



WETLAND'S GAZETTE

Volume 4, Issue 3

December 2008

New Educator on Board **Article by Tom Meier**

I'm pleased to announce that Pam Stange is the new Natural Resources Educator at Mead. This position is paramount to the success and continued growth of our wildlife education program here at the Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center. With almost 4000 school age students attending in 2008, Pam will have her hands full, but we know that she can do it and carry our programming far into the future.

Pam currently lives in Curtiss with her fiancé Jim, 8 year old son Zachary and their new Labrador puppy, Lily. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where her major was Natural Resource Management with an emphasis on Environmental Education and Interpretation. She has worked for the Department in two LTE (limited term employee) positions (Naturalist and Wildlife Technician) since 2006 at the Mead Wildlife Area. Pam is extremely dedicated and talented. She brings many ideas and innovative approaches to the Mead Education Program and will definitely be an asset to the program. While her main duties will be in the education arena, Pam also takes extreme



Pam Stange — Environmental Educator at MWA
Photo by Tony Geiger

Friends of Mead- **McMillan**

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Mosinee 693-7336
- *Brian Peters*
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Editor:

- *Dave Grabski*
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New educator on Board (continued from front page)

pride in the new center. When you visit, just look around and notice the personnel touch she provides. It's awesome, adding much warmth and personality to the center.

Pam will be responsible for developing, coordinating, implementing and delivering on and off-site activity based wildlife, environmental, and renewable energy education as well as wildlife-based outdoor skills programs for organized groups of school-aged children (K-12 and college), teachers, adult groups, organizations, hunters, trappers and general tourists visiting Mead Wildlife Area. She will also be involved in the design, development, installation, and maintenance of interpretive exhibits and facilities at the Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center as well as property wide.

Pam will work with schools, groups, and organizations throughout Central Wisconsin. Think she has enough to do??

WELCOME ABOARD PAM!!

From the Manager Article by Tom Meier

This fall has been a busy, productive and interesting time for all of us here at Mead-McMillan. We have undertaken and made tremendous progress in the renovation of forest trails, the near completion of our new Berkhahn Splitter Dike, parking lot maintenance, mowing of over 36 miles of dikes and trails and pumping of water (what water we could get) to fill Townline Reservoir. The Berkhahn Splitter Dike will divide this historic flowage into two parts (cells) so that management in the future will be easier with the ability to only affect one cell at any given time. The dike is almost one-half mile in length and required the installation of two large water control structures. We have also taken on an additional project which involves the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir Aerator. In the past, this project was undertaken by Marathon County in cooperation with Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company. With funding priorities changing for everyone, Marathon County feels it can no longer take this on. Since we are so close, we have agreed to run the aerator this winter. This will be done in a partnership with WVIC through which an operational budget has been set up. Once we go through this winter, we will have a better idea in regard to the feasibility of future operation. Many individuals and clubs interested in the Reservoir have offered volunteer help to make this all possible.

We now have Pam Stange as our permanent Wildlife Educator. This is a milestone for this has been a long time in coming and with budget cuts and funding problems statewide, filling the position now would have been very tough. Welcome and congratulations Pam!!

On the more serious side, we have also experienced some trying times with several occurrences on the wildlife area. In Late October we were burning a 40 acre area in Teal Flowage where switching winds



and extremely dry fuels allowed the fire to break out of control. This was a real learning experience that resulted in about 150 acres being burnt. It did not cause any damage, but did take a lot of time and effort to control. Lesson learned: "Never burn an area in extreme drought." In November, vandals damaged our interpretive panels at the McMillan Wildlife Area Kiosk with spray paint. Why someone would do this is beyond me. We are attempting to contact the maker to determine the best way to deal with this. This kiosk was funded through the Friends of Mead/McMillan. In addition, individuals also opened up the Townline Reservoir water control structure resulting in the release of all the water we had pumped into the flowage this fall. To make matters worse, the water was released into Berkhahn Flowage thus flooding our splitter dike construction area. The dike project will now have to be finished next spring. What a shame. The entire incident will probably cost us over \$10,000.

