



WETLAND'S GAZETTE

Volume 15, Issue 2
Summer 2019

From the Field

Article and photo by Brian Peters (Property Supervisor)

It's been a very wet time for us up until this week when we've seen a few days without rain. The constant wet weather has hindered our progress with dike repairs. We also saw the river rise above flood stage two times since the April flooding. Weather has a great influence on what we are able to accomplish. When conditions are workable, we take advantage of the opportunity to do as much as we can in the field. We are grateful for assistance we received from wildlife staff who came from other parts of the state to spend a few days here helping with dike repair at McMillan.

As was planned for some time, the visitor center geo-thermal system's in-ground lines received a flush, then cleaning and recharging with new fluid. Functioning and maintenance of the system should now be improved.

Plans are in the works to repair the damaged wind turbine. New blades are on order by the contractor who will be making the repairs. The wind turbine was damaged by a severe wind event after an ice storm on February 24th. Also, work on the amphitheater re-build is progressing. Thank you again to the Friends Group for taking on this major amphitheater project!

The recent storms and resulting power outage caused some problems at the visitor center with the water and security systems, but those have been rectified. Many trees were damaged or down across trails, but we were lucky that no structures were affected. The main trails have been cleared but there are still some rarely used trails that may be blocked by trees.

Other activities recently completed or ongoing include helicopter chemical treatment of 296 acres in our open sedge and grass habitat to set back encroaching brush and trees. Mourning dove banding is finished. Mallard banding is going well and will be completed soon. Wood duck banding will be undertaken and may be complete by the time this article goes to press.

Lastly, the DNR's Wildlife Program is implementing a new strategic plan. This plan will define and direct priority operations of the statewide wildlife program for the next five years.



Recent cutting of large trees from dike slopes on Mead prevented potential dike damage from wind pushing a tree over and taking part of the dike with it.

Friends of Mead-McMillan

Officers

- *President—Matt Ahles*
- *VP- Justin Guthman*
- *Secretary—Robert Sander*
- *Treasurer – Connie Milz*

Directors:

- *Dennis Dieringer*
- *Brian Lang*
- *Don Fox*
- *Joan Dickrell*
- *Jeremiah Smith*
- *Marlene Furo*
- *Doug Aziz*
- *Doug Urban*

DNR Staff:

- *Brian Peters, Project Manager*
- *Pam Resech, Educator*

Webmaster

- *Justin Guthman*

Newsletter Editor

- *Justin Guthman*



Board Meeting Summary– July 2019

Article by Robert Sander.

A bid of \$103,081 for reconstruction of the outdoor amphitheater at the Mead Educational Center was accepted by the Board. The winning bid was submitted by Pember Companies who will do all of the construction themselves except for landscaping and ADA compliant railings. Construction will start in July and is scheduled to be completed by August 30. With contingency fees to pay for possible cost overruns, and other expenses, the cost of the project will be roughly \$120,000 which is consistent with the original estimate. While the Board has committed the Friends to pay up to the full cost of the amphitheater funding will solicited from outside organizations that have assisted with paying for other projects at Mead.

The ninth annual Fall Family Festival will be held at Mead on September 14. As in the past, fun activities to help educate the family about nature and the environment will available with assistance from UWSP students. The Board will provide \$100 to help pay for speakers.

The Board is continuing to explore having a pancake breakfast at Mead next spring. Dates and seeking assistance from the Boy Scouts to help staff the event are being explored.

The new boardwalk and platform at Pool #5 is almost complete after approximately 250 hours of hard work by volunteers from the Friends. Outside funding to help pay for materials is still being explored.

Dennis Dieringer has volunteered to coordinate the Souvenir Sales Program which helps to support projects by the Friends.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for September 10. Any Friends member who wants to address the Board should let Matt Ahles know so this can be placed on the agenda.

Membership Expiration Update

Historically membership expiration dates were 12 months from the date of renewal. This approach has proven to be difficult to manage and keep organized. Due to this issue, the board has decided to change membership from a rolling 12 months to set January 1st to December 31st (of each year).

In order to ensure our members all get the full benefit from their existing membership, all current members are “grandfathered” until January 1st of the year following their expiration date (for example: Renewed on July 1st 2018 with Expiration of July 1st 2019 = New expiration date will be December 31st 2019 or Renewed on April 1st 2019 with expiration of April 1st 2020 = New expiration date will be December 31st 2020).

We acknowledge that this may slightly decrease our membership income but hope that we will make it easier for everyone in the long run.

Renewals will be sent each year with the announcement for the annual meeting.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support!



