



# Madeline Island

## Wilderness Preserve News

Summer 2013

### **“PRESERVING OUR ISLAND’S NATURAL HERITAGE”**

*By Victoria Erhart, President*

Preserving our island’s natural heritage. Those five words are the fruit of a weeks-long discussion by the entire MIWP board on our role on the island, our “brand promise” as Ned Hancock calls it. These days, when large tracts of land are seldom available for purchase, we have to take a broad view of what it means to preserve our natural heritage, to be a good steward of the land. Beyond owning land, which is vital and central to what we do, we need to advocate for all island lands, not just our own. And because we are part of the island community, we want to forge partnerships with other members of the community; no one can take on environmental issues alone.

Take buckthorn. We’ve written about buckthorn off and on through the years, but I am not sure how clear we have made this: buckthorn is bad. If you know buckthorn, you know what I am talking about. If not, let me be clear; if we take no action, within a relatively small number of years, the entire island understory will be buckthorn. And very little else. What buckthorn does so well is outcompete native plants for nutrients, water and light. It shades out almost everything else on the forest floor, disturbing wildlife habitat and, ultimately, preventing regeneration of the tall trees, the canopy. It is not fussy about where it grows and it spreads incredibly fast. It’s a disaster. And, because buckthorn is non-native, it has no natural controls and has proven to be nearly impossible to eradicate (did I mention that when you cut it back, it multiplies, and its roots are deep enough that you can’t dig it out? Oh yes). A lot of responsible environmental stewards have just given up.

What we have on Madeline is something very rare: that tiny moment in time where the problem has become obvious (dense stands on the Southern end of the island, a few patches on the North) but is contained enough that control is possible. And we are an island; we have the lake as a natural boundary which might keep the problem from returning (buckthorn arrived initially in nursery pots, sold as

good hedge material. That won’t happen again). Control won’t be easy, nor will it be fast (I cut down a mature buckthorn hedge in my yard in the Twin Cities 14 years ago and I am still pulling seedlings!), but I am optimistic that, with persistence, we can get there.

The MIWP believes that buckthorn and barberry control is absolutely vital to the health of the island’s native plant community. Talk about your island’s natural heritage at risk! Over the years, we have taken different approaches to the problem: Tom Kromroy leading groups of determined cutters and sprayers; a boy scout troop; and a somewhat short-lived Americorps group. This year, we are partnering with the town of La Pointe to hire an invasive species intern for the summer (thanks to Keith Sowl and Bonnie Matuseski for doing most of the heavy lifting on this; Bonnie single-handedly interviewed applicants in the Bayfield MIFL office when the island became inaccessible due to whiteout conditions!).

*(President’s letter, continued on page 6)*



*Wilderness Preserve battles invasives at the 2012 4<sup>th</sup>-of-July parade: “Zebra Mussels vs. Lake Superior” (see p. 3 for story)*

## WILD BEES AND POLLINATION

By Victoria Erhart

*"Pollination is almost as essential to life as water and oxygen."*

Eric Mader

Assistant Pollinator Program Director, The Xerces Society;  
Extension Professor of Entomology, Univ. of Minnesota

As you lean on your hoe in that lovingly tended, highly productive early August vegetable patch, do you ever think about who else is helping you to get those vegetables to the table? Sometimes unseen, often unheard, paid only in nectar and pollen, those assistants are absolutely essential to the process of turning flowers into fruit and seed. Pollinators, be they beetles, bees, flies, ants, butterflies, hummingbirds, or bats, are responsible for apples, beans, cranberries, squash, tomatoes, sunflowers and hundreds more. Globally, one out of every three mouthfuls of food depends on a pollinator. And pollinators are in trouble.

