



Madeline Island

Wilderness Preserve News

Summer 2015

“THAT’S WHAT THE WILDERNESS PRESERVE IS ABOUT”

By Victoria Erhart, President

As I sit down to write this President’s letter, I have in mind a neat list of accomplishments I want to share. Sometimes I worry the list is a little too neat; I am tidying up all the messiness: the discussions, the disagreements, the tangents and the crazy ideas that didn’t go anywhere. That’s probably not all bad. It’s a little like you’re a patron at a restaurant; do you really need to know everything that is going on in the kitchen? But just as it is important to acknowledge the cooks for a great meal, I think it is also important to acknowledge the twelve reliable, creative, hard-working, professionally and politically and philosophically diverse humans that make up the MIWP board, who with their time and brains and sweat have cobbled together what the MIWP is today. And still seem to like each other! It is a pleasure to work with each one of them.

The MIWP has been taking on the issue of island-wide woody invasives, primarily buckthorn and barberry, for a long time, and intensively for the last two years. I have written about this many times and you can read more on our new website (more about that later) but it matters enormously. Taking on these non-native invasives is one of the most important things that the MIWP does; there is no other island organization with the manpower or resources to take on a multi-year program of this magnitude. For 2015, the MIWP has hired two interns, Rebecca Flesh and Brigid Reina, well-trained and articulate Northland College students whose jobs will be to act as a resource to island landowners; to identify problem areas; to publicize their program and availability; and to do the actual cutting and treatment. While these interns technically are employed by the Town of La Pointe, the MIWP provides their salaries in the form of grants and an outright gift of \$10,000; we also provide supervision, aka the unstoppable Bonnie Matuseski, as well as lakeside housing. The Town of La Pointe is incredibly supportive, and it has been a joy to partner with them. Many thanks in particular to Kristian Larsen and Barb Nelson.

By the way, the MIWP feels so strongly about the invasive species issue that our Fourth of July parade float theme this year is this: Star Wars Episode MMXV, The Darth inVaders, Buckthorn and Barberry! See the full article on page 3, and join in!

I mentioned our new website. For years we have been struggling with an old and outdated website, and now we have a new one that is informative, fluid, and beautiful. Take a look: www.miwp.org. Thanks to Kate Bortell for pulling it all together.

(President’s letter, continued on page 6)

“Saturday really was one of those magic days. I got to hike a part of the trail (Sowl entrance down to Burroughs) that I had never been on and it was exquisite: big hemlock forests, everything bright yellow. Dogs, kids and good friends, what more could you ask for?” V.E. Oct 2014



Bonnie Matuseski directing our volunteer trail-marking crew on MIWP’s north-end hiking/skiing trails

THE PERFECT STORM

By Adam Haecker

IT WAS A DAY REMINISCENT OF THE GALES OF NOVEMBER. THE SKY GREW DARK, THE RAIN INEVITABLY BEGAN TO FALL, AND THE WIND BLEW WITH SUCH FURY THAT MADELINE ISLANDERS BEGAN REALIZING THAT THIS WAS NO GARDEN-VARIETY EVENT FOR EARLY SEPTEMBER. NO, THIS WAS A STORM LIKE NO OTHER – AT LEAST AT THIS POINT ON THE CALENDAR.

If you were on the island on Sept. 10, 2014, something in the air didn't feel right. You know that feeling you get before a storm when your conscience oscillates between fascination and fear? And no doubt Gordon Lightfoot played in the heads of those who stood in awe, watching what would remind them of the lake that wouldn't give up its dead. You remember: that song about the nearly 1,000-footer that sank in the eastern part of Lake Superior so many years ago in 1975?

According to the Duluth office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), the wind at midnight on Sept. 9 was about 6 knots with gusts to about 11 knots. By 10 p.m. on the same day, the wind increased to about 25 knots with gusts to about 33 knots. If it's hard for you to wrap your mind around all these knots, number one, you're not alone; but number two, that's quite an increase for a relatively short amount of time. And although the sustaining wind slowly began to taper during the waking hours on Sept. 10, the gusts remained strong. Needless to say, those empty coffee cups or stray tarps sitting



*Capser Road beach scene after the storm;
photo by Tina Nelson*

unattended were the least concern. What we have here is a storm of such magnitude that docks and piers felt the brunt, and the perimeter of the island began looking like its own shipwreck by day's end.

