

WISCONSIN

# GAME WARDEN

Fall 2009



An Ambassador  
to Afghanistan



— WISCONSIN —

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Fall 2009

## in this issue...

- 3** Game Wardens from the Past
- 4** The Farm Team
- 6** U.P. Fishing Fun
- 9** Banding Provides Pertinent Info on Birds
- 12** Matt Groppi: The DNR's 'Ambassador' to Afghanistan
- 16** A Day of Anguish in the Northwoods
- 20** The Saga of the Passenger Pigeon in Wisconsin
- 23** Rains Change Appearance of Pafrey's Glen

## departments

- 8** Looking Back
- 8, 17** Obituaries
- 11** Membership Form
- 18** Fruits of Their Labor

## on the cover...

When Warden recruit Matt Groppi was deployed to Afghanistan with the Army Reserves, he was able to put his law enforcement training to use. But he was also able to give back to the area, as Wisconsin wardens and friends collected and shipped school supplies to him to distribute to Bagram children.

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# GAME WARDENS FROM THE PAST

By Harland Steinhorst

## EDWARD BOSWORTH

*Merrill Station  
1909-1937*

Edward Bosworth started as a “Special” warden in 1909 at Merrill and in 1910, was appointed a full-time warden.

He had a good day during the “any one buck” season of 1915 in Marathon County, when he confiscated seven illegal does and a spiked buck over the season bag limit. (See picture.) But what is interesting about this posed photo is the vehicle. It is a state-owned vehicle with a 1914 “star” plate (492W). It was the only state-owned passenger car at the time.

There were 64 state wardens in 1915, and of that number, two wardens used their own horses and eight owned automobiles to travel and investigate complaints. The Department also purchased 25 Excelsior motorbikes that the wardens could use.

In 1930, Bosworth was given a 60-day suspension without pay for an unspecified charge. In that era, a number of field wardens got into trouble for not remitting monies to the Madison office for license sales, fish and game sales, etc. Most of the time they were diverting funds to run their cars.

In 1931, Bosworth was dismissed from the warden service with 10 other wardens due to budget cuts. He transferred to the Forest Department for a three-month period as a forest ranger.

In March of 1937, Bosworth retired after 27 years of law enforcement.



**Warden Edward Bosworth had a good day during this “any one buck” season of 1915 in Marathon County. Pictured with Bosworth are seven illegal does and a spiked buck over the season bag limit.**



## WERNIE W. WISMER

*Hayward and Drummond Stations  
1911-1928*

W.W. Wismer fought in two wars, served at two warden stations and worked for a government agency.

Born in Menomonie, Wis., he joined the Wisconsin National Guard as a young man. In 1898, his unit, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment, was called up and sent to

Puerto Rico to participate in the Battle of Coamo, one of many battles during the Spanish-American War. He was a private in Company H.

In 1911, he moved to Hayward and on Nov. 16 of that year, he was appointed a state game warden. In 1915, he transferred to the Drummond station, making nine arrests that year.

In 1917 his unit, now the 128<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 32<sup>nd</sup> Division, was called up to serve in World War I. His unit arrived in France in January 1918 and fought many battles there. He mustered out with a rank of captain.

In 1919, he resumed his field warden duties at Drummond and in 1923 he was promoted to district warden for the northwestern counties. In 1926, he moved back to Hayward, retiring from the warden force in January 1928.

A year later, Wismer was appointed enforcement officer of the Volstead Act. He served as a prohibition agent until the end of prohibition in 1933. He died at Old Soldiers Home at King, Wis. in December 1949.

According to “Cap” Wismer, one of his greatest honors was when the Chippewa tribe made him an honorary chief and gave him the name “Chief Butterfly.”

His obituary was written by Walter E. Scott and appeared in the Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin in May of 1950.

*Harland Steinhorst is a retired Wisconsin conservation warden now living in LaValle.*



**Conservation officer Joe Paul returns to his alma mater to coach current students during a fishing scenario at UW-Stevens Point's Lake Joanis in Schmeckle Reserve**

# The Farm Team

**By Robert H. Holsman**

Being a Milwaukee Brewers fan is fun again for the first time in years. They've had a competitive team thanks to stars like Prince Fielder, J.J. Hardy, Ryan Braun and Yovani Gallardo. These players were all developed in the Brewer's farm system.

This recipe for success is one that is already known to the Wisconsin warden force, which has been calling up "big leaguers" from UW-Stevens Point for more than three decades. The current roster of conservation officers in Wisconsin reads like a "Who's who" of Pointer alumni, most who began their development in the College of Natural Resources in Stevens Point. In addition to offering the largest undergraduate natural resource program in the country, UW-Stevens Point boasts a very popular environmental law enforcement program that has in many ways served as the "farm system" for Wisconsin DNR wardens.

There are four reasons why UW-Stevens Point has been so successful developing wardens and park rangers. One, the curriculum emphasizes field skills in natural resources, which is something that sets the College of Natural Resources apart from most other degree programs in the country. Future law enforcement students can choose to emphasize wildlife, forestry, soils or waters, but they get exposure to all aspects of natural resources through a core curriculum that features a six-week summer session at the Treehaven Field Station near Tomahawk. When it comes to identifying the difference between a ruffed grouse and prairie chicken or knowing how to spot Eurasian milfoil, Pointers get hands-on training. The academics build on the outdoor knowledge many students bring with them to school. In fact last year, Outdoor Life named UW-Stevens Point one of the Top10 universities in the nation for people who like to hunt.

Two, UW-Stevens Point has institutional cooperative agreements in place that allow students to attend a police recruit academy from any of the state's two-year campuses and count those credits toward their degree. Most of the students in the program attend Mid-State Technical College at the end of their junior year. That

makes them eligible for limited-term employee ranger positions in the summer prior to completing their degree. As a result, many UW-Stevens Point graduates bring law enforcement experience to the table when they begin applying for warden jobs.

Three, the Student Law Enforcement Association or SLEA provides an outstanding organizational platform for students to develop leadership and community service skills. SLEA was formed and recognized as an official extracurricular organization on campus in 1998 thanks to the initiative of Jeremy Peery, now a conservation warden in Rusk County. Its membership roles topped 80 students last year. SLEA members offer and teach recreational safety classes in the community. They have also assisted with surveillance efforts that have brought down some poachers. For instance, when they were students helping Stu Smith keep an eye on local duck hunters, current wardens Joe Paul and Ben Herzfeldt observed a suspect shoot a tundra swan. They helped recover the downed bird and assisted in making the case. In recent years, SLEA members have helped another SLEA alum, Ryan Volenberg, make a number of salmon snagging cases during the fall runs along Lake Michigan. It is these kinds of opportunities that help UW-Stevens Point students develop their skills and “try on” their aspirations.

Sometimes students even get a taste of the politics that they’ll experience later in their professional lives. A few years back, the Student Government Association’s budget committee had a rogue member with a strong anti-gun agenda. That senator cut SLEA’s funding because he opposed the group’s involvement in offering hunter safety classes. Then-SLEA President David Oginski Jr. vigilantly attended numerous committee meetings through the budget process and testified in an appeals hearing to get the SLEA funding restored. It was great training for the “real world” and it is the stuff that classes cannot prepare students to confront.

SLEA has also provided a platform for students to engage in a number of community service projects. Recent graduate Riley Brooks organized and implemented a learn-to-hunt pheasant program last fall at the Mead Wildlife Area. The participant list included a newly hired natural resource professor who shot her first pheasant. Other recent activities have included mentoring an ice fishing day with the Portage County Boys and Girls Club, cleaning up a highway biannually, and participating in the Polar Plunge to raise money for Special Olympics.

**Far right: Kyle Dilley, right, a deputy warden in the SE Region, checks another student during a hunting scenario during an enforcement class at UW-Stevens Point. Top Left: Ben Mott, a current water guard deputy warden, shows a youngster how to set a tip-up during a SLEA ice fishing outing. Mott also has worked for the state’s learn-to-hunt program. Bottom Left: Several members of SLEA take the plunge in the Wisconsin River last February to raise money for Special Olympics.**

The fourth reason UW-Stevens Point has developed such a strong program has been the generous assistance provided by the Bureau of Law Enforcement. Whether it’s providing internships for UW-Stevens Point students or offering the chance to participate in training opportunities, the BLE has invested a lot in its “farm team.”