As we head into the winter, we will be working on small flowage dike renovation, continuing trail renovation, and encouraging oak growth in many of our timber sale areas. Pam has several winter educational programs set up for visiting school children, which will be a new adventure for all of us.

I do want to thank our neighbors, friends and volunteers for all the support we have received in regard to our wildlife and educational programs in 2008. This support and friendship makes our work much more enjoyable and meaningful. All of us at Mead wish you a most enjoyable holiday season and please

Visit The George W. Mead Wildlife Area Online

<http://meadwildlife.org/>



**Stanton W. Mead Education and
Visitors Center**
Photo by Tom Brown



Strategic Planning Session

Article by Jim Yulga

On October 7, the Friends board members and the Mead DNR staff held a strategic planning session to chart future activities of the Friends organization and the Mead Wildlife Area itself. The funding for the educator has been a superb success. Over \$500,000 was raised, which matched the \$500,000 donated by the Mead Witter Foundation and the Trust for the position has been created. While this is certainly a monumental achievement for the Friends, the Friends board realized that there are other activities and projects that require attention in the upcoming years, thus the need for strategic planning.

During the meeting, Friends board members and Mead DNR staff met in small groups to brainstorm ideas. After 45 minutes, all participants gathered to discuss and review the results. Similar ideas were combined, and the results ranked as to importance. Over 50 ideas resulted. The ideas with the highest ranking are: actively fill vacant board positions and update bylaws, expand and promote the walking trail system, continue and enhance fundraising and support for education, expand the education component of alternative energy, increase Friends membership involvement, purchase equipment for the Mead, update and expand the Mead website, and expand McMillan information. Other ideas generated include - continue the sportsmen's auction, complete the reference library, offer a busing stipend to reimburse schools for transportation costs, hold Saturday morning workshops, promote the Mead as a birding area, among others. All ideas will contribute and enhance to the Mead experience.

The highest ranked idea (actively filling vacant board positions) was addressed at the November 5th board meeting. If you have an interest in becoming a board member, please contact Doug Aziz or Kent Hall (344-8081). Other ideas will be addressed in the upcoming months.

Please note that while the Educator Trust Fund has met its goals, contributions can still be made to the Fund. The interest earned from the Fund not only pays the salary of the educator, it also can be used for land acquisition, educational supplies, and funding educator support personnel.



Extra Eyes Are Needed

Article by Brian Peters



Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Your on-going dedication to the Mead/McMillan Wildlife Areas is most appreciated. You certainly possess an inner connection to the land and conduct yourselves in an ethical manner when using the properties. Unfortunately, there are others out there who do not share in this ideal and are too often demonstrating their utter disregard for the Mead/McMillan properties.

The latest examples are the vandalism done to the McMillan Informational Kiosk on Meadow Avenue and opening of the water control structure on the east end of Berkhahn Flowage at Mead. These incidents are described in more detail in the project manager's report.

We ask for your assistance in being extra eyes on these state owned properties. If you witness any suspicious activity, please get the license plate number, and feel free to call us at 715-457-6771 extension 5. Together, we can work to protect Our Wildlife Areas from the abusers.

Thank you, from the Mead Wildlife Area Staff.



Students Collecting Prairie Grass Seeds

Photo by Mrs. Kowatch

Students Sowing Prairie Grass Seeds

Photo by Mrs. Kowatch



Winged Artistry: The Fine Art of Taxidermy

Article by Pam Stange

The Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center hosted its "First Annual Winged Artistry Exhibit." This exhibit complemented the annual fall "Birds in Art" exhibition held at the Woodson Art Museum in Wausau. "Winged Artistry" showcased unique bird art created by highly skilled taxidermists. This year's exhibit consisted of fourteen original pieces by eight taxidermy artists. These artists were mostly from Wisconsin and Michigan, with one piece on loan from an English artist.

