



Madeline Island

Wilderness Preserve News

Summer 2012

"I RE-REMEMBER"

By Victoria Erhart, President

This is new for me, this writing of President's letters. I am used to my Fourth of July Parade articles being buried somewhere back of page 5 or thereabouts, and this feels different. But Tom Kromroy, after 7 years of impeccable leadership, has passed on the baton to yours truly, and I would be speaking for everyone associated with the MIWP when I say thank you, Tom, for a job beautifully done. Tom will remain on the board and focus on land issues.

Since the inauguration of the Buckthorn Task Force in 2007, an ongoing project has been the attempt to eradicate common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) from the island. For anyone who has experienced the dense monospecific buckthorn thickets that make up way too much of the understory from New England to Saskatchewan, total eradication is an enviable and necessary goal. And, in the case of Madeline and almost nowhere else, a POSSIBLE one. This year the MIWP joined forces with the town to bring a group of Americorps workers to the island to do buckthorn and barberry cutting (see Tom Kromroy's article elsewhere in this newsletter). We provided food and lodging for all of them in the weeks that they were able to be on the island and, although the group had to cut short its visit because of emergencies elsewhere, I think there was a sense that we made progress. The MIWP remains committed to building on this progress with the ultimate goal of buckthorn-free forests island-wide. That would be a remarkable achievement.

In 2011, the Wilderness Preserve purchased two parcels of land, both small and both adjacent to our own landholdings. The first is a five-acre piece on the north end, and the second is four acres off middle road. Both were bank-owned at the time of the sale. Both are consistent with MIWP land acquisition criteria: inland land that contributes to an undivided forest, or lands of unusual ecological significance.

There have been some big changes on the MIWP board. I mention this not so much because it will change the day to day functioning of the organization, but really to say thank-you to some wonderful, hard-working people. And hello and good luck to some new faces! The board has accepted, with regrets, the resignation of past president Bob Benjamin. Bob served as the fourth MIWP president and has a particular interest in conservation easements and other non-ownership methods of land preservation. Bob, we will miss you. Bob's presence on the board has been so large that he is being replaced by two people, Ned Hancock and Adam Haecker. As I mentioned earlier, we have had a major change in officers, with Tom Kromroy stepping down as President, leaving me, Victoria Erhart, to try to fill his exceedingly large shoes (metaphorically speaking). Laurel Lein, who has been a superb Vice-President for about as long as I can remember, is being replaced by Fred Koerschner, and Pixie Martin will take over Fred's place as Secretary. Steve Mueller continues as Treasurer.

(President's letter, continued on page 6)



Fall tamaracks at Big Bay, photo by Pixie Martin

THE AMERICORPS HELPS WITH INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL ON MADELINE ISLAND

By Tom Kromroy

Last summer, MIWP collaborated with the Town of La Pointe in sponsoring a work crew from the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps to help us with invasive plant removal. AmeriCorps is a federally-funded service program for men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. Our invasive plant removal project qualified as an environmental service project, and we were selected to host a crew of eight young people to work for a period of six weeks without having to pay for their labor.

As a co-sponsor, the MIWP contributed \$11,500 to cover lodging, part of the meal expense, supplies and equipment required for the project. The Town of La Pointe provided daily direction and supervision. Also, members of the Northwoods Weed Cooperative provided technical support and training for the crew with no charge.

The AmeriCorps crew cut and/or treated most of the seed-producing buckthorn and barberry plants on over 25 acres of Town land and private property. In addition to significantly reducing the potential for spread of the invasive plants, the project was an opportunity for the MIWP and the Town to work together toward a common goal. We would like to thank Keith Sowl and the Town of La Pointe, Robin Russell, Jerry and Janet Smith, Bonnie and Mark Matuseski, Kathy Kromroy and Steve Mueller for their support and help.

The MIWP Board has once again made invasive plant control a priority and has authorized another \$10,000 to be spent on this effort for 2012 so we can once again collaborate with the Town of La Pointe to keep the invasive plants from spreading over the entire Island.