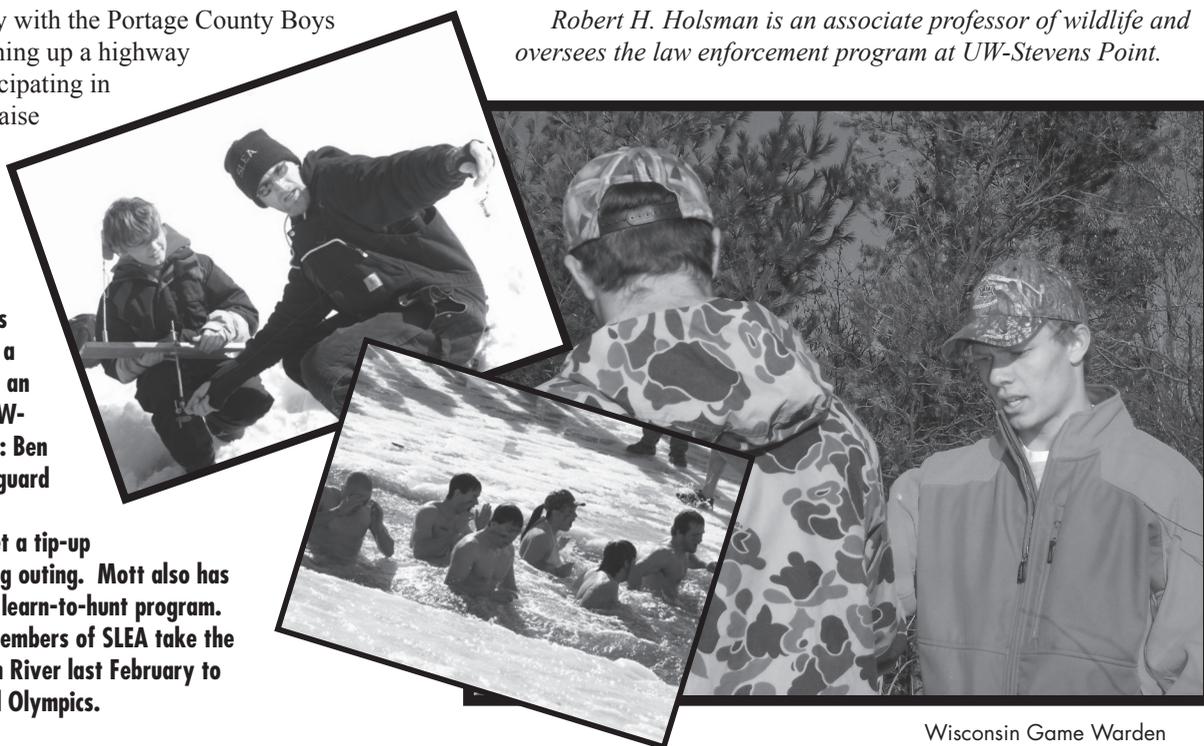
Through this partnership, both institutions have benefitted. One of the most rewarding examples of the DNR/UW-Stevens Point partnership happens during the fall when students take NR392-Environmental Enforcement Principles. Many current wardens and enforcement staff have returned to class at Point, this time as instructors. Tim Ebert, Randy Falstad, Ben Herzfeld, Roy Kubisiak, Barry Meister, Joe Paul and Jon Scharbarth have helped with hunting and fishing enforcement scenario training in the University’s Schmeekle Reserve. For students in the class, the opportunity to interact with the wardens and engage in real-life practice is one of the highlights of the year.

Last spring, Warden Supervisor Dave Zebro led a panel presentation on “Inclusive Resource Communities” to three different UW-Stevens Point natural resource classes. Other panelists included Fred Maulson, Eileen Hocker, and several representatives of the Hmong community. Thanks to the commitment of wardens to give back, students are enriched with a new perspective of the emerging trends and opportunities to be community problem solvers.

Of course, not all of the talent in the farm system stays in the state. Hiring freezes in recent years have meant some aspiring wardens have been scooped up by other states like Minnesota, South Dakota and Idaho. Others have taken jobs with the Wisconsin State Patrol or in the county deputy service.

All in all though, the College of Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point takes a great deal of pride in helping grow the next generation of conservation officers recognizing that few DNR employees influence the stewardship ethic of the state like those who get to wear the badge. So if we are fortunate enough to see a class hired again this fall, be sure to check your scorecard. It is very likely that some new Pointers will again get the call to join one of Wisconsin’s best teams.

*Robert H. Holsman is an associate professor of wildlife and oversees the law enforcement program at UW-Stevens Point.*





# U.P.

## *fishing fun*

**By Michael J. Miller**

I have recently discovered a sport known as spear fishing. When I tell people that, they usually stare at me, raise an eyebrow, and ask “Isn’t that illegal?” It’s at this point I have to clarify my statement and let them know that I was spear fishing in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Most Wisconsinites will usually accept that as an answer because they know things are just done differently in the U.P. The few people who still doubt me are almost always convinced when I tell them that we’ve only gone spear fishing with my friend’s dad, who happens to be a Wisconsin DNR marine enforcement warden. This is a story, as clearly as it can be remembered, of our spear fishing trip in early 2009 and the biggest catch of my life.

A few years back I crashed on the couch at an apartment where a bunch of my friends lived. We formed a pretty tightknit friendship over the 5-month period we lived together and even though we have all since moved on to different locations, we’ve always tried to

make time throughout the year to get together, drink a few (perhaps a few too many) beers, and make some new stories. One event that has been bringing us together in recent years was started by my friend Josh, whom we call Monday (a story too long to fit in here), and his dad, who invited us to Marinette, Wis. to spearfish during the winter. Jake, my roommate, and I had only gone spear fishing once before, and when Monday invited us to go spearing in 2009, it didn’t take us long to say yes. The plan was to spear fish the Friday and Saturday after celebrating New Year’s in Marinette.

When Friday finally came I can honestly say that I was filled with excitement, but also with some trepidation. I was excited about hanging out with my friends and doing some guy stuff, but I was also worried about making a fool of myself. I had been spear fishing the previous year but never actually saw a fish. I was worried this year that I might see a fish and do something ridiculous such as throwing and losing the spear under the ice. Or perhaps I would manage to spear a fish but

would then be unable to get it out of the water. I've never really been much of an outdoorsman, but I needn't have worried. Monday and his father were not only skilled teachers, they were truly passionate about Jake and I having as much fun as possible.

After lunch on that Friday we loaded up our gear and headed to a remote lake in the U.P. After a 30-minute drive that ended with my Saab sedan going off road for a mile, we finally reached our lake. From there we dragged our equipment on sleds another half mile to the specific spot on the lake where we were going to set up camp. We cracked a few beers and began the arduous process of drilling and cutting 2-by-3 foot rectangles in the ice and setting up our dark houses to cover those holes.

A dark house is really nothing more than a shanty, but I suppose that if a knowledgeable spear fisherman calls a shanty a dark house, I better call it a dark house, too. Of course the important part of a dark house is what it does for the spear fisherman, which is its namesake. It makes it dark inside, allowing a person to see into the water without seeing any reflections, and in turn, it makes it much easier to see fish. All of this set up seemed to take hours because of the extremely cold temperature and wind chill, but it really didn't take any longer than 45 minutes.

Once everything was set up, we settled into our dark houses in pairs, one person would sit at the ready with the spear and the other would jig a decoy trying to lure a northern pike in. I've been to many different fishing shops since I was a boy and I've seen many different types of fishing decoys. None of them compared to the beauty of the decoys that we were using on this adventure. Each decoy was handmade by Monday's father during a process that can take anywhere from days to weeks; it truly is a form of art. Not only did Monday's father make the decoys by hand, he also labored over the jigging poles as well.

A jigging pole needn't be anything special I suppose. It is simply an extension of a person's arm with fishing line attached to it. You jerk it up and down to give the fish decoy the vaguest semblance of life and hope that you can trick a northern pike into checking it out. You could use a stick for a jigging pole or even just hold the fishing line in your hand. In

my opinion, the jigging poles that we were using were too exquisite to use on the ice. They were fashioned to resemble various types of fish, and the amount of time and skill that went into their production was quite impressive.

Jake and I sat in that dark house, staring into this foreign environment under the ice for nearly half an hour. At that point Jake left our dark house to replenish our rapidly diminishing beer supply. He hadn't been gone for more than 3 minutes before the biggest fish I have ever seen swam into our hole.

It's tough to describe just how startling it is to see a truly large northern pike. Generally, spear fishing consists of a lot of time looking into a hole and seeing nothing. When you first see fish in your hole, you immediately think that these fish are decent, spear-worthy fish. After a second or so, however, the logical portion of your mind kicks in and you can accurately judge a fish's size. Unfortunately, you usually come to the conclusion that none of those fish are spear worthy. However this particular northern was in a whole different league. When this fish floated through my spearing hole I was immediately excited to see anything, then I was briefly disappointed because I thought that this was just a log floating under the ice. That's how big this fish was.

Once I realized I had the biggest northern pike I've ever seen in front of me, I mentally shifted gears and tried to properly set myself up to spear him. My first obstacle was to switch the jigging pole from my right to my left hand since I am right handed and would never be able to throw a spear with my left. I suppose that seems like a rather simple task that shouldn't even be mentioned, but if you ever try jigging a decoy you'll gain a new perspective. Every little movement above the ice translates itself greatly to the fish that reside under that ice and if a movement doesn't look realistic, a northern pike will simply swim away, never to be seen again.

Not being an experienced spear fisherman, I really didn't know how to jig and it was just blind luck that I had managed to attract this northern to my hole. The only thing I could think to do was to slowly drag the decoy to the far left side of the hole while transferring the jigging pole to my left hand. This seemed to be working so I grabbed the spear and

eased it into the water while the northern was distracted.

I must have been doing something right with the decoy because the northern was slowly stalking it across the width of my spearing hole. After 20 or 30 seconds I managed to coax it all the way to the far left and was able to finally see the true size of this monster. He took up nearly the entirety of the 3-foot width of the hole in the ice.

As the fish hunted my decoy I was trying to ease my spear into the water without him noticing. Again, this seems like such a mindlessly boring task that it shouldn't even be mentioned. In actuality this was perhaps the most difficult of tasks for me. The spear I was using was a 5-foot long, seven-tined, 20-pound steel trident fit for Poseidon himself. Unfortunately for me, I think Poseidon was going to the gym a lot more than I was because my arm was beginning to ache after only 15 seconds of trying to ease this spear into water. At this point I suppose I could have just given the spear a toss and hope that my aim was true. But after a few hours of drinking, I had doubts about my accuracy so I had no real choice but to keep inching the spear down toward my prey.