Bees are the most important pollinators in temperate North America. Since there are no native North American honey bees, the introduced European honey bee (social, lives in colonies, makes honey!) is the species of bee most often raised by North American beekeepers. Since the winter of 2006/2007, unusually large numbers of apparently healthy worker honey bees have abandoned their hives en masse, a phenomenon that has come to be called Colony Collapse Disorder. But focusing on Colony Collapse Disorder, which is

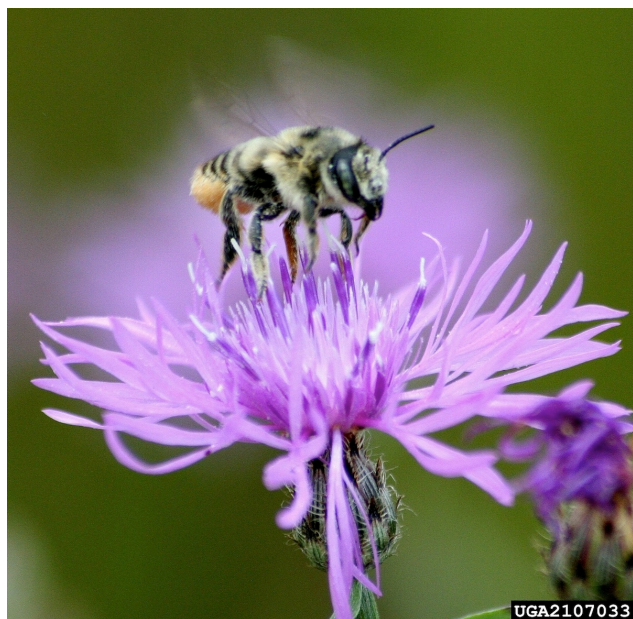


photo by David Cappaert, Michigan State University,  
Bugwood.org

real and dramatic and troubling (and imperfectly understood), has in many ways obscured the more powerful fact that honey bees have been in accelerating decline for the last seventy years. Why?

Wild bees are struggling as well, perhaps more than the honey bees. I suspect that most of us aren't aware that there are bees other than honey bees and bumble bees, but in fact there are 20,000 species of bees worldwide, 4000 of them found in the United States, 500 native to Minnesota and Wisconsin. They include sweat bees, orchard mason bees (early spring pollinators), and leafcutter bees (summer pollinators who wrap their eggs into pouches made of pieces of cut leaf). Most wild bees nest either in the ground or in holes in dead wood, stone walls, hollow stems, or other crevices in the landscape. They are docile and hardly ever sting. Although they don't make honey, they are terrific pollinators because they've evolved alongside the flowers that they pollinate. Wild bees' numbers have been dropping. Some bumble bee species are on the verge of extinction.

What has gone wrong? Of course there is no simple answer to that question; over the last 50 years, almost every change we have made as a society to how we live and how we farm has been unfriendly to bees. We have more concrete, more lawns, more pesticides, and more giant farms growing corn and soybeans. We have fewer weeds and fewer flowers. As individuals who are concerned about the health of bees, there are some things we can't do much about (bee diseases, bee genetics) but we can make some helpful changes in our relationship to our immediate environment. Make some simple changes, and then persuade your neighbor and their neighbor to do the same. It can make a difference.

### What CAN you do?

- 1) Minimize your pesticide use. Learn to accept imperfection. Think of the "weeds" in your lawn (clover, chickweed, violets) as "grass companions". Read about integrated pest management.
- 2) If you have a garden, plant flowers that appeal to bees: flowers with landing platforms, single flowers, particularly in white, yellow or blue (bees see in the UV range, which means that, unlike hummingbirds, they don't see red). Be slow to deadhead. Plant in clumps.

- 3) Plant natives. This is an important one. Studies of bumblebees show that they prefer natives 4:1 over introduced plants. Dense stands of native flowers give “more bang for the buzz”.
- 4) Try to have at least three things flowering in your landscape at all times; critical times are early spring and late fall, think squill and crocuses, goldenrod and asters. Plan your yard vertically (canopy, understory, shrubs, ground layer) to fit in more plants. Reduce or get rid of your lawn.
- 5) Include some nesting space for wild bees. Sixty to seventy percent are ground nesters; just leave an area of exposed, undisturbed soil. No mulch, sorry. Thirty to forty percent of wild bees are cavity nesters; except for the carpenter bees, wild bees can’t excavate their own holes, so they need ready-made tunnels. Consider a bee

house made of either an untreated, drilled wood block or hollow sticks. Leave rotting dead wood in your yard.

- 6) Read. Educate yourself. Educate your neighbor (if your neighbor is using pesticides, I hate to tell you where they are ending up).