WILDERNESS PRESERVE FLEXES MUSSELS AT 4TH OF JULY PARADE

You might think we pay off the judges, but we don't. Really we don't. We tried, once, with chocolate cake, but it didn't work. I am proud to say that on our very own merit, the MIWP marching not-even-close-to-a-band won the coveted Fourth of July Parade SPECIAL Award for 2011. Eat your heart out, award lovers. The vehicle for this astounding feat was a tightly-organized, beautifully choreographed (thanks, Bonnie) group of 24 giant, sparkly, emerald ash borers with a powerful ecological message: don't move firewood, save your ash. The poetry alone makes me weep.



For the 2012 parade, we take on some of the baddest of the bad invasives: Zebra mussels! Known for cute stripes and clinging on to boats, Zebra mussels won't stand a chance against the might of the MIWP. As always, I have no idea exactly what we will be doing, but I have a strong sense it will involve some very bad puns. Please join us. Costumes are easy: a set of modestly tight white long-johns (the stripes and the "muscles" will be supplied). Meet at the marina under the MIWP banner one half hour prior to parade time (the parade usually starts at 10:30 AM, but check with the Chamber of Commerce). Children and dogs with a flair for the dramatic are welcome. Questions, comments, footnotes, offers of assistance, call Victoria Erhart at 715-747-2277 in early July.



MONITORING PERSISTENT CONTAMINANTS IN BALD EAGLES

The following article is excerpted from a resource brief published by the National Park Service's Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network. In 2010 the network's director, Bill Route, gave an evening presentation on this subject at the Madeline Island Historical Museum, sponsored by the Wilderness Preserve. The NPS Great Lakes Network is responsible for long-term ecological monitoring of critical resources in nine national park units in the upper Midwest. It's offices are in Ashland, Wisconsin. For more information on biological contaminants and other important environmental issues in your favorite Great Lakes park, visit: <http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/glkn/index.cfm>



Human-made contaminants released into water, air, or on land often end up in aquatic systems. Bald eagles are high on the aquatic food web and serve as good indicators of the distribution and levels of these contaminants in the environment. The National Park Service Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network is currently monitoring six contaminants in bald eagle nestlings. Each of these contaminants is known or hypothesized to adversely impact wildlife and humans. This Resource Brief presents efforts to monitor DDE (a metabolite of the pesticide DDT) and PCBs – both banned in North America in the 1970s – and mercury – one of the most pervasive contaminants in the upper Midwest.

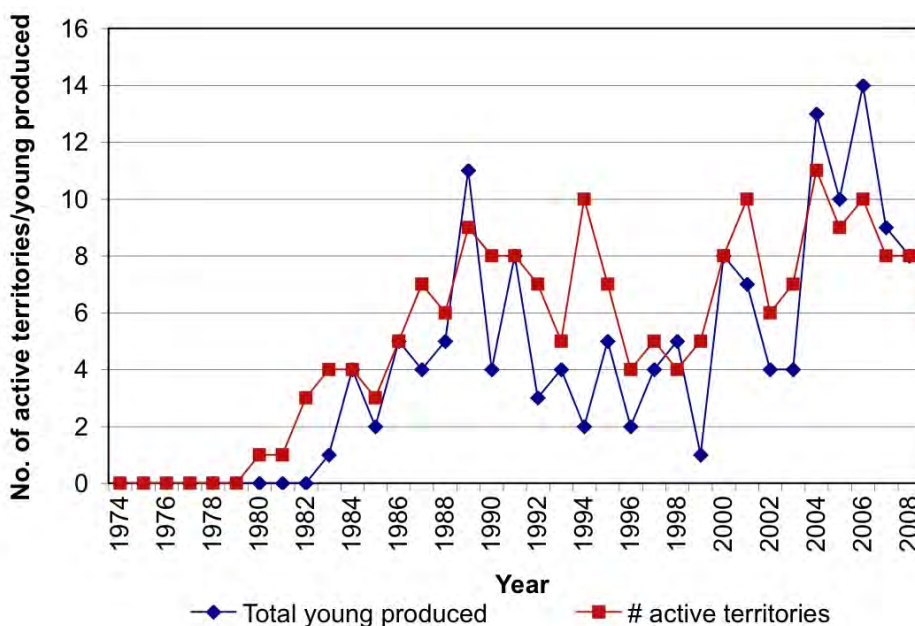
Bald eagle nestlings have been used as a sentinel species to monitor environmental contaminants on the Great Lakes for over 20 years. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources monitored contaminants in eaglets along the south shore of Lake Superior, including the Apostle Islands, from 1989 through 2002.