I would estimate that this northern was about 2 ½ to 3 feet below the surface and I had managed to get my spear to within 8 inches of it. Getting that spear down to that point seemed to take about five minutes though it probably only really took 45 to 50 seconds. That short amount of time was definitely long enough for my arm to start shaking and feel as if it were on fire, though I suppose that could have been the anticipation. Either way, I can clearly remember that I didn't have much time until the fish got wise to the situation so I took a deep breath, counted down "3," "2," "1" and I launched the spear.

I've seen others throw spears before and some of them make an awful racket with a lot of water splash. When I threw my spear though, it was like a hot knife through butter. It cleanly and smoothly collected my northern pike on its way to the bottom of the lakebed.

After the briefest of struggles I hefted my prize out of the water and into the dark house. I think I was still in awe of what had just happened because I didn't shout out to my fellow fisherman. Twice, in an

**continued on next page**

## SPEAR FISHING: from page 7

even tone, I said, "I got one" while pulling my fish out of the dark house and onto the ice. My friends have told me that they knew I caught a fish from my statement, but they thought it was just a small one. However, when they saw my catch, they became as excited as I should have been.

We put my fish onto one of our sleds that had inch markings etched onto it to measure my catch. My fish came in at just over 35 inches, which was within a hairsbreadth of tying the previous record for this lake, won by Monday's dad, at 36 inches. In my opinion, and though it may sound boastful, it was a very nice catch for my very first fish.

We continued to fish the rest of that afternoon and my friends caught other fish, although I never managed to see another that

day. We finished that evening in accordance with our newly created tradition of going to a local "social gathering emporium" in Menominee, Mich., where I had to buy a round of shots as "punishment" for having speared the biggest fish of the day. While at the bar Monday and his father entertained us all by telling stories of their past triumphs and of course, true to the fishing cliché, a few stories were perhaps embellished ever so slightly. Thanks to the instruction and support of Monday and his father, I had the best fishing of my life and I now have a great story to tell on future spear-fishing adventures.

*Michael J. Miller wrote this as an English paper in February 2009. He is a friend to warden Mike Kitt's son. Kitt asked Miller if Wisconsin Game Warden could print it, adding, "It really captures the essence of the feeling a 'first timer' gets when they participate in outdoor sports with the proper guidance and camaraderie."*

## OBITUARY

### Harley C. "Putter" Petersen

Harley C. "Putter" Petersen died at his home on Lake Minocqua on April 20, 2009. He was born in Luck, Wis. on June 10, 1925 to John and Dora Petersen.

Petersen graduated from Luck High School in 1943 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He served his country as a Combat Air Crewman on P.B.M. Martin Mariner. Petersen was stationed on both the East and West Coasts. He and his crew performed anti-submarine warfare and combat duty until discharged in May 1946.

He started with the Wisconsin Conservation Department as a game warden in 1949. He was stationed in Appleton, Ellsworth and Viroqua. In 1962 he moved to Minocqua as one of the five original flying game wardens for the Wisconsin Conservation Department. He retired in January 1982 as chief district pilot for the DNR.

On June 6, 1948, Petersen married Donna Mae Lawson in Luck, Wis. They were married for 60 years. He is survived by sons Brad (Patty) and Kent (Lori), all of Minocqua. He is further survived by six grandchildren: Stacy Harvey (Mike); Brady (Allison); Erika; Mark; Andrea and Kara; and by six great-grandchildren: Lexi, Malreaux, Brady, Jr. and Layla Petersen; and Reese and Quinn Harvey.

In addition, he is survived by his brother, Carlo, and three sisters, Fern, Melba and Lola Mae. Petersen was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Reno.

Memorial services were held at Ascension Lutheran Church on April 26.

# LOOKING BACK



by Harland Steinhorst  
125 year ago

- The gun deer season was open from Oct. 1 until Nov. 30. Any sex, no bag limit and no license required.
- Killing deer "only for food" was the law, which was an attempt to stop market hunting of deer.

100 years ago

- Deer season runs from Nov. 11 until Nov. 30. Bag limit was one deer, either sex.
- Deer license sales were 113,000; a resident deer license costs \$1, while non-resident licenses were \$25.
- Harley W. Mackenzie became a "special" deputy conservation warden and was assigned for training with regular Warden Jack Foster at Wausau.

75 years ago

- The Conservation Commission dismisses Conservation Warden Arthur Tic (Shawano) from the warden service. The Commission claimed he had violated Department rules and made false statements in regard to his enforcement activities, in addition to "failure to meet ordinary financial obligations." Warden Tic started with the Department in 1921.

50 years ago

- A Law Enforcement Procedure Manual was assembled and in-service training sessions were held in the five enforcement areas to introduce the information to all wardens.
- The Special Investigation Unit concluded 35 cases during the year, mostly against commercial violators.

25 years ago

- The warden shield badge, started in 1929, displayed the Wisconsin conservation seal in the center of the badge. It was replaced with the state seal, however, 25 years ago.
- The environmental warden position was created.
- Implied consent law now applies to motorboat operators.

*Harland Steinhorst is a retired Wisconsin conservation warden now living in LaValle.*

# Banding provides pertinent info on birds

By Peter Dring

Bird banding in America dates from the time of James J. Audubon, who in about 1803 used silver wire to mark a brood of phoebes. He was well rewarded for his efforts as two of the fledglings returned the following year.

Many years later a Danish schoolmaster, Herr Chr. C. Mortensen, began "ringing" birds, as he called his systematic banding of storks, teals, starlings and birds of prey. His remarkable success soon attracted the attention of European ornithologists, and bird banding was well on its way as a scientific approach in studying the movements, distribution and migration of birds.

By 1939 banding was being actively conducted in 19 countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, India, Japan, Morocco, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

Dr. Leon J. Cole first introduced the method of systematic bird banding to U. S. ornithologists in 1902. After a few individual projects were tried, the American Bird Banding Association was organized in December 1909. This association, along with the Linnaean Society and many enthusiastic workers, diligently carried on this project for the next 11 years until it outgrew its resources.

In 1920 the old Biological Survey (Fish and Wildlife Service) took over the management and operation of bird banding as an official research project. In North America, bird banding is now under the general direction of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U. S. Department of Interior, in cooperation with the Dominion Wild-

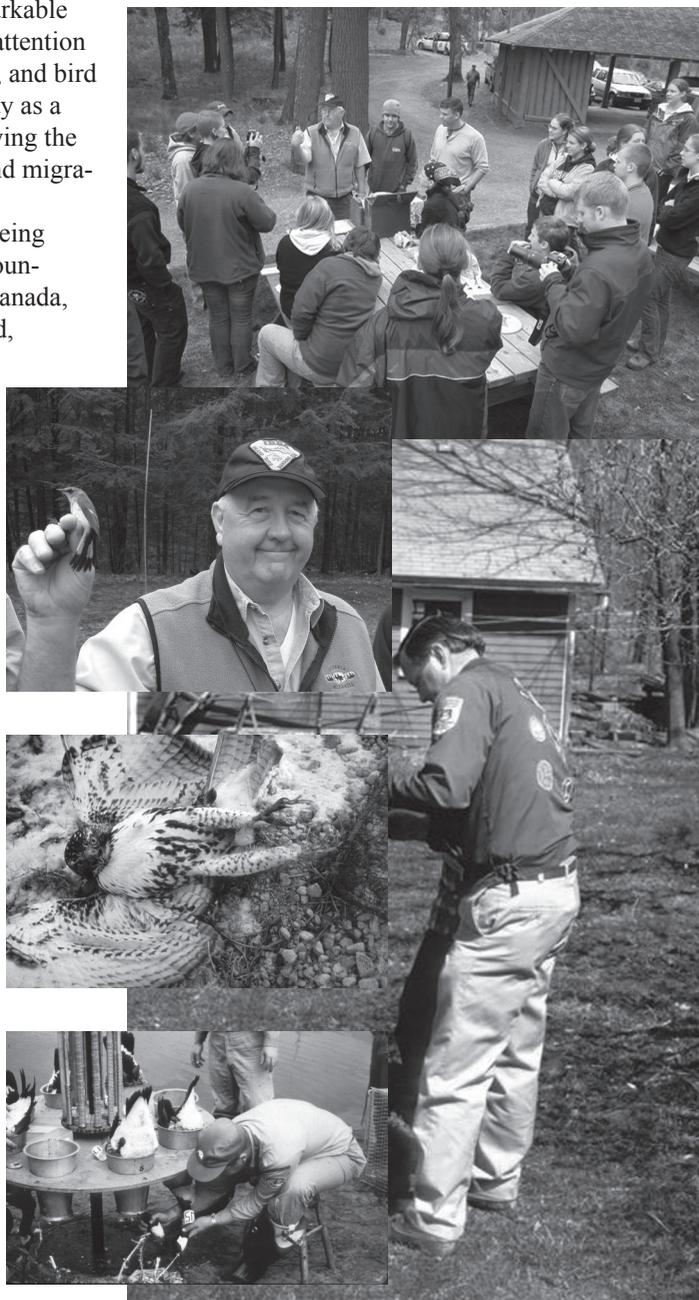
life Service and Canadian Department of Natural Resources. The first bands bore the words "Notify the Auk, N.Y." or "Notify Am. Museum, N.Y." and were serially numbered. When the Biological Survey took over, this was changed to "Notify the Biological Survey." The bands now read "Notify Fish and Wildlife Service, Wash., D.C."