But this is only one of several ingredients in the mix that day. Add in the rise of water level, and the conditions get all that more interesting. Again, referencing the Duluth office of the NOAA as a resource: At midnight on Sept. 9, the water level was about 602.6 feet. By around 5 a.m. on Sept. 10, the water level peaked at 603.5 feet (nearly a foot difference) before seesawing up and down for the next day or so. To put this in perspective, the water level was so high that it was splashing up from underneath the decking (top planks) of many of the docks and piers around the island. This pressure caused many planks to break loose and float free. It also caused many property owners along the shoreline to break as well...into a cold sweat.

Greg Nelson is a dock builder for C.A. Nelson & Son Dock Construction on the island. He concurs like many others that the day had an eerie feel, and before he knew it, his mettle would be put to the test. "Yeah, the day kind of reminded me of the day that the Edmund Fitzgerald went down," says Nelson. "The seas just kept building and building throughout the day."

Nelson has mastered his craft of building docks. He constructs each section (crib) with care, proper reinforcement and the best timber for this trade. He also understands the wrath of Mother Nature, and if she so chooses, your life can become unhinged – one plank at a time. "I think the day of the storm I received nine or 10 calls from property owners whose docks were coming apart," he says. "And the calls just kept rolling in after that. In fact, I have so much repair business, that I won't begin to get caught up until next season." (That is, the year 2016.)

Nelson states that, as logic would dictate, the older docks were more susceptible and vulnerable to damage, but plenty of newer ones were scathed as well. "The problem was that the water was so high that it was splashing up and through the top decking (planks), and causing a lot of pressure. As a result, those planks were coming loose, and floating down the shoreline. We saw more of this happening with the older docks."

Adding insult to injury, the wind blew just so that really no stretch of shoreline was safe from its

onslaught. Nelson thinks that any property immediately north of the town dock was probably the least affected by the storm, but even that can't be safe to say. Furthermore, the wreckage of planking and other debris pooled on the south end of the island; making it look like a scene from the television series titled 'Lost.'

Maybe this storm deserves a name. You know, like the severe and potent hurricanes that potentially ravage the southern coast of the United States every year. Regardless, let's hope that this storm is of the 500-year variety, and so rare, that even deckhands on another freighter 40 years from now will still be humming something about the lake they call Gitche Gumees.

DARTH INVADERS, BUCKTHORN AND BARBERRY AT 4TH OF JULY PARADE

Maybe it was the bloodstained mosquitoes painted on the beanbags. Maybe it was Laurel's mother, beaming and presiding over a float-sized baseball stadium, the sign around her neck making everything clear: "Old Bat". Maybe it was all the other "bats", with their silken wings and mouse-like ears and terrible fangs, heartbreakingly vulnerable to White Nose Bat Syndrome. Whatever it was, and in spite of the fact that thematically the 2014 MIWP Fourth of July Parade Float "Bats and White Nose Syndrome" was as unfocused as anything I have ever seen (baseball stadium????), the judges loved us. Loved us enough to award us the First Prize (Adult Float division). Our gratitude is boundless.



For the 2015 parade, the MIWP is going to re-celebrate (see *Buckthorn Buckaroos* 2008) our ongoing battle with invasive species in: **Star Wars Episode MMXV: the Darth inVaders, Buckthorn and Barberrry!** Watch as the massive malevolence of the inVaders tries to obliterate our humble band of heroes. Look for Princess Leia's side-buns, a heavy dose of capes and boots, and cameo appearances by the Actual Interns fighting the good fight. And much more! An epic saga on this scale (how big is a Death Star anyway?) can only succeed with your help. Please join us: wear white or black, and we will provide masks, weaponry, and identities. Meet at the Marina one half hour prior to parade time (the parade usually starts at 10:30 AM but check with the Chamber of Commerce) under the MIWP banner. Everyone of any age, species or planetary origin is welcome. For questions, call Victoria Erhart at 715-747-2277 in early July.



Sorry – no parade photos from 2014, but here's one from our 2008 winner, "Buckthorn Buckaroos"



28TH ANNUAL SPRING MEETING AND EVENING RECEPTION

The Wilderness Preserve will be hosting its 28th Annual Spring Meeting this coming Memorial Day weekend, Saturday May 23rd, at the Madeline Island Museum. The event will be an evening reception with an informal buffet of elegant and hearty hors d'oeuvres, choice wine service, and coffee/tea and assorted desserts. 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 pm, with the program beginning at 8:00 pm.