Construction of Accessible Boardwalk & Blind on Pool #5

Article and photos by Don Fox

The replacement of the boardwalk and blind on Pool # 5 near the dog training grounds has been planned for a number of years. The DNR staff asked the Friends Special Project Committee and Mead Volunteers to help remove the old structure, and design and construct 120 feet of boardwalk and a new blind near the site of the current one.



The site selection, elevation levels, design and ordering the \$5,602 worth of project materials took place in April. While funds from the DNR/Mead Operations Budget were used to purchase the project material, Friends Board Members and volunteers are still seeking donations and writing grants to help fund this project. So far The North Central Wisconsin Chapter of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA) has contributed to the project. Any additional donations and grant funds will be returned to the DNR/Mead Operations Budget.

In May volunteers constructed fourteen 5 by 10 foot boardwalk and platform sections and cut and pre-drilled the deck boards.

In June volunteers installed the 120 feet of boardwalk. Finally, on June 26th volunteers installed the ten by ten foot platform and attached the walls of the seven by seven hunting blind. Isaac Kukulka, an Eagle Scout, built the hunting blind and donated it to the Mead as an Eagle Scout project.

The volunteers working on this project are: Warren Austin, Doug Aziz, Don Fox, Tom Hollar, Tim Kaiser and Dick Shepherd. To date, these volunteers have donated 230 hours of labor on this project. Bill Hirt, DNR/Mead Wildlife Technician, provided guidance and support during all phases of this project.

The installation of the boardwalk safety curb and platform rails are being delayed to allow the support pans to settle before the final leveling can be done. The old boardwalk and blind also need to be removed. By late September or early October this work should be completed and the boardwalk and blind should be ready for use.

McMillan Marsh Matters

By Kyle Christianson

I hope this newsletter finds you well. A lot of changes are coming to the Marsh in the next month. You may have noticed all the material piles throughout the property. As conditions have improved, dike repair has been ramped up. Please be aware of equipment operations and trucks hauling. September 1 brings the closure of the bike trail and the opening of several hunting seasons. Please respect the rules of the Marsh and the change in usership. Lastly, I would like to thank Troop 385 for renewing their Adopt A Wildlife Area contract. They will again be assisting with parking lot clean up, habitat projects, and wood duck boxes. They are a terrific partner, ensure you say thank you if see them on the Marsh.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about the Marsh. Please contact me at kyle.christianson@wisconsin.gov or at 715-781-0928 (C), 715-457-6771 ex3 (O). For any concerns regarding law enforcement, please contact the DNR Tip line at 1-800-TIP-WDNR.

Summer Storytime Recap

By Joan Drickrell. Photo by Pam Resech.



Another story time event has ended. Although our participant numbers were down a bit, we all enjoyed the activities each of the four weeks.

Frogs and toads found our kids making puppets and decorating cookies before we hopped around the property searching for frogs and toads.

The turkey theme was great fun as we had Mr. Turkey himself, Mr. Harvey, join us. He showed us a real turkey blind as well as shared

some facts about turkey hunting and turkeys.

As we visited Dragonfly Pond week three, we observed the dragonfly in flight and the nymphs as we dipped them from the pond.

Week four was the elk. Although there are no elk in this area, we learned about how there are some of this large mammal being brought to Wisconsin. Maybe one day there will be one that will call the Mead its home.

Tom Meier Wildlife Viewing Platform

By Doug Aziz. Photo by Don Fox.

On July 2nd, The Friends of Mead-McMillan Wildlife Area, family, friends and DNR Staff gathered at Mead Wildlife Area to celebrate the dedication of the Tom Meier Wildlife Viewing Platform.

This new feature recognizes Tom's 30 years of dedicated service to Mead-McMillan Wildlife Area. It is strategically located adjacent to the Cormorant rookery approximately two miles east of the Stanton W. Mead Education and Visitor's Center just off the former bike trail. Its location recognizes Tom's key role in the development of a long-term management strategy to maintain a population of that species not associated with large bodies of water such as Green Bay, lake Winnebago, etc. It is unique in Wisconsin and possibly in the entirety of the United States.



The Friends provided the funds and volunteer labor to develop the viewing platform. Likewise, the Friends, DNR Staff and volunteers from WPS worked together to relocate/rebuild the rookery at its present location. **It is worth seeing!**

When asked to say a few words to the assembled crowd he, in his usual manner, was not found to be at a loss. His comments, aside from thanking everyone in attendance for this honor, can be summed up simply by repeating the quote, attributed to him, which can be found on the platform that reads: "Diversity is all around us. It is a puzzle and Nature's recipe for a stable and healthy environment. It is our job to

make sure all the pieces are present and fit together properly".