What is Bird banding? Bird banding is the system whereby cooperators put aluminum bands on the legs of virtually all species of birds in order to study the movements of individual birds. Each bird is given a band with a number on it and if it is ever caught again, or if it returns to another trap or is found dead, it can be traced through the number to the place of banding.

Let us take, for instance, a robin that has been banded by one of the volunteer cooperators with an aluminum band furnished by the Fish and Wildlife Service. At the time of banding the cooperator will choose one of the 14 sizes that best fits the leg (#2 in this case), and place it securely around the leg, clenching it with a pair of pliers. He will record in his field notebook the band number, species, sex and age (if possible), date, location, type trap, and bait used (if any).

After recording this information the bird is liberated. These records are then transferred to schedules sent periodically in to the Fish and Wildlife Service, which keeps complete files of every bird banded by species and number. It is possible, therefore, for the government to find, with little difficulty, data on any banded bird.

It is an accepted fact by professional ornithologists throughout the world that bird banding is one of the most important ways of gathering pertinent data on the living bird. It is valuable not only for the study of migration, but it also helps to determine the extent of its range and where it winters and summers. In addition, it contributes facts that enable the government to administer sound conservation practices. With the aid of banding many loose ends have been tied together; this couldn't have been done any other way.



**Putting bands on birds allows experts to study the movements of individual birds, and give insight into their migration habits.**

continued on next page

The flyway system, which birds utilize as they make their northward and southward treks, was discovered for posterity through banding. Perhaps the most dramatic and exciting of all stories about banding came in 1944, when it was reported to the home office from the American Embassy at Lima, Peru, that 13 bands had been received from the local natives. It turned out that these bands were originally put on chimney swifts, a species of which nothing was known concerning their wintering grounds. The Indians reported that they killed those birds on the River Yanayaco, which forms the boundary between Peru and Columbia, solving the mystery of where the swifts spend the winter.

The trapping for banding is done in several ways: 1) Banding stations are set up where banding alone is conducted. 2) Banding is carried on at feeding stations, which in no way hinders the usefulness of the station. It actually increases the usability of the station and makes it interesting to watch the returning birds, particularly if color bands are placed on the legs. 3) Fledglings, young just out of the nest, are banded. This applies especially to colonial species like gulls, terns, martins, cormorants and others.

New bait and new traps are continually being devised in an effort to increase the number of banded birds. One should not consider this method of study, however, unless one is capable of making correct identifications.

It is also important that the cooperator be prepared to keep records and watch his or her traps constantly. This project cannot be entered upon without a federal permit, and sometimes one from the state conservation department, too. However, anyone qualified to do the work that has the energy and the enthusiasm should have no difficulty in obtaining this permit.

The collaborator makes his or her own traps or buys them from individual banders who make and sell traps. There are several kinds of traps:

- Automatic, with a funnel that provides an easy entrance for

the bird, but a difficult exit;

- Potter type, where the door drops down in back of the bird as it enters the trap;

- Chardonneret or top entrance, where the bird sits on a treadle and drops the door down;

- The false-bottom trap, and many other automatic traps that are ingeniously devised in order to catch the bird. There is also a drop trap that can be released by the operator by pulling a string from a blind; and

- The mist net, once used by some folks to catch birds to be used as food, is used extensively to catch and band birds.

More phases of ornithology are studied systematically than almost any other biological science. The study of birds offers recreation and relaxation for all professions. The study involves those from the casual observer who records the first robin, to the research ornithologist studying migration and homing ability. One interesting end for the mature bird student is the banding station. It is here where a young enthusiastic and imaginative student can contribute to the intricacies of migration, movement, and dispersal of birds that he or she so loves. So when a banded bird is found dead, report it promptly to the Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. If the bird is still alive, record the band number. You, too, can be a participant in this important research that may help us understand the overall picture, which may mean life or death to a certain species. It is from this type of data that sound conservation practice and laws can and are being made.

*Peter Dring is the retired director of the Red Schoolhouse Nature Center in Cook County, Ill. and is now living in Land O' Lakes. In 1960 he received his Master Bird Banding permit from the Fish and Wildlife Service, which he still holds and exercises. Over the years he has banded tens of thousands of birds specializing in tree swallows, bluebirds and house wrens.*

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# Articles, photos sought for spring issue of Wisconsin Game Warden

*Wisconsin Game Warden Magazine* is looking for interesting articles that deal with the great outdoors. The deadline for the spring issue is January 15, 2010.

Possible topics include ecology, warden cases made, places to go, resource conservation methods, gotcha-type stories, animal rescues, history of the warden force, and articles dealing with the natural world.

Other possible story topics include vacations, recipes and the future of the warden force.

Articles can be submitted to Managing Editor Barbara A. Schmitz, at 1705 Graber St., Oshkosh, WI 54901, or e-mailed as a Word document to [write2us@sbcglobal.net](mailto:write2us@sbcglobal.net). When possible include photographs to go with your story. They can be mailed

or e-mailed to Schmitz. E-mailed photos should be at least 4" x 6" and 300 dpi or 8" x 10" and at least 72 dpi.

In addition, the magazine is searching for photos for Fruits of their Labor. Do you have a picture of your family with fish and game they've harvested in Wisconsin? Or how about one of you and some game? Send it in!

Photos can be mailed to Schmitz at the above address. They will be returned, if requested.

As before, photos can also be sent electronically to Schmitz. However, e-mailed photos should be at least 4" x 6" and 300 dpi or 8" x 10" and at least 72 dpi.

Aren't sure if your story is a good one? Contact Schmitz at (920) 235-0972 and ask.

## IN BRIEF

### Don't forget WGW when you move

If you've moved, don't forget to tell *Wisconsin Game Warden Magazine*.

The post office does not forward or return the magazines since they are mailed Third Class. That means the Association has no way of knowing which members are not receiving their copies.

For address changes or general mailing questions, contact Kathy Oginski at kaoginski@cheqnet.net.



Green



Falk

### Volunteer instructors thanked at banquet

A Florence County safety instructor banquet was held in spring to thank the volunteers and present awards to long-time instructors.

About 30 volunteer instructors attended the banquet, held at the Florence Resource Center on April 23, 2009, and enjoyed a catered meal.

Jeff Dauterman, a recreational safety warden for northern Wisconsin, and Gary Eddy, DNR ATV/snowmobile safety administrator, also attended and updated the volunteers on the DNR's safety programs.

In addition, Kelly Crotty, a conservation warden for Florence and northern Marinette counties, and Dauterman presented Don Green with his 30-year service award for hunter safety and Wayne Falk with his 20-year service award for hunter safety.

A \$250 grant from the Wisconsin Conservation Association helped pay for food for the event.



## Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association

### Our purpose

The Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association (WCWA) exists to further conservation efforts within the state, without unionizing or collective bargaining, and is dedicated to all of the men and women who have served as Wisconsin Conservation Wardens since 1879.

### Our objectives

- Promote natural resources education.
- Promote the profession of natural resources law enforcement.
- Strive to enhance conservation warden/community relationships.
- Provide encouragement, recognition and support to all members in their profession.
- Increase awareness and understanding of conservation and environmental issues.

### Why join the WCWA?

- Receive the official WCWA magazine with information, pictures and stories that revolve around Wisconsin conservation wardens, past and present.
- Help support the WCWA Scholarship Program at UW-Stevens Point.
- Help establish and maintain a Conservation Warden Memorial Program.
- Help establish and maintain a Conservation Warden Museum.

### Membership categories

- *Regular Membership* — Active and retired, fulltime permanent conservation wardens who have served part of their careers as wardens; past and present special and county conservation wardens; and active and retired law enforcement officers from other agencies.
- *Associate Membership* — Individuals, organizations and businesses expressing an interest in supporting the association.
- *Sponsor Membership* — Any individual or organization that wishes to provide additional financial support to the organization.
- *Corporate Membership* — Any business that wishes to provide financial support to the WCWA. Receive a free ad in this magazine with donation of \$500 or more.

### I want to become a WCWA member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

#### Regular and Associate Memberships

- \$20 for one-year membership
- \$200 for life membership

#### Corporate Sponsorship

- \$250-\$500 one year (\$500 or more includes ad.)

#### Sponsor Memberships

- \$25-\$99 one year
- \$100-\$499, five year with certificate
- \$500 or more, life membership with plaque

Memberships expire on June 30. Please make your check payable to the WCWA and send it to P.O. Box 44, Madison, WI 53701-0044. Your e-mail will not be shared with anyone. It is for the sole purpose of communicating with our members.



# An Ambassador to Afghanistan

When Warden recruit Matt Groppi was deployed to Afghanistan with the Army Reserves, he was able to put his law enforcement training to use. But he was also able to give back to the area, as Wisconsin wardens and friends collected and shipped school supplies to him to distribute to Bagram children.



**By Diane L. Brinson**

Matt Groppi is a member of the DNR's 2008 class of conservation warden recruits. Before he was even assigned a workstation, however, the Army Reserves called him up for training and deployment. It wasn't long before he knew where he'd be stationed, Bagram in Afghanistan. An on-duty staff sergeant, Groppi's jobs in the war zone were military and customs law enforcement, giving him the rare opportunity to develop many of the skills he'll employ when he returns to the states and the Department.