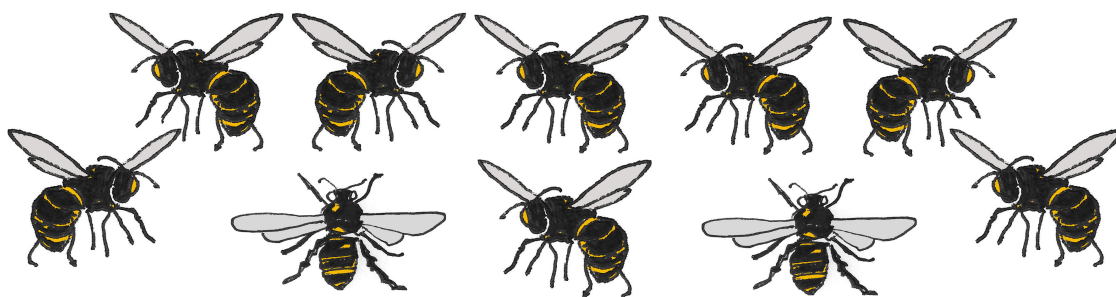
Consider becoming a beekeeper. Really, why not?

A note on wasps: Wasps are different from bees. Paper wasps, yellow jackets and hornets are all types of wasps. Most wasps are carnivorous predators that feed on insects but have little to do with pollination (one notable exception; the tiny fig wasp which is the sole pollinator of figs). If you have ever been stung at a picnic, it was probably by a wasp, and not by a bee. Foraging bees hardly ever sting. Yellow jackets in August, watch out!

*This article was originally written for the Friends School Plant-Sale catalog*

## WILD BEES MAKE BEELINE TO 4TH OF JULY PARADE

I am so proud of us. Working with a 2012 Fourth of July Parade concept that had very little visual appeal (Zebra mussels? Slimy little underwater things that don’t do anything? Except reproduce, and you can’t show that in a G-rated parade, can you?), we turned it into a visual feast: lots of black and white zebras with attitude and bad puns, and the centerpiece, the quintessential good-vs-evil: a boxing match between Bad King Zebra Mussel and Lake Superior herself. Fought cleanly, I might add. For this we were rewarded with a first-place (Adult Float Division) prize and another year to strut, just a little. (*see photo on page 1*)



For the 2013 Madeline Island Fourth of July Parade, the MIWP is turning away from our old work horse, the invasive species (I don’t know, invasive species have been awfully good to us: carp and buckthorn and ash borers, I have fond memories of all of them, artistically speaking) and moving into the equally large arena of: endangered species! Specifically bees (both honey and wild, and maybe one rogue butterfly) in their role as pollinators supreme (see article in this newsletter). Of course I have no idea what we are really doing, but I picture something like fat little bees running up and dunking pollen/tennis balls into basketball hoops. Or something like that. We would love for you to join us, really, and since I am clueless about what we are going to wear, just come as you are and we will outfit you, attractively I’m sure. Plan to meet at the marina 30 minutes before parade time (the parade usually starts at 10:30 AM, but check with the Chamber of Commerce) under the MIWP banner. Children and dogs who know how to make buzzing noises are welcome. For questions or compliments, call Victoria Erhart at 715-747-2277 in early July.



## 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SPRING MEETING AND EVENING RECEPTION

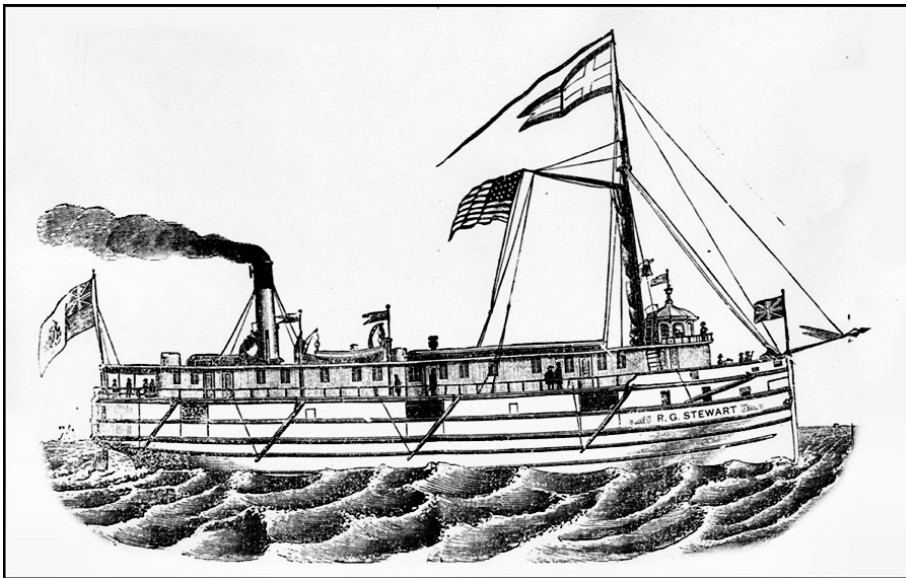
The Wilderness Preserve will be hosting its 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting this coming Memorial Day weekend, Saturday May 25<sup>th</sup>, at the Madeline Island School of the Arts. The event will be an evening reception with an informal buffet of elegant and hearty hors d'oeuvres, complimentary wine service, and coffee/tea and assorted desserts (come with an appetite). This year's evening fare will again 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.