The dictionary defines dedication as; "wholly committed to an ideal or cause" and that is what was celebrated on this occasion. It seemed appropriate to cap-off the festivities with the following limerick:

There once was a student named
Thomas
Whose love for the environment was
Ginormous
In search of a thesis he selected a
Species
The lowly Cormorant was chosen for his
Quest
The result of it all was a 30 year call
and the grand vistas we see before us



Fall Family Festival

Article and photos by Sue Hall

"The Fall Family Festival" will be held on Sunday, September 15th from 11-2 and we would like to invite your family and friends to come to celebrate with us at the Mead Wildlife Area. Rex Runke and his variety of birds will entertain the crowd with a wildlife presentation at 1:00. Prior to his performance, students from Dr. Perry Cook's UWSP Science Methods classes will help with varied "hands on" craft activities including building a seed feeder with pictures of birds in this area that would come to the feeders. There will be a Monarch butterfly tagging event at noon. Participants can also explore the nature trails, the boardwalk, observation decks and "Green Energy: visitors' center".



Snacks will be provided and picnic tables are available if you want to bring a sack lunch.

The event is co-sponsored by the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society and the Friends of the Mead/McMillan Assn.

The Mead Wildlife Area and Visitor Center is located at S2148 County Hwy S, Milladore, WI 54454

Raptor Program @1 pm

Rex Runke will present a program about the importance of raptors and interact with some live specimens.

Monarch Butterfly Tagging @ Noon

Wildflower Walk @ Noon

Animal & Nature Crafts -- 11-1 pm

Folk Music by Dale Dickerson—11:30am

For directions and more information visit the Mead website: www.meadwildlife.org



Upcoming Events ****Mark your Calendars****

September 15th: Fall Family Festival- Sunday, September 15th from 11-2 pm

October 19th: Spooktacular– Saturday, October 19th from 5-7:30pm (Note new time)

Monday Evening Educational Series

The Mead Education & Visitor Center will be hosting a series of presentations about wildlife in Wisconsin on Monday evenings. These Fall Talks are sponsored by the Friends of the Mead/McMillan and the Mead Education Staff. All sessions have a door opening at 6pm with presentation starting at 6:30pm at the Mead Education and Visitor Center.

September 23: CWD in Wisconsin's Deer Herd

Amanda Kamps, Wildlife Health Conservation Specialist-Bureau of Wildlife Management, will present this topic and address related biological, social and policy issues.



October 7: The Endangered Whooping Crane

Brad Strobel, Wildlife Biologist at the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, will present this topic and address related biological, social and policy issues.



October 14: Snapshot Wisconsin

Christine Anhalt-Depies, DNR Natural Resources Research Scientist, will present this topic and address how citizens can get involved.



October 21: Red-shouldered Hawks & Saw-whet Owls

Gene Jacobs, Linwood Research Station, will present this topic about his research on these two Raptors. He will also address related biological, social and policy issues.

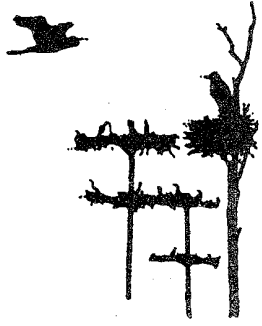
***"Sassy" Gene's Great horned owl will make an appearance after his presentation



October 28: Wolves in Wisconsin

Scott Walter, DNR Big Game Wildlife Biologist, will present this topic and address related biological, social and policy issues.





**Friends of
Mead/McMillan
Association, Inc.
201517 Cty Hwy S
Milladore, WI 54454**

Mailing Address Line 1
Mailing Address Line 2
Mailing Address Line 3
Mailing Address Line 4
Mailing Address Line 5

Wetland's Gazette

SPOOKTACULAR

Join us for our 9th Annual non-scary, Family fun night **Halloween** event. This Year's Theme: "Happy 75th Birthday-Smokey"

Date: Saturday October 19, 2019

NEW Time!

Time: 5:00pm-7:30pm

Admission is **Free** with a non-perishable food item, or \$2.00 per person

Location:

**Stanton W. Mead Education & Visitor Center
201517 County Rd S Milladore, WI 54454**

Sponsored by: Friends of the Mead/McMillan, Western Fraternal Life & Mead Staff

Activities include:

- Meet Smokey Bear & his Flying Friends
- Decorate a Pumpkin or Cookie
- Play games for Prizes & Candy
- Create a Halloween Craft
- Wear your Halloween Costume
- Spooktacular Safari-Outside
- Enjoy Halloween Refreshments & a Campfire