As he tells the story, during his first stint in Bagram, Groppi met a captain assigned to the provincial reconstruction team charged with rebuilding the area's infrastructure. Upon hearing from him that the local kids especially love pens, Groppi told family and friends who had wanted to send him care packages that he didn't need anything, but they could donate supplies for the schools in the vicinity.

"When I went through the DNR law enforcement academy, the importance of being active in the community was stressed, repeatedly," said Groppi. He took that philosophy to Bahrain with him.

With fellow warden and friend Rick Peters, Merrill, the two formed a partnership to collect and ship school supplies. Peters took the effort to the Wisconsin Conservation Wardens Association, which agreed to cover the cost of shipping the supplies to Bahrain.

"When Rick and Matt brought up the idea of supplying school supplies and clothing, the WCWA agreed to help organize and pay for the shipping of the supplies," said DNR warden Jim Jung, Rhinelander, and secretary for WCWA. In addition to these items, association members have donated more than \$300 toward the purchase of additional supplies. Collections take place during warden training.

"I think many association members will be surprised when they get feedback from Matt on how much difference their single small donation can help folks that they have never met halfway around the world," Peters said. Matt's efforts should be commended because this is something he does not have to do as part of his official duties, but rather chose to do. He simply wants to make a difference, Peters explained.

**Applying law enforcement and natural resources skills mutually beneficial**

"The Bagram military base is like a small U.S. town and, as in any town, there are laws that must be enforced," said Groppi. "I supervised law enforcement during my first four months of duty, then moved on to customs enforcement. I never dreamed that I'd have the chance to use and develop my conservation warden skills."

Groppi explained that customs enforcement meant checking the gear belonging to anyone on his or her way back to the states. He was conducting inspections to assure that no soil, invasive species or other items specified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as illegal were amongst the luggage. At the same time, he was learning about international trade laws.

Local vendors would come onto base to sell their wares. Furs are a particularly popular item, Groppi said. It was his job to be on the look out for furs listed on the international treaty dictating

what can and cannot leave Afghanistan en route to other countries. "In the U.S., such items may fall under the endangered species act," he said.

"At home, I will have responsibility for working with trappers of furbearing animals," said Groppi. "There's a lot of wildlife in Afghanistan, and we have to assure that leopard, wolf and fox furs, which are illegal in the states, don't get through base customs."

Groppi said when he enlisted, he was given a type of entrance exam that tested aptitude. "I wanted to be a military police officer, but I had no specific ideas about what that involved," he said. "Anything that I could do that would help with my DNR job, I'll do it."

**Started base hunting and fishing club**

"We actually started a hunting and fishing club over here. We get together twice a week and watch hunting and fishing videos," said Groppi. "Some of the guys solicited some companies and they've sent us quite a collection of videos, magazines and catalogs. Some companies have even offered free outdoors trips to the soldiers when they return home."

All of the members of the club are from Wisconsin, so he keeps current on changes in the state's hunting and fishing regulations. Groppi was scheduled to return home in late August.

"I cannot wait to get home and take some time off to go fishing," he wrote in an e-mail in July. "After some R&R it will be back to field training."

**Rebuilding includes Afghanistan's educational infrastructure**

Groppi said that family and friends who donated school supplies wanted to be sure that they got to those who needed them. That's one of his duties. In return, he sends photos of the students to those at home, so donors can see the appreciation on the students' faces.

"We delivered school supplies, clothing and other items to the Egyptian-run hospital on base because the people are poor and the kids really enjoy them," said Groppi. "We'll be going there on a regular basis, and I'll also continue to give items away for the local schools."

The list of items making their way to the hospital, schools and the community includes outdoor-related literature and videos, even if they're old; that would be useful for the guys in my unit as well as to distribute to the locals; hunting and fishing clothing, including some WCWA shirts and hats; DNR publications on wildlife and habitat; classroom supplies, including crayons and coloring books.

Clothing donations, especially for the harsh winters are much appreciated, said Groppi. He also plans to work with someone receiving donations of soccer balls, a popular sport in that region of the world.

**Groppi enamored with the beauty of Afghanistan and its wildlife**

While training in Mississippi before deployment, Groppi read a Time magazine article on the top 10 environmental heroes in the world. One was about the Afghanistan woman who led the

**continued on next page**

## AMBASSADOR: from page 13

effort to create the country's first national park.

Wanting to learn more, he did online research and came upon the Wildlife Conservation Society in Afghanistan and began e-mailing a member of the organization. As fate would have it, this same person, the country's director for the Wildlife Conservation Society, came to base to train the customs enforcement soldiers on the furs they'd have to inspect.

Upon sitting down to talk with this man, Groppi learned that the society had written the management plan for the park. One of the goals for the park is to establish a trophy-hunting program to serve as a source of revenue, he said.

He also discovered that the New York Times, Reuters UK, and the BBC had run stories on the first park, located in the Band-e-amir region of Afghanistan. "In the park, in the middle of the desert, there are six lakes as blue as any Caribbean waters," said Groppi.

In fact, Groppi was able to attend the dedication ceremony for the first park. In an e-mail, he wrote: "It was an incredible experience and the park was an amazing sight. The rocket attacks happened right after I got back to Bagram. They were close and unfortunately killed two soldiers. They were a couple other injuries, but none in my unit."

### Dreams of returning to a stabilized Afghanistan

"I would like to return one day as a tourist," said Groppi. "Afghanistan was a popular vacation spot before the Russian invasion in 1979, which lasted until 1989," he said. "The country has tremendous potential to once again become a flourishing tourist destination."

### Grateful for all of the support from wardens, friends and family

"I am thankful for the support of everyone back home, specifically Rick Peters' work coordinating donations," said Groppi. "I will be able to take away several things from the deployment that will assist me in my duties as a conservation warden."

"From a legal standpoint, being able to research the laws governing trade of endangered species, the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) and writing our unit's policy on fur inspections has been a great learning experience," he said.

"From coordinating donations, I've learned how supportive people can be if you just ask for help. I look forward to finishing my field training when I return and using these experiences to promote conservation efforts in the area where I'm assigned."

Chief Warden Randy Stark praised Groppi's work: "We're really proud of Matt's service to our country and his commitment to serving the people and natural resources of Afghanistan. It's impressive how he's applied the community involvement skills he learned in the DNR Warden Academy on an international level. It really underscores the universal importance of community involvement in solving problems."



Marissa Hansen shows off just some of the items she purchased or were donated as part of her "Support the Brave" project. She is the daughter of Thomas R. Hansen who retired in 2007 after nearly 35 years as a Wisconsin conservation officer.

## Teen collects 941 items for soldiers, Afghan children

Wisconsin wardens weren't the only ones to respond to Matt Groppi's call to help Afghanistan children.

Warden Thomas R. Hansen's daughter, Marissa, did a community service project as one of her class requirements at Bay Port High School based on the theme of "Pay it Forward." She solicited items for children in Afghanistan, including school supplies, toys and clothing, as well as items for the troop.

The theme of her project was "Support the Brave." Marissa worked primarily through her church where she spoke in front of the congregation six times over three Sundays, as well as distributed a handout. The response was overwhelming — she collected more than 500 items and \$204 cash donations that she used to purchase 11 more soccer balls, three large, heavy duty playground balls and more school supplies for the children. For the soldiers, she also bought beef jerky, gum and powdered drink mixes.

Altogether, she gathered and purchased 500 large items and 441 small items for a total of 941 items! The items were delivered to the Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association, which then paid for shipping the items to Afghanistan

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



The Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association awarded \$1,000 memorial scholarships to four students at the UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources. Warden Jon Schrubarth of Portage County, center, presented the scholarship awards to the students during an April 3, 2009 ceremony. From left, Angela Grosskreutz, of White Lake, Wis., received the Harold Hettrick Memorial Scholarship; Kyle Lenzner of Antigo, Wis., received the Einar Johnson Memorial Scholarship; Kyle Dille of Janesville, Wis., received the Robert Markle Memorial Scholarship; and Elyse Jacobson of Watford, Wis., received the Andrew Krakow Memorial Scholarship.

# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Consider a gift to the Wisconsin Conservation and Education Foundation

The Wisconsin Conservation and Education Foundation is a non-profit public charity associated with the Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association. The WCEF

- awards 15 to 20 grants annually to Wisconsin conservation groups, teachers and conservation wardens that promote hunting and angling opportunities for the young and inexperienced; recognize and support dedicated volunteer safety education instructors; fund river watch programs to protect Wisconsin's natural resources; fund river and lake cleanup projects to improve habitat; and fund development of and improvements to exhibits and educational materials at nature centers and public schools
- Provides funding for four scholarships to worthy natural resources law enforcement students selected by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

- Provides funding for planning and development of a conservation law enforcement exhibit, to be installed on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the DNR Headquarters in Madison
- Provides support for warden's conferences; and
- Provides support to send children of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty to summer camp in the Southeast Region

*Please send your tax-deductible gift payable to the WCEF to:*

Wisconsin Conservation and Education Foundation  
P.O. Box 44  
Madison, WI 53701-0044

*The Wisconsin Conservation and Education Foundation is exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the IRS Code. The Foundation is classified as a public charity under IRS code 170 (b) (1) (A) (vi).*

# A day of anguish in the Northwoods

Four hunters were killed by gunshots during November's deer hunting season. This is the story of one...

It's Thanksgiving Day, 1977. There's a heavy overcast and it is cold and gray in Sawyer County. It's threatening to snow.

Your name is Milton Dieckman. You are a Wisconsin conservation warden. You are on patrol. It has already been a hectic deer season.