The NPS picked up this effort in 2006 for areas it manages. Combining data from both agencies reveals that levels of DDE, PCBs, and mercury in eagle nestlings have declined at annual rates of 3% for DDE, 4.3% for PCBs, and 2.4% for mercury.

On a population level the average concentrations of DDE and PCBs are currently below threshold values established for healthy bald eagle populations. For DDE it took 28 years from when DDT was banned in 1972 for levels to drop below the threshold. However, greater than 50% of the nestlings sampled on the Apostle Islands from 2006 to 2008 were still above threshold values. Similar thresholds do not yet exist for mercury in bald eagle feathers.

The bald eagle population on the Apostle Islands began increasing in 1983 when the first nestling was fledged in more than 15 years (see figure). This increase closely coincides with the bans on DDT and PCBs.

Number of active eagle territories and number of young produced at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1974-2008.



25TH ANNUAL SPRING MEETING AND EVENING RECEPTION

The Wilderness Preserve will be hosting its 25th Annual Spring Meeting this coming Memorial Day weekend, Saturday May 26th, at Madeline School of the Arts. The event will be an evening reception with an informal buffet of elegant and hearty hors d'oeuvres, complimentary wine service, and coffee /tea and assorted desserts (come with an appetite). This year's evening fare will be provided by the highly acclaimed Ashland Baking Company. A social gathering and food service begins at 7:00 p.m., with the program beginning at 8:00 pm.

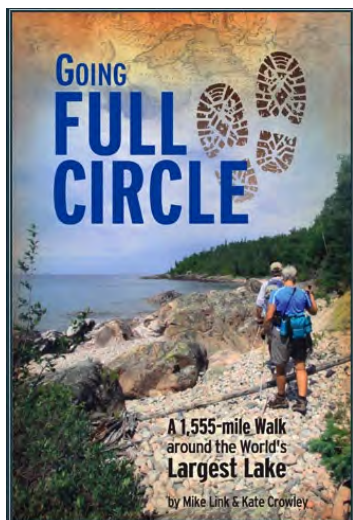
Our program this year features Lake Superior trekkers

KATE CROWLEY AND MIKE LINK

“FULL CIRCLE – A WALK AROUND THE WORLD’S GREATEST LAKE”

“Full Circle Superior is not just the first shoreline circumnavigation of Lake Superior by foot in recorded history - it is an incredible international bridge that brings together people, ideas and issues from areas as diverse as science, community, economy, education and the environment intricately into a web interlacing around and in the midst of this great lake.”

Full Circle Superior is a commitment to freshwater that is highlighted by a 1550 mile trek around the lake accomplished by the husband and wife team - Kate Crowley and Mike Link - in 2010. The combination of



biological, physical, and cultural research with the adventure of walking around the largest lake in the world was a dramatic experience that Mike and Kate will share with photos and stories from the trek.

Mike Link has been the executive director of the Audubon Center of the North Woods near Sandstone, MN, since its founding in 1971. Following his retirement in May 2009, he has been teaching for Hamline University and acting as Assistant to the President of Northland College. His partner, Kate Crowley, also a veteran naturalist, has lived a life with education and animals, first at the Minnesota Zoo, then at the Audubon Center.