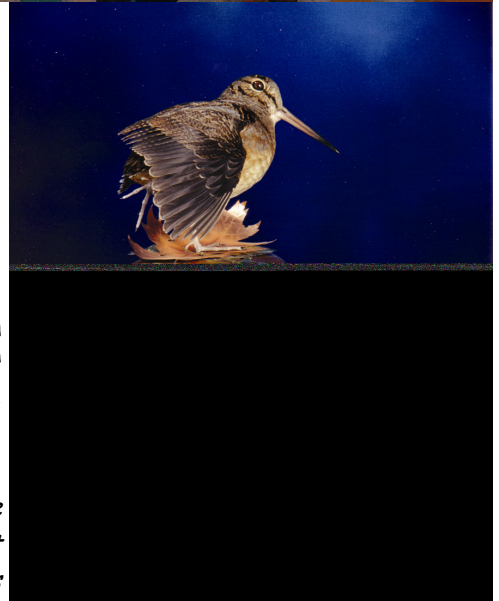


Meet the Artist Reception

From left: Tom Meier, Mike Orthober, Ken Blomberg, Andy McGivern, George Rogers
Photo by Pam Stange

The artists set up their own artwork on Friday September 12th afternoon. The Mead staff invited the local media and the Friends of Mead/McMillan Board members to a "Meet the Artist" reception to kick-off the exhibit on Friday night. The exhibit was open to the public from September 13th through October 18th. The public was able to view the exhibit on Saturdays 10am- 2pm due to our great volunteer greeter program.

Sue Meyer from Marshfield said, *"When Steve and I were greeters, we were impressed that the visitors were so engaging about the taxidermy art on display, discussed other places they have traveled that were examples of restored prairies or wildlife preserves and the comments on the energy efficient building. Several visitors were from out of state. Many visitors were local and this was the first time they had visited the Mead. Most folks took a walk on a beautiful fall day."*



From Artist Mike Orthober

Photo by Pam Stange

Many visitors to the Center helped to make this exhibit a successful endeavor. Over 1,300 guests (adults and students) viewed the exhibit during the five week period. If you were one of the many visitors to the Center during the "Winged Artistry" exhibit, thank you for making its first year a hit. Local newspapers also wrote articles about the exhibit which helped increase the public's awareness of the exhibit and the Mead Education and Visitor Center. Plans for the 2009 "Winged Artistry" exhibit are already in the works. If you would like to be a volunteer greeter during the exhibit, contact Pam at 457-6771 extension 5.



Volunteer Highlights

Article by Pam Stange—Natural Resources Educator

Another year of volunteering at the Mead/McMillan Wildlife Areas has past. Our Volunteer Greeter program has had another successful year! During 2007, individuals greeted the public on Saturdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm from July through October. For 2008, we were looking to expand the months to include April through October, and our volunteers stepped up to the plate again! Some of the new Greeter Volunteers are; Don Fox, John Callahan, Sharon Sauter, Nancy Stevenson, Sally Overholt, Kathy & Tom Kollross, and Steve & Sue Meyer. They joined veteran Greeter Volunteers Barb Altmann, Betty Ptacek, Joan Dickrell, and Dennis & Meredith Hess to make this year great.

Stephanie Haka helped get this year off to a great start by creating a Greeters Manual. The manual was designed as a resource for potential questions greeters might receive from the public. She also held a training session for the new recruits, including an overview of the Greeters manual, a tour of the building and its ground, and instructions on the new key card entry system.



Jim Legge and Pam Stange discuss Renewable Energy

Photo by Mrs. Kowatch

commitments. The primary job skill requirement is for friendly, people-oriented individuals who are willing to share the Mead's mission and its bountiful recreational opportunities with the visiting public. You may staff the Center alone or with a spouse or friend.