Lost hunters. More than the normal number. You have been moving about your county, coordinating, directing, helping in whatever way you can.

The weather hasn't helped. It went from bitter cold to warm to rain to snow and back to cold again. You know the woods. You know they can kill. And so you worry.

But it's Thanksgiving Day, and the hunt is more than half over, and if it stays quiet this day you'll join your family and other relatives for a holiday dinner, and maybe, a good night's sleep. Something you haven't had since the hunt began.

So you stop at the ranger station in Hayward. The time is about 1 p.m. You are just inside the door when the phone rings.

It's the sheriff's department. There has been a report of a fatal-

ity about 25 miles from town. No other information. Just a report. A death.

The sheriff's office has dispatched a deputy. You hurry to your squad car. You call DNR district headquarters at Spooner by radio. You ask for help.

Bill Hoyt, DNR safety specialist for the Northwest District, has been sent to the scene.

A township road. That's the place. There will be a car and a hunter waiting. You find the spot. You stop.

A deputy sheriff is there. And a hunter is waiting to take you to the scene.

You get as much general information from him as you can. Then you tell the deputy to stay with the squad to keep in radio contact.

The hunter guides you into the woods. You don't talk. It's about a quarter of a mile through the hardwoods to the place where the shooting took place.

You walk in silence, thinking.

You approach the area and you can see a small fire. A deputy sheriff is there. And another member of the hunting party.

The shooter is there, too.

They stand in silence around the fire trying to keep warm. Introductions are made. Credentials are shown.

You look at the victim. His body is crumpled in the snow. Nothing has been touched.

You attempt, then, to piece the story together.

The shooter is in his middle years. The victim is an old man, a veteran of many hunts.

There are no tears, no overt emotion. But there is deep anguish, deep sorrow, shattered spirit, a collapse of all that once was good and clean and bright and exciting.

How did it happen?

Both the shooter and the victim had been standers on what was to be a routine drive through some hardwoods. There have been a thousand hunts on a thousand different days run off exactly the same way.

The man who was to become a victim was put on his stand. The middle-aged man was put on his. Others took stands. And others participated in the drive.

The middle-aged man watched the area for which he was responsible. He could see no signs of life, no other person within his range of vision.

About 10 minutes into the drive he saw two deer moving through the hardwoods. When the animals stopped on a logging road he leaned against a tree and took aim at one. He could see it clearly through his scope.

He fired once. And the deer ran.

The animal at which he had shot showed no sign of being hit.

It has been the rule of the hunt since time began that you



**Above: Warden Milt Dieckman, left, who is highlighted in the story above, works a DNR exhibit in this August 1959 photo.**

**Below: With the help of a hunting partner, Jay Reed drags this buck out of the woods—as he did the spike buck described in another column, “Lightning Flashed and a Rifle Spoke,” included in the book.**

stay on your stand until you see the drivers approaching. And that's what the shooter did.

In about 20 minutes from the time he fired the shot, the first of the drivers came into view. The shooter walked over to where the deer had stood when he fired.

Nothing. No spots of blood. No tufts of hair. Just the tracks of two deer.

He walked in little circles looking, seeking. But there was no sign of a wounded deer.

And then he saw it.

A body in the snow looks like nothing more than a lot of dull red in the distance.

## REED'S COLUMNS MADE INTO BOOK

Cancer may have killed Jay Reed in 2002, but his stories are living on through his new book, "Thor and More," which includes more than 100 of his best-loved newspaper columns.

As the outdoor writer of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel for more than 40 years, Reed set aside the columns he felt were his very best, in the hope they'd be made into a book someday.

One of those stories, "A Day of Anguish in the Northwoods," is reprinted here. Other columns include stories of hunting, fishing and outdoor humor, along with Reed's reflections as a war correspondent in Vietnam, which twice made him a finalist in voting for the Pulitzer Prize.

Although Reed never got to see his book materialize, his wife, Christine, made sure it was published and celebrated his life, as well as Thor, Reed's yellow Labrador retriever.

The 312-page book includes 70 photos and a foil-stamped spine and dust jacket. The hardcover book costs \$29.99, or \$5 if you wish to download it. To purchase the book, go to <http://www.lulu.com/content/hardcover-book/thor-and-more/5589764>.

Proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to further the Jay Reed Conservation Scholarship at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.



## Thor & More

By Jay Reed



### Reporting from the Front Lines

While attached to combat units of the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps, Jay Reed was a correspondent in some of the hottest areas of the Vietnam War. His work there in 1968, and later, in 1969, made him a two-time finalist in the voting for the Pulitzer Prize. Those memorable essays, and many more, have been gathered between the covers of this book, where you'll find the very best columns of Jay Reed...as chosen by the writer himself.

The Best-Loved Columns by the Legendary Outdoor Writer of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

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## OBITUARY

### Homer E. Moe



Homer Ellsworth Moe, 75, of West Salem, Wis., died peacefully surrounded by loving family at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center in La Crosse on Saturday, Aug. 8, 2009.

Moe was born on March 28, 1934, in Holmen to Clarence and Eleanor (Casberg) Moe. He was the fourth of nine brothers and sisters, and married his high school sweetheart, Vernetta Wilson, on May 15, 1954.

He served the people of the state of Wisconsin as a state patrol officer from 1955 until 1961. Moe went on to a life-long career as a conservation warden and hunter education administrator, a program that rose to become No. 1 in the nation thanks to the 3,000 volunteers under his leadership. He was a respected hunting accident investigator and expert witness. He pioneered research into hunter behavior with Dr. Robert Norton and the late Dr. Robert Jackson of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Moe was a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church of West Salem, Sons of Norway Lodge 5-028 and also the International Hunter Education Association, serving as past president. He became a charter member at age 16 of the Holmen Rod and Gun Club and was also a member of Ducks Unlimited.

He retired in 1989 and spent many summers house-boating on the Mississippi River, fishing with his grandchildren whenever possible. Homer and Vernetta traveled throughout the U.S. for several years, living in southern California each winter. He taught his grandsons how to shoot and took up painting and woodcarving.

Moe authored the first Hunter Education Manual that has been used nationwide for many years.

He is survived by his wife, Vernetta of West Salem; his two daughters, Cheryl (Douglas) Hein of Los Angeles and Cindy Jones of La Crosse; and his grandchildren, Jessi Rose (Mark) Fry of Fredericksburg, Va., Michael Hein and Melissa Hein, both of Los Angeles, and Jacob Jones of La Crosse.

He is also survived by his brother, Art (Leatrice) Moe of Hayward, Wis.; his sisters, Gloria Cassel of Onalaska and Joyce (Verlan) Urban of Rockland/Tavares, Fla.; his brother, Burton (Janice) Moe of Buffalo City, Wis.; his sister-in-law, Barbara Moe of Mondovi, Wis.; his brother, Clayton (Joanne) Moe of Onalaska; his brother, Hjal Jonsen of Palm Springs, Calif.; his sister, Molly (Doug) Haskell of La Crosse; and many other nieces, nephews, family and friends.

Moe was preceded in death by his parents, Clarence and Eleanor Moe; his brother-in-law, Donald Cassel; and his brother, Aldin Moe.

Funeral services with a warden honor guard were held Aug. 14 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in West Salem with the Rev. J. David Bersagel officiating. The Jostad-Jandt Funeral Home handled the arrangements.

# FRUITS OF THEIR LABOR



Brenda Von Ruenden shot her first turkey in Dodge County in May 2009 with the assistance of Tim Lawhern, Wisconsin DNR hunter education administrator. The 22-pound turkey had two beards — one 12 inches and the other 6 inches with 1 inch spurs. Von Ruenden is a program assistant for Hunter Education and the Learn to Hunt programs as well as a deputy warden for the South Central Region.



ABOVE: Nicole Nerva shows off the northern pike she caught during a June 2009 fishing trip with her father, Warden Ron Nerva of Tomahawk, and warden Jeff Knorr of Fremont. ABOVE LEFT: Genna Knorr poses with a walleye she caught during that same June 2009 fishing trip. MIDDLE: Nicole Nerva and Rachel & Genna Knorr after a successful June 2009 fishing trip with their dads, warden Ron Nerva of Tomahawk and warden Jeff Knorr of Fremont.

# 1931: A very bad year for wardens

By Harland Steinhorst

The Great Depression caught up with the Wisconsin conservation warden force beginning in July of 1931.

“Attempting to adjust the budget to available funds resulted in a cut for law enforcement from \$258,000 in the coming year to the available \$160,000,” wrote Walter Scott in his book, “Wisconsin Warden.” This meant that 20 wardens would have to be laid off, or as an alternative, “10 men could be laid off if the balance could be saved in some other way” such as enforced vacations without pay for two week intervals at three times a year for all men, “and a reduction in the car allowance which amounts to a cut in salary from \$30 to \$20.” These conditions were voted on at the Conservation Commission special meeting held in Fond du Lac on July 7, 1931.

But Chief Warden MacKenzie later presented a revised plan to lay off only 11 wardens and give 15 days without pay during the first quarter and 18 days without pay during the third quarter to the remaining force, according to Scott’s book. MacKenzie’s plan was approved.

On July 23, a United Press release, appearing in the *Baraboo News-Republic*, further explained the budget reductions. “Only 29 Wisconsin game wardens are serving at the present time as the result of wholesale reductions announced in the conservation commission budget,” the paper reported. “Eleven wardens have been dismissed for lack of funds while 29 of the remaining 58 are on vacation without pay.