The price of the Spring Reception and Program is \$30 per person.

Reservations can be made (through May 22nd) by contacting MIWP Treasurer Steve Mueller, 2112 Parklands Road, St. Louis Park, MN 55416 ☞ (952-925-9315) ☞ Email at: stmueller@comcast.net

(maximum 120 guests)

Venue: Madeline School of the Arts (978 Middle Road, www.madelineschool.com)

SUMMER 2012 PROGRAM

Saturday, May 26th, 9:00–11:00 a.m. *Spring Bird Migration on Madeline*

Bring your binoculars and join our 12th Annual Spring Bird Hike with Bill Stjern and Tom George, national and local celebrities. Migrating warblers appear in large numbers at this time of year, along with hermit thrushes, resident chickadees, woodpeckers, and many others. Meet at Big Bay Town Park.

Saturday, May 26th, 7:00 p.m. *MIWP's 25th Annual Spring Meeting and Evening Reception: Full Circle – A Walk Around the World's Greatest Lake*

Hear first-hand about the recent and first ever shoreline circumnavigation of Lake Superior by foot with trekkers, Kate Crowley and Mike Link. At Madeline School of the Arts (*see detailed announcement, page 4*)

Sunday, May 27th, 10:00 a.m. – noon *Capser Trail Hike*

Families and all are invited on an interpretive hike of Madeline Island's Capser Trail with veteran naturalists, Kate Crowley and Mike Link. Mike recently retired as long-time director of the Audubon Center of the North Woods, but here's one more chance to tap into that deep knowledge base. Meet at Capser Trailhead, across from the Fire Station.

Saturday, July 7th, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. *Wandering Among Wild Edibles & Medicinal Plants*

Join Pastor Marina Lachecki of St. John's UCC and Sheri Hupfer on another wildly popular annual hike. Pastor Marina and Sheri will share their wisdom and learning from Native American and indigenous peoples in relation to the plants found in this beautiful area of the Island. Meet at Big Bay Town Park.

Thursday, July 12th, 7:00 p.m. *Living on the Shores of Madeline Island*

This presentation will consider how coastal processes of the Great Lakes (wind, waves and water levels) shape our natural shorelines. These processes can be easily altered by human activities, either inadvertently or intentionally. Examples of management practices from other Great Lakes shorelines will show how interactions with the lake can enhance or harm our fragile shorelines. Presenters: Gene Clark, coastal engineer – Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute and Bonnie Matuseski, Island lake-shore property owner. At the Madeline Island Library, co-sponsor.

All events are free (except the Spring Reception) and open to the public



(President's letter: Continued from page 1)

Since August, I have been fortunate to be able to visit Madeline Island almost every two weeks. Every time I come back, I re-remember the incredible richness that is Madeline in all seasons: the starkness of naked trees in November; over-wintering eagles; the quiet during snowstorms. In the 34 years I have been coming to Madeline, I have never lost that sense of wonder. It is the reason I joined the MIWP board 23

years ago, and it is the reason I agreed to become president of the MIWP board this year (a little arm-twisting didn't hurt, either). I believe in the Wilderness Preserve's mission: preservation, education, and advocacy. I believe in the necessity of open spaces. I believe that with your help we have made and will continue to make a difference in the life of an island. My thanks to all of you.



MIWP Board of Directors (L-R): Dan Engstrom, Steve Mueller, Laurel Lein, Fred Koerschner, Victoria Erhart, Pixie Martin (front), Bonnie Matuseski (rear), Adam Haecker, John Humphrey, Phil Greenberg, Ned Hancock, Tom Kromroy

OUR MISSION

The Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve is a non-profit land trust dedicated to the protection and preservation of natural areas on Madeline Island. The MIWP was formed in 1987 and is one of the oldest and most successful land trusts in the State of Wisconsin. The Preserve holds 2500 acres of forest, wetlands and trails on Madeline Island that provide plant and wildlife habitat and contribute to the natural beauty of the Island

