



## From the Field

Article and photo by Brian Peters (Property Supervisor)

It's been a tough winter and spring for us on Mead and McMillan Wildlife Areas. Continuous deep snow kept us from working on dike repair projects as much as we had hoped and also presented a snow plowing challenge. Where do you put it when the previous plowed snowbanks are higher than your plow? Bill Hirt almost lived in the snowplow truck and front-end loader moving the white stuff. Early on in the winter before the snow deepened we were able to make some good progress on dike repairs where frozen ground was a necessity. The late fall and early winter conditions did enable loggers to work and we had multiple timber sales actively being harvested. Kyle Christianson was kept busy monitoring the logger activity.

All that snow melting combined with a two- and one-half inch rainfall caused a major flood event in late April, and we've been very wet ever since. We are seeing above average amounts of dike damage resulting from the flooding and animal damage causing holes and cave-ins. A major effort to repair priority damage is being planned for this summer and early fall.

Patrice Evers is assisting the DNR research staff with a new state-wide bear population study using barbed wire to snare hair from bears visiting scattered bait sites. Many wildlife program staff around the state are involved in this four-week study. It is a huge workload.



Photo of dike damage on Rice Lake River

### **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*



## Tom Meier Special Recognition Event

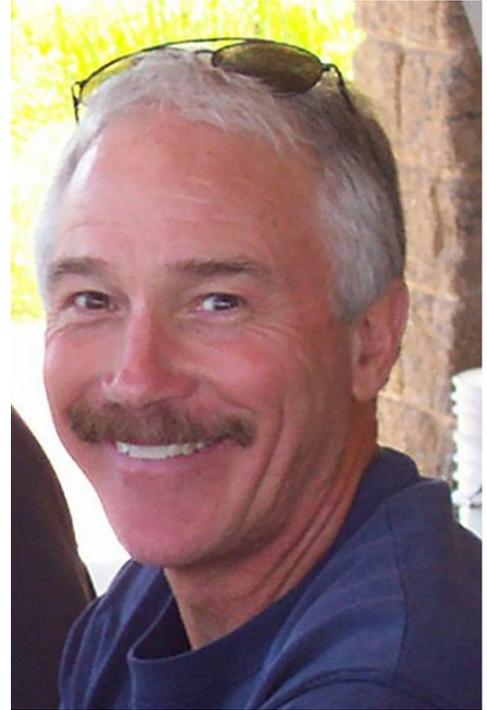
**WHAT:** Tom Meier Special Recognition Event

**WHERE:** Stanton W. Mead Education & Visitor Center

**WHEN:** Tuesday July 2nd 2019 at 5pm

**WHO:** You, your friends, your family, everyone one is invited

**WHY:** In honor of his thirty years of dedicated service as Property Manager for The Mead and McMillan Marsh Wildlife Areas, we invite you to join the Friends of the Mead/McMillan Board and Department of National Resources Staff in a special recognition event for Tom Meier. During Tom's tenure as property manager, he left a legacy that can still be seen today. Please join us for this special event (weather supporting the event will be held at the Thomas I. Meier Habitat Diversity Lookout located ~2.5 miles from the Mead Center- Dress appropriately.)



*“Diversity is all around us. It is a giant 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.”* Thomas I. Meier

## 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.

An updated membership brochure is included in this issue of the newsletter

Thank you for your understanding and continued support!



## Board Meeting Summary– May 2019

Article by Robert Sander. Photo by Doug Urban

FOMM is in the process of updating its agreement with the DNR. This is being coordinated by Doug Aziz and Don Fox.

Matt Ahles reported that the detailed plan developed by Rettler Corporation to reconstruct the failing amphitheater at the Mead Education and Visitor Center has gone out for bids. Final bids are expected to return in the near future, and the Board will then meet in special session to select a bid with the goal of having the new amphitheater completed by late summer or early fall. Once a final cost for the amphitheater is known we will be reaching out to prior patrons of Mead/McMillan, and the public, for financial help to pay for this project.