When these 29 return the same number will be asked to take payless layoffs.”

On Aug. 29, the “dismissed 11” got some good news. “The 11 conservation wardens who were laid off because of budget cuts were offered positions in the forestry division (which had adequate funds) and Wardens Hougan, Jeske, Powell and Tourtillott accepted. Wardens Bosworth and Randall also were willing, but found they could not climb the fire towers. Wardens Long and Raeth both refused and Lanning couldn’t be contacted as he had left on a trip.”

H.O. Hougan’s salary as a warden was \$160 a month; as a forest ranger it



**The Great Depression hit the Wisconsin warden force hard in 1931, with wardens facing layoffs, furloughs and more. Wardens often had to complete tasks with less support.**

decreased to \$110 a month. John Long of Mellon was laid off on July 15 and reinstated on Sept. 15 of the same year at a salary of \$170 a month.

Two wardens not listed were Harold Apel of Menomonie and F.A. Dockham of Baraboo. The *Baraboo News-Republic* reported on July 2, 1936 that F.A. Dockham was retiring at age 71 after serving 20 years as a game warden.

The year had dismissals, transfers, vacations without pay and reductions in mileage. The dismissals did not last very long and by 1933 the warden force was back to 66 full-time wardens. The wardens weathered the budget shortfall and served for many more years until their retirement from the force.

*Harland Steinhorst is a retired Wisconsin conservation warden now living in LaValle.*

## NEWSPAPER FLASHES FROM THE PAST

By Harland Steinhorst

- Oct. 15, 1931, Wisconsin Rapids — “Game Warden William Cole of Wisconsin Rapids was shot by an Indian named George Lonetree. He is recovering from several buckshot wounds.”
- Aug. 15, 1930, Rhinelander — “Reports are that Wisconsin wardens, including A.J. Robinson of Rhinelander, arrested nine Chicago hoodlums, including the nationally known retired gangster “Beer Joe Saltis,” in an armed raid yesterday.”
- May 10, 1898, Prairie du Chien — “G.L. Miller, the game warden, shot a fisherman named Charles Skellenger one day last week. While Warden Miller was seizing some set nets, the fisherman put in an appearance with a shotgun. Miller drew his pistol and shot the fisherman through the neck.”
- Oct. 12, 1928, Crandon — “Failing to stop when ordered to do so by a state game warden (Charles Otto), William Johnson was shot and wounded this morning but his condition is not serious.”
- Dec. 6, 1928, Sayner — “Game Warden Paul Smith today owes his life to a small metal star. The conservation commission badge pinned to the underneath side of his coat deflected a rifle bullet that might have killed him, had not the star been in the way.”
- Oct. 30, 1890, Tomahawk — “The game warden has 11 men under arrest for hunting deer with dogs. Lincoln County is to be rid of its deer chasers.”
- Jan. 21, 1919, Shawano — “(In) the case of William Gresch vs. Ed Apel, a special conservation officer, the plaintiff believed that more force was used in making the arrest than necessary and he was given \$5 in damages.”



## Chronicling the last 30 years of the passenger pigeon

By Harland Steinhorst

In a series of newspaper articles the last 30 years of this extinct species is chronicled.

*Passing Over Loganville, Sauk County  
April 21, 1869*

PIGEONS... "After a brief, but spirited passage-at-arms between eminent rival naturalists on the question of the respective merits of birds, our thoughts naturally revert to birds of passage, to wit: pigeons; and to shoot guns in connection with them. Never within the remembrance of the oldest inhabitant have these gallinaceans visited us in greater numbers than at the present time. One flock, which passed this village today, I estimated to be 10 miles in length and to contain (allowing three birds to the square yard) some 2,904,000 birds, which in all probability was far below the actual number. Now if we suppose that this one flock to feed for a single day upon wheat alone and each bird to consume one-half-gill, we shall find that

it will acquire 5,671 bushels, worth at the present market price \$45,561.87, making it rather expensive to entertain such visitors in a region where hops have failed. Should they nest in this vicinity (which is thought they will) the farmer of this section, will apt to wage against them a vigorous warfare, notwithstanding the protest of eminent "naturalist," against their destruction."

*The Great Pigeon Roost,  
Adams County  
May 3, 1871*

### THE START – WEBSTER'S PRAIRIE – KILBOURN CITY – DELL PRAIRIE

On Saturday last a portion of the first nine of the Baraboo Sporting Club, consisting of the following named gentlemen: Louis Vallikett, Ephraim Hewett, James Stott, Capron Pratt and the writer hereof, went up to the pigeon roost to try our luck. An early hour in the

morning found us on the road armed with shot guns, well supplied with ammunition, food, clothing preparatory, to camping out, and a lively team to take us through.



We struck the prairie just as the sun peeped over the horizon, and the green wheat field, extending on either hand as far as the eye could reach, as they reflected back the right rays of that early morning sun, presented a sight most glorious to behold. Three-fourths of the grain between Baraboo and Kilbourn is well above ground. The patches kept for corn and potatoes are being prepared

for seed. There will, I should judge from appearances be considerably larger percentage of wheat, oats and rye, sowed this year than last; and less corn and potatoes planted. The rainy, damp weather has been very favorable to grain sowed, preventing the rapid upward growth and at the same time giving it good roots, so that when the time comes for it to shoot up it

will have something to back it.

Arrive at Kilbourn City about eight o'clock, having enjoyed a very pleasant ride. Found business quite lively, city growing and improving, stores full of goods and customers, trains of cars, well loaded, stacking up at the depot, or just starting off, during their biggest try and keep up with the engine, every body sober, and a mighty low hop market. Saw fleet of some 15 or 20 rafts, composed principally of pine lumber, bound for St. Louis and other points down river. Dropped into *The Mirror* office just as they were running off their paper. *The Mirror* is a neat, home printed sheet, and looks well to the interest of the people of Kilbourn and the vicinity. Just as we are about to leave the news comes that the Northwestern Railroad Company has sold out to the Milwaukee & St. Paul Company, and that work on the branch running through thru Baraboo has been stopped. This we are very sorry to hear, as we had anticipated a good time when the road was completed.

Now we are on the road again, going north from Kilbourn. The first belt of timber we come to shows signs of the game, and no sooner have we struck the deserted nests in great quantities, the birds having been driven back or killed. Every tree is full of the nests, often counted 30 in a single tree. The ground is covered under the trees with egg shells...

We are now four or five miles from Kilbourn, on Dell Prairie. Here the traveler can ride for miles without seeing a house or any signs of life. About 10 miles from Kilbourn we struck our tent, where the pigeons were thick as locusts. After a little lunch, for it was now about noon, we went for them. Whatever induced the pigeons to stop here is more than I can comprehend. All the soil you find is bottomless drifts of white sand, capable only of producing little scrubby oaks and stunted pines, which appear to be better adapted to bearing pigeon's nests than foliage. I at first wondered what made the farmer so careless in allowing their fences to run down, but I soon learned that there never is anything in the fields to tempt cattle to gain admittance. We had to go four miles for a drink of water, and were glad to get an armful of marsh hay by paying 50 cents.

All that afternoon, and until dark in the evening, we waged war against those birds, and succeeded in bagging 250. In the middle of the day the hens are on

## Did you know?

- **The scientific name for the passenger pigeon is *Ectopistes migratorius*, meaning "Migrating wander."**
- **The estimated population of passenger pigeons in Wisconsin in 1871 was 136 million.**
- **The last large flight of passenger pigeons was in 1882.**
- **The nesting grounds of passenger pigeons covered 850 square miles in Wisconsin.**
- **Passenger pigeons nested in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.**
- **Passenger pigeons nested in the South, particularly Texas and Florida.**
- **One dealer in Sparta reported selling 16 tons of shot in 1871.**
- **Many hunters used double-barrel muzzle-loading shotguns; breech-loading shotguns were available starting in 1859.**
- **Individual gunners could average more than 1,000 birds per day, and it is estimated that there were 10,000 hunters per day during the peak of the nesting season.**
- **Kilbourn City was renamed Wisconsin Dells in 1935.**
- **Closed seasons for prairie chickens, quail, woodcock and pheasants were established in 1851. Partridge and ruffed grouse were added in 1860.**
- **No law was enacted to protect the "migrating wander."**

their nests, and the cocks, which at this season of the year are much preferable, are always feeding. Found the woods full of hunters, lots of Baraboo boys around. But with the woods constantly ringing with reports of firearms, you can hunt all day in a place as large as our public square, and be unable to drive birds away. The extent of the business may be imagined from the fact that 35 barrels were forwarded by express, on Monday night, to Milwaukee, Chicago and New York, on which the charges were over \$200. In the vicinity of Plainfield net settlers have been enabled to take as high as 500 a day, for which they receive, in Milwaukee, from 50 cents to \$1 per dozen. This roost extends from Kilbourn to Black River Falls, and varies in width from 10 to 15 miles. Inside this

tract, as far as I have been, not a single tree has been slighted by the nest builders.

After long and rapid firing our guns become foul, and at every discharge would, as the boys remarked, kill from both ends. To those of us who were not used to being out in a hot sun and hearing the report of shotguns, it gave us a severe headache. When too dark to shoot, we built a fire and spread our blankets on the ground, near where they used to hold camp meeting, with a euchre deck for a textbook, and the only tune we all could sing being Old Ben Skinner!