This year's program features Wisconsin Northwoods Naturalist

JOHN BATES

“A SPRING PHENOLOGY: CELEBRATING THE BEAUTY, SCIENCE, AND SPIRIT OF THE NORTHWOODS”

THERE'S NO MORE EXCITING SEASON IN THE NORTHWOODS THAN SPRING. THE SNOW AND MUD ARE GONE; THE SUN IS FINALLY WARMING; IT'S THE “GREENING-UP” OF MILLIONS OF LEAVES; BIRDS ARE MATING/NESTING/HATCHING OR STILL MIGRATING; WILDFLOWERS ARE BLOOMING; MAMMALS ARE BIRTHING AND GROWING; BUTTERFLIES AND DRAGONFLIES ARE HATCHING – IT'S ALL OF LIFE COMING INTO FULL FLOWER.



John Bates is the author of seven books and a contributor to seven others, all of which focus on the natural history of the Northwoods. He's worked as a naturalist in Wisconsin's Northwoods for 26 years, leading an array of trips all designed to help people further understand the remarkable diversity and beauty of nature, and our place within it. He's a former member of the Board of Trustees for the Wisconsin Nature Conservancy and the Wisconsin Humanities Council.

*John won the 2006 Ellis/Henderson Outdoor Writing Award from the Council for Wisconsin Writers for his book *Graced by the Seasons: Spring and Summer in the Northwoods*.*



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

Reservations can be made (through May 18th)
by contacting:

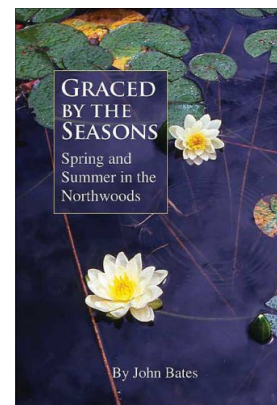
MIWP Treasurer, Steve Mueller

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

☞ Email at: stmueller@comcast.net

(maximum 120 guests)

Venue: Madeline Island Museum



SUMMER 2015 PROGRAMS

Saturday, May 23rd, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. *Spring Bird Migration on Madeline*

Annual bird hike with Victoria Erhart, MIWP Board member, and Peter Hudleston, Professor of Geology at Univ. of Minnesota. Bring your binoculars; see warblers and other spring migrants. Location: New Pavilion at the Town Park.

Saturday, May 23rd, 7:00 p.m. *MIWP's 28th Annual Spring Meeting & Reception: A Spring Phenology*

Celebrating the beauty, science, and spirit of the Northwoods, by John Bates, Wisconsin author and naturalist. At the Madeline Island Museum. (*see detailed announcement, page 4*)

Sunday, May 24th, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. *Hike with John Bates, Northwoods Naturalist*

Spring in the northwoods – plants and trees in bloom, frogs calling, insects hatching, mammals raising their young. This hike will be an opening to whatever offers itself that morning. Meet at Town Park Pavilion, then to Big Bay Ridge Trail.

Saturday, June 27th, 10:00 – Noon. *The Bogs and Beaches of Madeline Island*

Hike leader: Dan Engstrom, environmental geologist/ecologist and MIWP board member. Explore the ecology and unique plants of the bog lagoon and beach dunes and discuss the changing lake levels and paleo-shorelines of Madeline Island. Location: Meet at the State Park entrance building. Park entrance permit required if you are driving.

Wednesday, July 8th, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. *Sigurd Olson and Why Wilderness Matters*

Speaker: Mark Peterson, Executive Director, Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute. Wisconsin Native Sigurd Olson (1899–1982) spent his lifetime exploring wilderness from the Boundary Waters Canoe Area to Hudson's Bay. Sig wrote nine books on wilderness and hundreds of articles. His words are a timely reminder of the critical importance wild places provide the human spirit. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

Wednesday, July 29th, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. *Mushrooms of Madeline Island*

Travis Lynch, mushroom farmer and commercial mushroom forager, will discuss our local mushrooms and their seasons, along with the specific trees that these mushrooms share; identify 100 local edibles and about 300 local toxic species and learn a few hard and fast rules. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

Wednesday, August 5th, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. *Photo Treasure: The Emmanuel Luick Collection*

Emmanuel Luick, keeper at the Sand island lighthouse 1892–1920, was an enthusiastic amateur photographer. In 2014, a Duluth antique dealer came across a treasure trove of Luick photographs showing scenes around Bayfield and the Apostle Islands. Historian Bob Mackreth will offer a glimpse of what has been called one of the most significant discoveries in local history for many years. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

Wednesday, August 19th, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m. *C. lupus ex Fabula: The Wolf of Myth*

Speaker: Erik R Olson, Assistant Professor of Natural Resources Northland College, will explore the misconceptions, misunderstandings and missing perspectives of wolves. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

Saturday, September 5th, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. *Exploring the North End Trails*

Keith Sowl, Island resident and trail expert, will guide us through old logging trails and 100-year-old stands of hemlocks. Meet at the Burroughs Trail Head, 2.5 miles north of Benjamin Blvd on the North Shore Road.