Don Fox reported that the Special Projects Committee is starting to work on replacing the old Pool #5 hunting blind. The materials for the new blind are being provided by the DNR with labor coming from volunteers with the Committee. The new blind will be ADA compliant allowing access to those in wheelchairs.

Don Fox also reported that he is attempting to recruit additional Wildlife Assistants and Ground Maintenance volunteers. Anyone interested in helping to improve and maintain the Mead and McMillan Wildlife Areas should **contact Don at (715) 676-3115 or [foxdj@tds.net](mailto:foxdj@tds.net)**.

The Grant Committee has secured two grants from the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks for \$1000 each which will be matched by FOMM either in cash or in-kind labor. One grant will help to support the annual Winged Wonders and Spooktacular community educational events. The second grant will support 5 new wildlife talks in late summer or early fall. A response to another grant submitted to help defray costs for the elk talk, part of Mondays at the Mead last spring, is still pending. The Committee will also be exploring grants to support the Pool #5 blind to free up the DNR funding for this for other projects, as well as other potential grants to support additional FOMM projects. The Board committed to match any grants obtained when such matching is a requirement of the grant.

The Board supported Doug Urban's suggestion to resume the tradition of a late winter/early spring pancake breakfast at the Mead. The specifics of how to accomplish this will be investigated.



# McMillan Marsh Matters

By Kyle Christianson

I hope spring finds you above water. McMillan took on a lot of water in two different flood events this spring. As I drove around the property, several infrastructure issues started showing themselves. Every dike on the property is damaged in some way. Even with all the high water this spring, you will begin to see water levels drop throughout the Marsh.

Projects to be completed late spring/early summer include horseshoe structure board repair, horseshoe dike repair, dam inspection, culvert installs/resets. material (rock/clay) stock piling, tree removals, parking lot reconstruction, spillway repair (all flowages), and main/ Pool 6 splitter repair. Expect daily trail closers while prep work is conducted this summer. Closures will be during equipment operations, otherwise the trail will remain open.

Vandalism continues to be an issue on the marsh. Tire dumping, garbage dumping, sign shooting, mudding, and parking lot damage. If you see or hear something, please pass it on to me or to Law Enforcement through the Tip line

Enjoy spring and the rebirth of life throughout the marsh. Please Keep Wildlife Wild. If you see young or baby animals, stay away and leave them alone. For further information or guidance, go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), search Keep Wildlife Wild.

Are you in need firewood? Contact me for details. As always, if you have any questions or concerns please contact me at [kyle.christianson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:kyle.christianson@wisconsin.gov) or at 715-781-0928 (C), 715-457-6771 ex3 (O). DNR Tip line 1-800-TIP-WDNR.

## History of the Rich Chronquist Outdoor Youth Day

By Melody Bergdahl & Pam Resech. Photo by Pam Resech.

The Mead Education & Visitor Center was the new host site for the Rich Chronquist Outdoor Youth Day. The event was held on Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup>. Over 200 youth attended this year's event with either their parents, grandparents or guardians.

The Outdoor Youth Day was started over 32 year by Rich Chronquist from Marshfield after a chat with his wife Patti about how many kids in her class were living with single moms. He thought it was important to teach the kids about the outdoors and what could be done outdoors.

Rich also wanted to share his love for hunting and conservation. So, he started the first outdoor youth day. He had 13 kids the first year.

A few years after he started this day. Rich, Les and I talked about a better place to hold it. We all agreed our property by Lindsay was it. Our property had a perfect mix of water and cleared land for some of the events that were in the woods that the kids could walk through and see nature at its finest.



I only have records for 22 years and in that time over 8,000 people have come to learn about the outdoors. What a great testimony to Rich, who passed away December 2018. Not sure who enjoyed it more the kids or the adults that came with the kids. It was a great event for everyone.

Mark your calendars for next year's event, Saturday May 16, 2020.