On the morrow we arose at an early hour and started for home at which place we arrive in due time. *Reported by Hugh Kelly.*

*The Pigeon Trade – City of Milwaukee May 1871*

The *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported: Something of an idea of the "pigeon trade" may be formed when we state that every train arriving here on the La Cross road; bring from 100 to 200 barrels of the "dead" birds to market! In addition, great numbers are being brought to the city live for sportsmen to use at their "Trap shoots." The birds are captured in great number in the vicinity of Kilbourn, and in fact, all along the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, between Kilbourn and Sparta.

*The Last Wisconsin Passenger Pigeon – Babcock, Wood County*

In early September of 1899, Emerson Hough of Chicago's Forest and Stream was hunting prairie grouse with a group of Wisconsin friends near Babcock. Mr. and Mrs. Neal Brown had engaged a guide called "Varney" and they had a very successful "chicken" hunt. He wrote a story about his experiences in which he states: "While we were cleaning our birds at lunch time on the first day, our guide, Varney, pulled out of his pocket some turtle doves which he had innocently been shooting in the morning. Among these were a bird to which he called our attention, saying it was "too big for a dove."

This proved to be the last Passenger Pigeon killed in Wisconsin. The significant fact is that Varney didn't have to violate the game laws because the state had not yet declared a closed season on the almost-extinct species.

# State's first attempt to restock turkeys ran into problems

*On July 26, 1938, The Capital Times carried the following story on four restocked turkeys:*

In an attempt to bring back wild turkeys, the conservation department pen-raised turkeys at the experimental game and fur farm in Poynette. Some of the turkeys were released on July 8 at various locations in the Baraboo bluffs.

The turkey's freedom lasted only a couple of hours. Four of the turkeys were captured, placed in a gunnysack and placed in the back of a vehicle. A local resident witnessed the wildlife violation and wrote down the vehicle license number.

Later the pickup truck headed for Baraboo as fast as the road conditions would allow. What they didn't realize was that the bag full of turkeys fell off the truck and that Henry DuBois of Baraboo found them thrashing around on the road. He assumed they were domestic turkeys and advertised in the newspaper for the owner or owners.

A Mrs. Earl Pierce claimed the turkeys for her husband who had received the birds from a L.W. Sutherland of Madison and Everett Hawkins of Baraboo. The Pierce's also believed that these were domestic turkeys.

Based on the eyewitness report and vehicle license number, Wardens Edward Fess of Madison and Andrew Sampson of Stoughton paid a visit on Mr. L.W. Sutherland. He claimed he was in the Baraboo area on July 8 to have his car repaired at a local garage but knew nothing about the four wild turkeys.

After some questioning, Mr. Sutherland and Mr. Hawkins finally admitted they had caught the birds shortly after the conservation department had released them. Each of them were fined \$50 plus court costs by Justice of the Peace Robert Holmes of Baraboo.

In the fall from the back of the Pierce pickup truck, one of the turkeys was beyond redemption and died. The other three were seized by the wardens and replanted back in the bluffs. This attempt to restock pen-raised birds failed as many of the planted birds ended up in chicken coops with the door shut behind them. The newspaper article does not indicate how these two individuals captured the four birds. It is possible that even Sutherland and Hawkins thought these were escaped domestic turkeys.

Note: Warden Frank Adamski was stationed at Baraboo at the time of this incident and was the Sauk County warden from 1936 until 1967.

*Contributed by Harland Steinhorst, a retired Wisconsin conservation warden now living in LaValle.*



**Wisconsin's first attempt to restock turkeys ran into problems when many of the planted birds ended up in chicken coops with the door shut behind them.**

# Parfrey's Glen: 2008 rains change appearance of state's first natural area

By Barbara A. Schmitz

If you drove through Wisconsin Dells during the summer, you couldn't miss the signs: "Welcome back Lake Delton."

It was only a year ago in June that storms dumped rain across Wisconsin and the dike wall of the lake gave way, draining the man-made lake within two hours.

While repairs have been made and the lake is refilled, the results of 2008's extreme rainfall can be observed elsewhere: Parfrey's Glen, the state's first natural area.

Parfrey's Glen is a rocky gorge, a quarter mile long, located 4 miles east of Devil's Lake State Park. A deep cool, shady ravine that frames a small creek, the glen included a wooden and stone walkway, including elaborate elevated boardwalks with railings and overlooks that provided easy access to a small waterfall. It was a microclimate with moss-covered walls providing cool temperatures on even the hottest day.

But the excessive rain and tons of rushing water changed the glen's appearance in June 2008, shifting rocks and boulders, obliterating the trail in places, crushing footbridges, and washing away vegetation. The course of Parfrey's Glen Creek was somewhat re-routed; it now runs where the trail was.

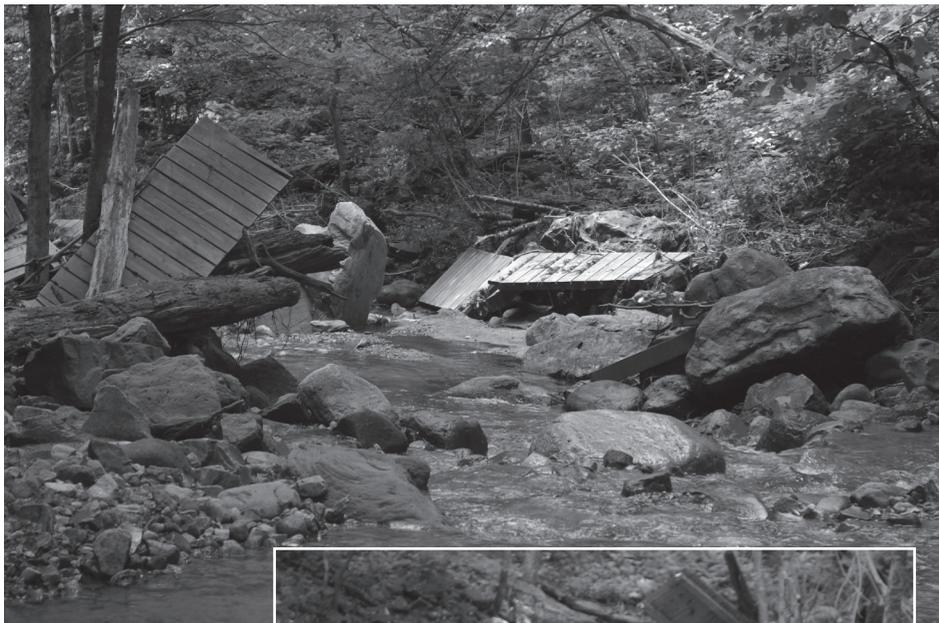
Steven Schmelzer, acting superintendent at Devil's Lake State Park, said it took workers three or four months to clean up the glen.

"The boardwalk had to be completely dismantled and hauled out," he said. "There were also a good number of trees that had fallen and had to be removed. When we initially went into Parfrey's Glen after the flooding, the old trail was completely gone and we had to crawl through some sections to gain access. Most of the work was done by hand and hauled out in small utility vehicles."

After being closed for almost 11 months, the glen opened again for visitors in May 2009. But the trail has been simplified, with only small wooden footbridges where necessary to cross the creek. The official trail now stops a little short of the previous trail's end. Only the posted trail is designated for public use, and will be maintained to normal trail standards. Visitors may choose to continue a short distance past the trail's end, by their own choice, at their own risk.

Schmelzer said the waters caused an estimated \$100,000 damage to the former trail. A new sustainable trail will be constructed to the west of the creek, beginning this fall.

Still, Thomas A. Meyer, conservation biologist with the State Natural Areas Program within the DNR, said damage could have been much worse.



**ABOVE and RIGHT:** Excessive rains in June 2008 took out the trail and bridges in parts of Parfrey's Glen, the state's first natural area. Photos from Wisconsin DNR



"To be frank, I don't know if there was any measurable damage to the significant fauna," Meyer said. "The significant fauna is found on the rock faces above the gorge ... and those were left high and dry."

The walls of the glen support flora more typical of northern Wisconsin, such as yellow birch, mountain maple, and several rare plant species, including northern monkshood.

**continued on next page**

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**PAFFREY'S GLEN: from page 23**

However, the common species were significantly impacted, Meyer said, due to the erosion and sloughing of the soil. "In the lower section, down stream if you will, where the river dumped its bed and took on a new course, there was a huge flow of water where native vegetation like trilliums got washed out."

But the true gorge, with its microclimate, was left relatively intact. "The flatter area that you walk through to get to the glen proper is more indicative of the Baraboo Hills and not unique to Parfrey's Glen. There was damage to that..."

In addition, when the Parfrey's Glen creek was flooding, there was a lot of undercutting of the bank, resulting in some fallen trees. So much sand and gravel washed out of the stream that there was nearly a foot of soil covering the entire parking lot, he said.

But a bigger concern is that invasive species like garlic mustard may have washed into the Parfrey's Glen property, Meyer said. "We try to control it on our property, but when you have it uncontrolled outside of the state boundary, we're limited in what we can do. We're concerned that the water carried the seeds in the natural area, but it will be next year before we know if our concern is valid."

No studies have yet been done to look at the impact of the flooding on the fauna such as the aquatic insect species, Meyer said. But he suspects the deluge of water decimated the aquatic fauna. Still, he said the aquatic fauna are resilient and will find their way back to that stream.

Parfrey's Glen is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1952. It is named after Robert Parfrey, an Englishman who acquired the property in 1865.

**Parfrey's Glen a year later, in June 2009.**