Saturday, September 19th, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. *Explore Madeline's North End Trails*

Fred Koerschner, MIWP Board member, will lead a second fall hike of the Island's north end trails; a great time for fall photography. Meet at the Burroughs trailhead, 2.5 miles north of Benjamin Blvd on North Shore Road.

Saturday, October 3rd, 10:00 – Noon. *Forest Management Opportunities and Challenges*

Hike leader: Charly Ray, Professional forester and expert in restoration ecology and forest management. The hike will include discussion on forest management, ecological context of Madeline forests, opportunities for restoration, and challenges posed by invasive species and a changing climate. Meet at the Burroughs trailhead, 2.5 miles north of Benjamin Blvd on North Shore Road.

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

(President's letter: Continued from page 1)

Land ownership was the founding purpose for the MIWP (see "History" at www.miwp.org) but it has been a lot of years since the MIWP expanded its boundaries in any meaningful way. In 2014, though, we added 98 acres as four different parcels, all inland land contiguous to land we already own. Two of those parcels, one of twenty acres and one of five, are in the North End and will help us to solidify our developing North End trail system. The third is forty acres adjacent to a parcel of land that we own just west of Benjamin Boulevard, and the fourth is a 33 acre piece next to our land by the airport. I truly hope, for many good environmental and economic reasons, that there is no lingering resentment at "taking it off the tax rolls". Every time we buy a piece of land, it passes from private hands and into the hands of the

community. Wilderness Preserve lands are yours to use as you choose (but no camping or motorized vehicles). They are free. They are becoming more accessible. They are wild and they are beautiful. If you feel that your commitment to these lands is more abstract than you would like, consider joining one of our three fall hikes on the North End trails, September 5 and 19, and October 3. Walking on a clear fall day, joined by like-minded people of all ages, through magnificent hemlock forests, blue skies, yellow aspens and maples, the earth smelling that wonderful rich rotting leaf smell: more than all the words I can string together, that is what the Wilderness Preserve is about.

May you have a peaceful and joyous 2015.

Toria

LAND TRUST OUTREACH AND INVASIVE SPECIES COORDINATION FOR 2015

Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve, the Town of La Pointe, and the Madeline Island Ferry Line have collaborated for the third summer in hiring summer interns to coordinate control of invasive plant species. The 2014 season was enormously successful with work on 46 private properties. For this year Rebecca Flesh and Brigid Reina, Northland College rising seniors, have been hired to work on the Island from June 1st to August 28th. Their mission will be educational outreach focused on management and control of invasive buckthorn, barberry and honeysuckle. Rebecca and Regina are available to identify invasive species on any private lands, to treat if necessary, and to help landowners develop a long-term management plan. They can be reached through the Town of La Pointe (715-747-6913) or the Town Foreman, Kristian Larson (715-747-6855, lapshop@cheqnet.net).

My name is **Rebecca Flesh**, a third year student attending Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. I am pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Natural Resources and a minor in Environmental Studies. In past years I have worked for Northland College's Native Plant Landscaping program and the U.S. Forest Service LaCroix Ranger District serving in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. In my free time I enjoy playing chess, hiking, biking, taking photographs, and learning about our diverse ecosystems. I am proud to be a part of this year's Land Trust Outreach and Invasive Species Coordination team!



Rebecca



Brigid



Hi, my name is **Brigid Reina**, and I'm currently a senior at Northland College. I'm about to graduate this May with a double major in Biology and Natural Resources (Ecological Restoration

emphasis), and a minor in music. I enjoy playing for the softball team and participating in orchestra and band at Northland. I also have a great love for the outdoors and can often be found kayaking, hiking, fishing, bird-watching, and cross country skiing in my free time.

Though I grew up in Garden City, New York, I have lived in northern Wisconsin for almost four years and have really come to love and appreciate the natural beauty of the area. I am looking forward to the challenge of helping to preserve the natural beauty of such a unique place as Madeline Island.



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Madeline Island
Wilderness Preserve
PO Box 28
La Pointe, WI 54850
www.miwp.org

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

***Yes, I'd like to support the preservation and protection
of natural areas on Madeline Island!***

Name(s) _____

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☐ Please make my gift anonymous.

☐ Gift in memory of: _____

☐ Gift in honor of: _____

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Thank you for your generous contribution.

Your dues are tax deductible. Membership is through December 31, 2015

Please make checks payable to MIWP and send to:

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