# 2019 Volunteer Task and Project List

Article by Don Fox. Photo by Doug Urban

Since becoming incorporated on April 25, 1996, Friends has actively supported the DNR's purpose to preserve, interpret and manage the Mead and McMillan Marsh Wildlife Areas for the benefit, education and enjoyment of everyone. To that end, the Friends Special Projects Committee and the DNR staff have developed the following list of tasks and projects they would like volunteers' help in completing in 2019.

## Major Construction Projects

1. Pool # 5 Accessible Hunting Blind – Replacement of the unusable boardwalk and blind has been planned for a number of years. An Eagle Scout has already built the replacement blind. Special Project Committee and volunteers working with DNR staff are asked to help remove the old structure, design, construct and install 130 feet of board walk and new blind on Pool # 5 flowage. Friends volunteers are also asked to assist with writing grants to help fund this project.
2. Lean-To Roof Equipment Storage – Assist DNR staff with design and construction of a free standing lean-to on the gable end of the pole shed for protection of equipment from the weather.



## Mead Visitors Center Grounds Maintenance

Volunteers are needed to do routine mowing of the lawn around the visitors' center, parking and shop areas. Volunteers are also needed to do seasonal work to keep the grounds around the visitors' center maintained.

## Mead/McMillan Marsh Field Work

Wildlife Assistant volunteers are needed to assist DNR staff with ongoing dike, trail, parking lot and gate maintenance and trash pick-up, boardwalk and observation platform maintenance, and other seasonal and specific projects such as invasive specie control and habitat development, etc. Listed below are tasks the DNR staff would like volunteers to help complete in 2019.

1. Property line and refuge line signage
2. Habitat improvement projects
3. Conducting surveys
4. Boardwalk and observation platform infrastructure upkeep
5. Interpretive signs and directional signs on both properties need to be installed and maintained.

## Education related Projects

Volunteers have been asked to build educational aids such as:

Wooden display boxes for the photo blind shelter; geological rock sample display boxes for the geology area; wooden picture puzzles; additional flip chart display stands; wooden mystery boxes for boardwalk and trails; and decorative mounting shelves for Visitors Center displays. Volunteers with wood working and construction skill are needed to finish these and other projects for the educational programs.

If you are interested in volunteering to assist with any of the above listed tasks and projects or you wish to know more about them please contact Don Fox at (715) 676-3115 or [foxdj@tds.net](mailto:foxdj@tds.net).

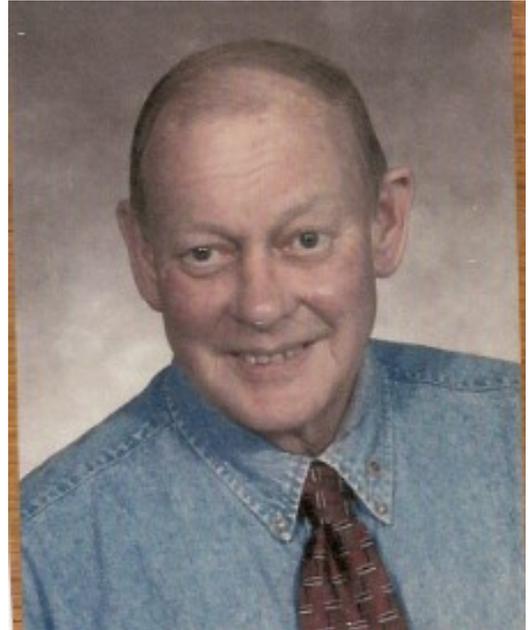


## Memory of Arne Ruha- Friends of Mead Board Member

Article by Gladys Ruha Photos by Gladys Ruha and Pam Resech

Arne started visiting the Mead Wildlife Area when we first started dating in 1974. I knew of the area because my mom was born in Dancy, my family picked blueberries somewhere in the marsh and my brother hunted in that area. In the Spring, Arne and I would go down Smokey Hill Road with our binoculars, boots and field guides to a pond to observe the migrating waterfowl and listen to the sounds of Spring. Arne's favorite bird was the yellow headed blackbird. In the summer armed with bug spray we would bike ( Arne did ride a bike.) along a dike to the cormorant rookery, which was in a different area then. Or other times we just hiked to the accessible areas observing nature. Many times our young nephews came along to fish in the river just north of the Center; lots of fun times teaching them to cast, but not into the trees. In winter we would strap on the cross country skis, make our own trail and enjoy the beauty of winter at the Mead.

