naturalist Guide. Her main job duties are property and facility maintenance, habitat restoration, and invasive species management.

**Favorite educational program:** Wetlands.

**Most memorable:** Duck banding is by far my favorite time of year. "Green-wings day", a day when we band with young green-wing members, is an unforgettable experience every year.

**Hobbies:** working with my 1-year-old black lad Kota, collecting aquatic insects, and learning to hunt.

**About me:** I am married to Brian and we have three children; Shane (20), Rebecca (15) and Kota (puppy). I enjoy spending time with my family. I am the parent advisor for the Marathon High School eco-club. We are currently interested in starting a river monitoring program. My daughter has a great interest in wildlife and frequently volunteers at Mead in the summer months. Mead is one of my favorite places. Everyday is a new experience. My husband and I enjoy NASCAR and try to make it to a couple races each year. I am also currently preparing to return to school for my Master's Degree.

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**Meet the Mead Wildlife Area Staff, continued from page 8.**



**Pam Stange** lives in Curtiss. She graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 2006 majoring in Resource Management with an emphasis on Environmental Education and Interpretation. She volunteered at the Mead in 2005-2006. Pam has been employed since 2006 as an LTE Naturalist Guide and Wildlife Technician. Her main job duties are coordinating the educational programs and Mead events, facility and grounds maintenance, fieldwork, and many other odd jobs.

**Favorite Educational programs:** Bird watching and Heritage

**Most memorable or humorous time working at the Mead:** Mead is a fun place to work, but my most memorable time was last spring when on a nature hike with students they were able to see a pair of Whooping Cranes fly over their heads.

**Hobbies:** Horseback riding, camping, traveling, gardening and photography.

**About me:** I grew up in Colby with three brothers and three sisters. I currently live with my finance Jim and my son Zachary. We have a small hobby farm with horses, which we all enjoy camping and trail riding with. In the summer of 2007, we took the horses to South Dakota and rode to Mount Rushmore. I am currently a member of the WAEE, Friends of Mead/ McMillan and the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society. My favorite place is being outdoors, especially if I can see birds. I like a variety of music from the 60's through the 90's.



**Luke Fara** lives in Stevens Point. He will be graduating from UW-Stevens Point in May of 2008 majoring in Wildlife Management and Ecology. Luke has been employed at the Mead since April 2007 as an LTE Wildlife Technician. His main job duties are doing surveys, collecting data for wood duck research, helping with duck banding, and many other miscellaneous activities.

**Favorite Educational programs:** Wetlands and Waterfowl

**Most memorable or humorous time working at the Mead:** Doing an avian influenza test with the Tom Meier and Bill Hirt

**Hobbies:** Hunting, fishing, camping, and athletics

**About me:** I grew up in Wisconsin Rapids with my mom, dad and sister. We traveled a lot when I was smaller and I really enjoyed Arizona, Alaska, Montana, Canada, and South Dakota. I love traveling to our cabin in Northwest Wisconsin and love all the opportunities available in this state. I am currently part of the student chapter of the Izaak Walton League and the Wildlife Society at Stevens Point. These two organizations opened the door for me getting into waterfowl and wetland management. Since I was able to hunt, the Mead Wildlife Area has been one of my favorite places to go and it is very exciting for me to now work there and be part of the management that occurs on the property.



## **Mead Volunteer Coordinator's Corner**

**by Stephanie Haka, Mead Volunteer Coordinator**

### *Volunteers are the Heart of the Mead!*

As bells rang out and salutations were extended, 2008 rolled in at the Mead with a whole host of new volunteers. On February 12<sup>th</sup> the first volunteer meeting of the season was held with over 30 people in attendance. The meeting was a chance for current and potential volunteers to hear about all of the Mead's volunteer opportunities. Tom Meier, Mead Wildlife Area Project Manager, provided a brief history of the Mead for all the newcomers. Brian Peters, Advanced Wildlife Technician, introduced the new greeter card security system. These cards will be used by the Volunteer Greeters for the upcoming spring and summer Greeter Program. Plus, the Volunteer Coordinator provided attendees an overview of the following volunteer positions: Volunteer Greeter, Volunteer Grounds Maintenance, Volunteer Wildlife Assistant, Volunteer Cleaner, Volunteer Assistant, and Education Facilitator.

In an effort to make everyone comfortable with the responsibilities involved in these positions, current volunteers Doug Aziz, Marlene Furo and Meredith Hess shared their volunteer experiences with the group. Their heartfelt comments were candid and enthusiastic and provided a window into a volunteer's role at the Mead. The meeting closed with a social which allowed the Mead staff, current volunteers and newcomers to get to know each other. When the lights went out each of the volunteer sign up sheets reflected many new names. Lending support to the statement, "*Volunteers are truly the Heart of the Mead.*"



The month of March played host to both the Volunteer Assistant Education Facilitators and Volunteer Greeter meetings. Current and new recruits signed up to assist the Mead Staff with children's programs for the spring season. However, there is still plenty of room for additional hands. Call now to find out where you can lend your support.

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Stephanie Haka leading the volunteer meeting..  
(Photo courtesy Pam Stange)



**Mead Volunteer Coordinator's Corner, continued from page 11.**

The newly recruited Volunteer Greeters have signed up to work at the Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. for the months of April through August. But, don't despair; there will be more Volunteer Greeter opportunities during the months of September and October for others to participate! Watch for additional information to follow in July/August of 2008.