We also had new Education Assistant volunteers that helped with our educational programs from April through June. These new volunteers are Barb Altmann, Gene Ekstadt, Jim Legge, and



Energy Flow Lesson

Photo by Mrs. Kowatch

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Volunteer Highlights (continued from page 9)

Gladys & Arne Ruha. These individuals joined the veteran Education Assistants of Marlene Furo, Larry Ruhde, Russ Zimmerman and Ben Hanson to help make the spring education programs run smoothly. Over 2,100 students and approximately 250 teachers and chaperones partook of the educational programming offered by the Center during those eight weeks. The primary job skills to be an Education Assistant volunteer are the desire to work with children, unending patience, and a love of the outdoors.

The following statements were made by our new volunteers when they were asked about their experiences:

Don Fox from Marshfield had this to say, *"I enjoyed visiting with and handing out information to all visitors but especially to young families. Pre-school children and their parents really enjoyed telling about all they saw on the bike and walking trails including their unsuccessful attempts at trying to catch the many leopard frogs on the walking trails by the center."*



Larry Rhude — Wetlands Station
Photo by Pam Stange

Barb Altmann from Marshfield wrote, *"I found both my greeter and education assistant experiences very fulfilling. Since I have always been an outdoors person it was great to see others enjoying the outdoors. As a greeter I met people from as far away as California. I think the Center is a marvelous place and would like to see more people take advantage of the things it has to offer."*

If you are interested in helping to staff the Center as a Greeter during the months of April through October or

helping with the spring Education and have not been contacted in the past, please let us know. We will be having an introductory training session after the Friends of Mead/McMillan's annual board meeting on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at 11am.

On a happy and sad note, Stephanie Haka has left the Mead staff and taken a full time position as the new Junior Achievement of Wisconsin Inc. district director for Portage and Wood County. Steph was instrumental in getting the Volunteer Greeter program off the ground and coordinating the other volunteer opportunities with the Mead staff. With her leaving, we are in need of a Volunteer Coordinator. Unfortunately, because of budget cuts this position would be solely reliant on a volunteer's commitment. The primary job duties of the individual would be to oversee the recruiting, training, and scheduling of volunteer workers. If you are self-motivated and able to work with a variety of people, please consider helping the Mead staff by contacting Pam at 457-6771 extension 5 to learn more about this position.



Gene Ekstadt — Heritage Station
Photo by Pam Stange



Friends of Mead-McMillan Annual Meeting

Article by Sue Hall

The Friends of the Mead/McMillan Board of Directors would like to invite you all to enjoy a morning at the Mead, have coffee, breakfast treats and our annual meeting on Saturday, January 17th at 9:00 a.m. We will review our activities from the past year, elect officers and board members, and discuss our plans for the future. We appreciate your continued support and will look forward to your suggestions to help educate the youth who come to visit at the Mead as well as ideas to help us interact with families and adults who also visit.

There will be a Volunteers' meeting following the annual meeting and it is hoped that interested persons will also attend the annual board meeting to become aware of what the Friends do to enhance the objectives of the DNR.

We now have several items for sale to promote the Mead including unique note cards photographed by Gerard Fuehrer. There are also note cards with a picture of the Mead with a photo by Brian Peters and also one from a painting by Phil Sealy. Several new Mead T-shirts and caps designed by Jon Emey from Auburndale are also available. All proceeds help support our educational programs.

Duck Banding at the Mead — Part 2

Article by Patrice Eysers

Photos by Luke Fara and Patrice Eysers

Another banding season has come and gone. For many of us, our favorite time of year goes by far too quickly.

For the first time in many years, the Mead employed two different types of bird capturing techniques. The first, swim-in traps, were designed, built and deployed by wildlife technician Luke Fara. Luke has spent some time in California banding waterfowl and modeled the new traps after the ones he had worked with there. The traps showed limited success. However, we learned a lot - like how it is not easy to empty a trap full of carp - though it is fun to watch someone else try. Bill Hirt and Luke have come up with some new design ideas for the traps (keeping the carp out and the ducks in) and they may begin trapping earlier in the summer next year. The traps captured seven juvenile wood ducks and two adult wood ducks. All nine were banded and released.