For his sixth grade class Arne developed an ecology/geography curriculum which included hikes to the Mead. Students would spend one day, in Spring, putting to use what they had learned in the classroom. Field guides, magnifying glasses, stamina and boots all came in handy. His early classes met in the garage because there was no Wildlife Center. After hiking the Mead the students were able to have an airplane ride over the Mead property to see how it looked from the air.



I guess we were hooked on the Mead and volunteered to help with projects and serve as teachers when needed and continued to do so for many years. How Arne got on the Board for the Friends of the Mead, I'm not sure. He took his role seriously after becoming a Board member in 2014. He especially enjoyed working with the group that put the newsletter together. Coincidentally our last date was at the Mead attending the Monday Night at the Mead sessions on March 13, 2019. Yes, the Mead was an important part of Arne's life and hopefully many more can appreciate and enjoy this wonderful area for years to come.

Arne's Retirement Plan: **"Enjoy life, to appreciate the world and make changes when and where I can".**



## Upcoming Events **\*\*Mark your Calendars\*\***

### June

**Winged Wonder- Sunday June 23rd, 2019 from noon– 2pm**

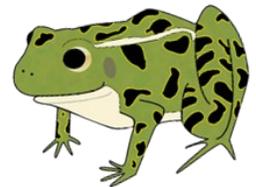
Have you ever smelled the flowers outside? Enjoyed the taste of your favorite fruit or vegetable? Who do you think is to thank? Our native pollinators (birds, bats, butterflies, and bees)! Bring your family and friends for a day of fun learning activities, interactive displays, and organizations interested in our native pollinators. At **12:30pm** join **Chelsea Gunther** for her presentation about the Endangered Karner Blue butterfly.



### July

**Little Naturalist Storytime– July 11th from 10am to Noon**

Hop over to the Mead Wildlife Area for the opening story time about frogs and toads. Explore the property for the amphibians searching for some of the twelve species native to Wisconsin.



**Little Naturalist Storytime– July 18th from 10am to Noon-**The wily wild turkey is an interesting bird that benefits nature and mankind. We will create a call to help locate this large bird on a hike of the property.



**Little Naturalist Storytime– July 25: Dragonflies from 10am– Noon** Dart about the Mead and check out Dragonfly Pond for its namesake. The odonatan, dragonflies, are members of that group and we hope to spot a few of the 110 species native to Wisconsin.



### August

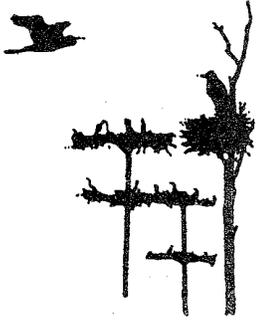
**Little Naturalist Storytime– August 1: Elk in Wisconsin-** The elk are back! Not here at the Mead, though. We will participate in a play about the large member of the deer family and explore this large mammals' unique characteristics.



### September

**Fall Family Festival- Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup> from 11-2 pm**

Look for additional details on the webpage and future newsletters.



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

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

**Wetland's Gazette**

**Special thank you to Dave Grabski for his years of dedication and service!**

For as long as anyone can remember, Dave Grabski has been the editor and chief of the Wetland Gazette. The magic that Dave has done to take all of the articles and pictures for each edition and produce a final version has not went unnoticed. Dave has officially retired from his role within the Wetland Gazette. Thank you Dave for your years for dedication, service, and putting up with all of our requests!!!