This year's program features Director (emeritus) of the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center, Duluth

**THOM HOLDEN**

### ***"SHIPWRECKS OF THE APOSTLE ISLANDS"***

*"There are many stories hidden among the islands and lighthouses of the Apostle Islands and Chequamegon Bay. This illustrated program gives a glimpse of several of these accidents, large and small, found and yet to be discovered; ships wrecked by fire, groundings, fog, and storms ... some lost, some recovered, some still missing. There are many pearls among this region's maritime jewels."*



Thom Holden developed a strong interest in Lake Superior and shipwreck history as a teenager as an offshoot of backpacking trips to Isle Royale National Park. He has written numerous articles on Lake Superior shipwrecks, is author of a small book entitled "Above and Below: A History of Lighthouses and Shipwrecks at Isle Royale", and was the contributing editor in a major revision and expansion of Dr. Julius F. Wolff's book, "Shipwrecks of Lake Superior" which remains the definitive reference on the subject.



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

Reservations can be made (through May 21<sup>st</sup>) by contacting  
MIWP Treasurer, Steve Mueller

2112 Parklands Road, St. Louis Park, MN 55416 ☞ (952-925-9315)

☞ Email at: [stmueller@comcast.net](mailto:stmueller@comcast.net)

***(maximum 120 guests)***

***Venue: Madeline Island School of the Arts***  
***(978 Middle Road, [www.madelineschool.com](http://www.madelineschool.com))***

#### **Weekly Trip to Marquette.**

The steamer City of Marquette, which Captain C. O. Flynn has purchased to take the place of the R. G. Stewart, which was burned one week ago yesterday, will make two trips a week between Duluth and South shore points. On one of the trips each week the steamer will go as far as Marquette.

Duluth News Tribune  
June 12, 1899

## SUMMER 2013 PROGRAMS

### **Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. *Spring Bird Migration on Madeline***

Bring your binoculars and join our 13<sup>th</sup> annual spring bird hike with Peter Hudleston and Victoria Erhart. Migrating warblers appear in large numbers at this time of year, along with hermit thrushes, resident chickadees, woodpeckers, and many others. Meet by the new pavilion at the Big Bay Town Park.

### **Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. *MIWP's 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting and Evening Reception: Shipwrecks of the Apostle Islands***

There are many stories of lost ships hidden among the islands and lighthouses of the Apostle Islands and Chequamegon Bay – hear them told by Thom Holden, past Director of the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center, Duluth. At the Madeline Island School of the Arts (*see detailed announcement, page 4*)

### **Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. *Warblers – from Madeline Island to the Western Hemisphere***

Warblers are a complex family of birds with varying environmental requirements; they face hazards on their wintering grounds, during migration and on their breeding grounds. We treasure them when we see them in breeding plumage or hear their song. What do they look like? At this time in history are they doing OK? What can be done to ensure their future? Presentation by national bird expert, Bill Stjern. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

### **Saturday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. *Burroughs Trail – Edible and Medicinal Plants***

Join Pastor Marina Lachecki, St. John's UCC, on this ever popular annual hike ... in a new location. Using her extensive knowledge of native plants, Pastor Marina will share stories and wisdom about what wild plants can do to both feed and heal our bodies. Meet at the Burroughs Trail, North Shore Road on the north end of Island.