Luke & Bill working with the swim-in traps

The second method of capture is the cannon net. The cannon net has been a very successful method of capture and produces the most ducks for banding. Cannon netting at the Mead is not only successful, but there has not been a bird fatality in over 15 years. The net measures 30 by 50 feet and is attached to three projectiles which are attached to the cannons, each packed with a 12 gauge load. Cob corn is

Duck Banding (continued next page)



Duck Banding (continued from page 9)

used in a bait pile that lies well within the nets boundaries. The cannons are detonated from a blind on the site.

The blind provides easy viewing of the bait pile. It's important to see the entire area. We will not detonate the cannons if there is a chance a bird will be fatally wounded. This means no birds should be standing on the net or in front of the projectiles. Also, the birds closest to the front of the net should have their heads down. Our philosophy is to forego a shot of 200 birds if it will cause the loss of one. Besides all of the technical and



Bill working on the bait pile



Cooper helping band ducks

scientific stuff, a morning in the blind is an exhilarating experience. The blind will seat 3 - 4 people if comfort is not an issue. Each year, at least 2 staff members occupy the blind and we invite one or two others who have yet to experience the sights and sounds of hundreds of birds dropping from the sky into the pond nearby. This year we were able to share the experience with DuWayne Behnke and his 6-year-old son Cooper, my husband Brian, UWSP student Kelly Hunter, and educator Pamela Stange along with her 7-year-old son Zachary. It was a first for all of them.

In addition to those sitting in the blind, a crew of staff and volunteers joined in for the banding. Friends members Doug Aziz, Don Fox, and Donnie Furo are always willing to help. Other volunteers are from the UWSP Wildlife Society, our neighbors, and our friends and family. They all make the banding process run like a well-tuned assembly line.

After the net has been fired, the birds are removed from the net and placed in holding pens. A staff member explains different techniques for identification to the volunteers (a real plus for students and future waterfowl hunters) and the assembly line begins. Birds are brought, by species, to staff members who sex and age them before applying a band. All information is recorded and the banded bird is released.



Don Fox releasing a banded duck

This seasons banding efforts resulted in the banding of 364 ducks; fifty-five adult mallards, 303 juvenile mallards, 2 green-wing teal and 4 wood ducks. We also recaptured an adult female mallard banded at Mead in 2006 and an adult male mallard banded in Vermont in 2003. Amazing!

Another banding season has come and gone. For many of us, our favorite time of year goes by far too quickly.



Removing birds from the net



Zachary releasing a banded duck



An Invitation To Membership

The Friends of Mead-McMillan Association, Inc., is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to the purpose of assisting with wildlife, interpretive and management activities at the Mead-McMillan State Wildlife Area. This organization is comprised of individuals from many different backgrounds interested in increasing public understanding, appreciation, support and enjoyment of wildlife and their habitats.

Your annual membership helps support
Wildlife education for over 2000 area youth, annually
The function & maintenance of the new Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor Center
Wildlife management practices on 30,000 acres
Updated maps and information on Mead-McMillan Wildlife Area
Maintenance of Mead and McMillan Bike Trails

If you would like to become a **member** of the Friends of Mead-McMillan, or purchase a **personalized tile or brick**, please fill in form below and return it with your tax deductible contribution.

Name: _____	Personalized Donations:
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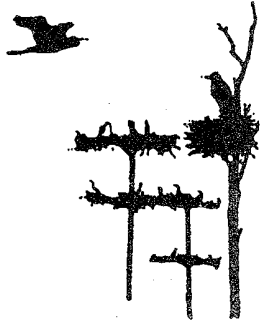
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Make your **tax deductible** check payable to: **Friends of Mead-McMillan Assoc., Inc.**

Mail to: Friends of Mead-McMillan Assoc., Inc.
S2148 County S
Milladore, WI 54454

For Information Call: Kent Hall at 344-8081 (Friends) or Brian Peters at 457-6771 (DNR)

Thanks for your support; your renewal date will be placed on your newsletter label.



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Wetland's Gazette