On March 19<sup>th</sup> the Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center received a face lift when the Cleaning Team stopped by the Mead. Volunteer cleaners Arne Ruha, John Callahan, Don Furo and Merlyn Reigel, lead by the cleaning team leaders Marlene Furo and Joan Dickrell, conducted spring cleaning activities in the building. Assisted by the Mead staff the cobwebs have been swept away and the building looks great!

Volunteer programs thrive when both old and new friends share in the mission of the center they support. The Mead Staff knows that *Volunteers are the Heart of the Mead* and can't thank everyone enough for all they do to support the Mead Wildlife Area.

Please join the Mead's Volunteer Team by calling 715-457-6771. Spring has sprung and the Volunteer Grounds Maintenance and Volunteer Wildlife Assistant projects will be starting soon. Plus, don't forget to check out the web site at [www.meadwildlife.org](http://www.meadwildlife.org) for an overview of the Mead's many recreational opportunities offered to the public.

## **Friends Membership info**

**by Sue Hall, Friends board member**

Your membership fee helps pay for the educational programs and materials for the central Wisconsin young people who come to the Mead to learn about the environment, alternate energy practices and enjoyment of being outdoors. It also helps pay for the teacher workshops on alternate energy, cost of newsletters and educational materials such as microscopes, hand lenses and supplies used for teaching.

You can tell if your \$20 membership fee is due by looking on the address label for the date. If there is no date on the label, you are receiving this newsletter free for now and if you would like to continue learning about the happenings at the Mead and supporting the Friends group, you can send in the enclosed form with your \$20 membership fee. This form also has additional tiles or bricks you might wish to purchase to recognize your family or business.



## Winged Artistry

### The Fine Art of Taxidermy

The Mead Education and Visitor Center on the George W. Area (MWA) is planning to host its first Winged Artistry complement the Woodson Art Museum's *Birds in Art* "Winged Artistry" will showcase unique bird art created skilled taxidermists. The exhibit will be open to the second Saturday following Labor Day and remain on view We plan to exhibit approximately 25 works of art in the library areas of the Stanton W. Mead Education and



Stanton W. Mead Wildlife exhibit. It will exhibition. by highly public on the for five weeks. lobby and Visitor Center.

Interested artists should contact Mead Wildlife Area for a prospectus:

Phone: (715) 457-6771  
Website: [www.meadwildlife.org](http://www.meadwildlife.org)  
Write: George W. Mead Wildlife Area  
S2148 County Highway S  
Milladore, WI 54454

Exhibition Dates:

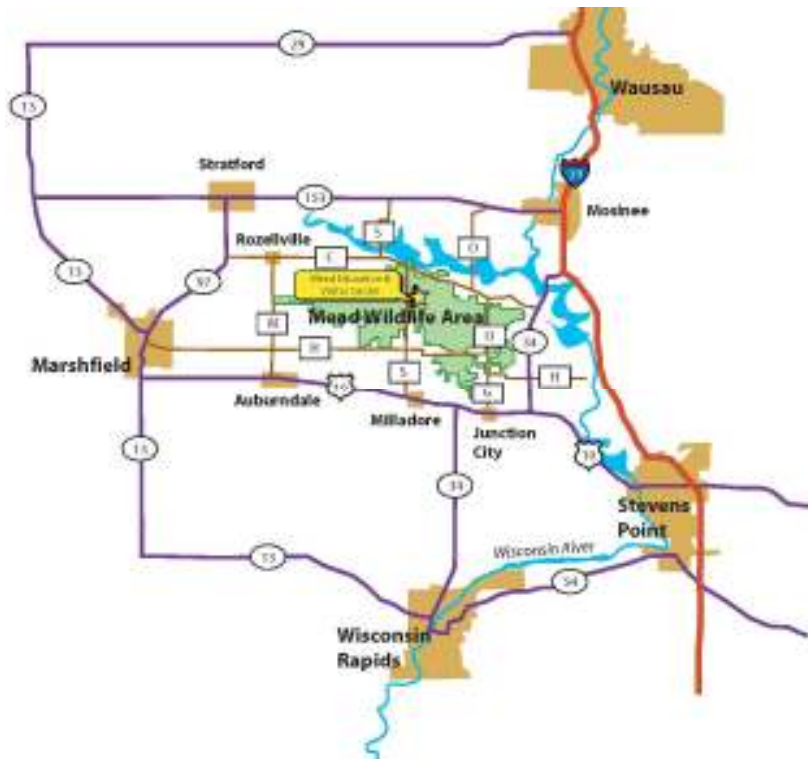
Opening

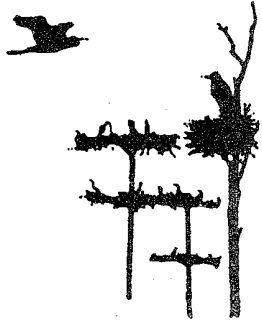
Saturday, September 13, 2008

Closing

Saturday, October 18, 2008

Location:





**Friends of  
Mead-McMillan  
Association, Inc.  
S2148 County S  
Milladore, WI 54454**

Mailing Address Label

### Wetlands Gazette



Students from Auburndale Elementary School.  
(Photo courtesy Pam Stange)

Visitors at the Prairie Chicken Festival.  
(Photo courtesy Pam Stange)