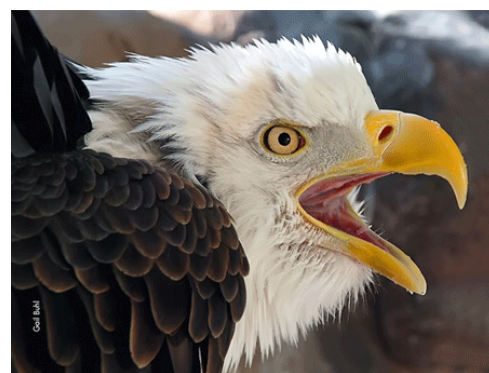
### **Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. *Somebody Lived Here***

Dramatic stories of men and women of Lake Superior's Apostle Islands: lighthouse keepers, pioneer farmers and fishermen, and the Ojibwa people who were there first – as told by Bob Mackreth, Park Historian, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

### **Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11:00 a.m. – Noon & 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

#### ***Raptors of the Midwest – Live Bird Presentations by the Raptor Center, University of Minnesota***

The MIWP, the Madeline Island Ferry Line, and the Madeline Island Museum are joint sponsors of this exciting, live-bird presentation about the different raptors found in the Midwest and their role in the environment. At the Madeline Island Museum (*note two different time options; see detailed announcement, page 6*).



### **Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. *Out on Thin Ice***

A look at nearly two centuries worth of history of the people of the Chequamegon region traveling working and playing on the ice of Lake Superior. Dogsleds and wind sleds, loggers and lighthouse keepers, farmers and fishermen, near disasters and narrow escapes, a few sad stories and a few joyous ones – as told by Bob Mackreth, Park Historian, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.



### **Thursday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. *Ladies of the Isles***

The story of women who lived and worked on the Islands: lighthouse keepers and fishermen's wives, and pioneers who faced the challenges of life in a unique environment. Some of the characters: Florantha Thompson Sproat, a Madeline Island missionary wife in the 1840's; Mary McGuire Moe, a young bride who opened a resort on South Twin Island; Gertrude Wellisch, a single schoolteacher who helped preserve the Sand Island Lighthouse. Presentation by Bob Mackreth, Park Historian, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

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

*(President's letter: Continued from page 1)*

We have hired Ethan Rossing, an impressive-sounding Northland College Natural Resources graduate, who is going to be working in three main areas: cutting the stuff itself; developing a GIS data base to help us define and follow the problem better; and landowner awareness (we can't do this alone). Say hello to Ethan if you meet him around the island. And thanks to the MIFL which has graciously offered to help out with ferry fees.

Preserving our island's natural heritage. I think this is a pretty beautiful and worthy goal. The way we are dealing with the buckthorn threat – changing tactics when something doesn't work, working with other island groups, planning for the long term – is a good model for how we will be able to deal with new environmental challenges in the years ahead. Although the challenges will be different, it gives me a certain peace to see that we are capable of being strategic in the face of difficult things. It gives me hope that, as an organization and as an island, we

have the flexibility and creativity to take on whatever trials the future holds. Have a wonderful 2013!



*Ethan Rossing – Invasive Species Intern (and turtle wrangler)*



## **SPECIAL LIVE-RAPTOR PROGRAM BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA'S RAPTOR CENTER**

**Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Madeline Island Museum**

**Two one-hour presentations: 11:00 AM – Noon and 2:00 – 3:00 PM**

*Sponsored by:*

*Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve*

*Madeline Island Ferry Line*

*Madeline Island Museum*

This program will explore the different raptors found in the Midwest and their role in the environment. Participants will learn the three key features of all raptors and learn why they are different from other birds. The presentation will discuss the positive and negative impact humans have on raptors, and some of our greatest environmental successes, the peregrine falcon and the bald eagle.

*(free and open to the public: limited seating)*





Madeline Island  
Wilderness Preserve  
PO Box 28  
La Pointe, WI 54850  
[www.miwp.org](http://www.miwp.org)

-----*Detach here and mail today*-----

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of natural areas on Madeline Island!***

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☐ Please make my gift anonymous.

☐ Gift in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ Send gift card to: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your generous contribution.**

Your dues are tax deductible. Membership is through December 31, 2013

Please Make checks payable to MIWP and send to:

**Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve  
P.O. Box 28 La Pointe WI 54850**