



# Madeline Island

## Wilderness Preserve News

Summer 2017

### **"MADELINE ISLAND WILDERNESS PRESERVE – 30 YEARS LATER"**

*By Fred Koerschner, President*

2017 is a special year for the Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve as we celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> birthday! This is a significant milestone for the Preserve and a time to look back on our history, how we've changed in 30 years and where we're headed in the future. From Bob Coffin, Founding Member of the Wilderness Preserve in 2007:

*"Twenty years ago, a group of residents from the north end of Madeline Island gathered in the living room of Bob and Norma Schaub. We discussed that, as the lakeshore property of the island was filling up, the pressure of subdivision would move to the interior of the Island. We could lose the very essence of what we all, summer and full-time residents, had come to enjoy the most; the undisturbed wilderness – forest and bog.*

*Using the example of a citizen-led land conservation effort on Nantucket Island, located off the shore of Massachusetts, we decided it would be prudent to acquire and preserve open natural land while it was still available. David Thomas pointed out that a 200-acre tract, next to the Blueberry Bog at the north end of the Island, was proposed for subdivision and sale. From this fireside chat, came the decision to form a non-profit land conservation organization. The Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve – incorporated on May 30<sup>th</sup> of 1987. Five families stepped forward and made the down payment. It was a risky proposition. There was no clear plan for paying off the mortgage. There was no assurance that there would be broad support for the creation of a land trust on Madeline Island.*

*A Board of Directors was formed and officers were elected. Our first full board included Island luminaries like Bill Wheeler, Nucy Meech, and Chas Bennett.*

*Within one year more than 100 families had joined the Preserve and we received two challenge grants, one of \$40,000 and one of \$100,000. Encouraged by such an enthusiastic response, the Board of Directors identified two additional parcels of land, these at the south end of*

*the island, that would ensure that some of the Island's most sensitive ecosystems are preserved forever..."*

Thirty years later the Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve owns and manages 2600+ acres of wild and natural land on Madeline Island supported by over 300 family memberships. These natural areas are protected and preserved for the enjoyment of everyone.

The Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve has made some changes in the 30 years since its inception to reflect the changing environment and the interests of our members and our community. The original purpose of our organization was to acquire and preserve open natural land and that is still an objective of MIWP. Additionally, we have expanded our mission to other areas that serve to protect and preserve nature on the island.

We believe it is important not only for these natural areas to be set aside but also for those living on and visiting the island to be able to experience them. Experiencing these areas of solitude and beauty builds our appreciation for nature and reminds us of the restorative effect of being out in it.

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



May-2003 annual bird hike;  
MIWP founding member, Bob Coffin, at center

## OUR ISLAND BEARS

*By Adam Haecker*

For many of us they cause both fear and fascination. We also tend to think of them as both cuddly and contemptuous. But for all of us, we respect their domain, because they are among the largest mammals in North America. I'm talking about the American Black Bear.

On Madeline, people rarely see them. And yet, according to a fact sheet published by the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (National Park Service) Stockton Island supports one of the most concentrated populations of black bears in the world. In fact, the bear population on Stockton skyrocketed in a ten-year span several decades ago. "A study of Stockton Island bears revealed that the population grew from two animals in 1984 to a high of 31 non-cub bears in 1994," states the fact sheet. But those numbers have since dwindled through self-regulation, as black bears are sensitive to over-crowding and make every attempt to avoid human contact.

Speaking of contact, people are always encouraged to follow several key steps to avoid confrontation with black bears. We've all heard the warnings from a concerned parent or perhaps a dutiful park ranger when entering the wilderness. How about: 'Never approach or feed a bear', 'Keep a distance of at least 50 yards' and one of my favorites, 'If you encounter a bear, make yourself look big.' The latter has always been a challenge for me, given my 5'6" frame and my natural fear of anything larger than a field mouse.

And not to digress too much, but I do have a short story about an encounter that I had with a black bear while running on the Capser Trail on Madeline last summer. I was rounding one of the blind corners on the trail close to Middle Road, when I saw what looked like a grossly overfed black lab. But, to my limited knowledge, black labs don't snort, and they certainly don't take up most of the trail when lumbering down it. Then our eyes locked. And as you can imagine: I instantly had a vision from childhood of that moment when you ride your three-wheeler into the street with an oncoming car. But just as suddenly, the male (I'm guessing), turned and bolted for the nearest offshoot from the trail like a scaredy-bear. I stood in astonishment. Here I am, 5'6" frame and all, and about as imposing as a sack of flour, scaring off a 200-pound behemoth of the wilderness. I caught my breath, and *quickly* made my way back home.

Adult male black bears range in weight from about 130 to 660 pounds, and females range in weight from 90 to 175 pounds, according to the International Association for Bear Research & Management, a non-profit of professional biologists and wildlife managers who are dedicated to the conservation of all bear species throughout the world. The association also states that a medium-sized black bear is typically black with a brown muzzle, however, some bears can be chocolate or cinnamon brown in color. They also have strong, highly curved claws, and the profile of their face is convex, compared with a more concave profile of a brown (grizzly) bear. And, as a kicker: They are excellent swimmers. However, despite these fascinating details, I can certainly tell you with conviction that the physiology of a bear's jaw isn't the first concern when you come nearly face-to-face with it in the wild. Looking big is first...*really* big.



*Black bear caught by a camera-trap at Big Bay State Park;  
Photo by Erik Olson, Northland College*



Erik Olson, Assistant Professor of Natural Resources at Northland College in Ashland, believes there is a genetic connection between the black bears in the Apostle Islands and the black bears on Madeline. He also says that little is known about the population on Madeline because it is not part of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. “Based upon previous studies, we know that there has been a meta population of black bears amongst the Apostles that proves that they have formed a genetic, connected community,” Olson says. “Therefore, we can only infer that such a genetic exchange exists between the Apostles and Madeline, even though we don’t have the hard studies to prove it.”

And although scientists and researchers have kept a relative track of the historical number of black bears on the other islands, there hasn’t been any such documentation done on Madeline, according to Olson.

That’s about to change, however, as Northland College was one of 30 recent applications to receive grant funding from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin through the 2016 Besadny Conservation Grant Program. Northland’s research project titled “Wild Madeline – Assessing the Wildlife Presence and Abundance of Madeline Island” will include a camera-trap survey to determine which animal species are present on the island, as well as their abundance (population numbers). These statistics will then be compared with the other islands and the mainland.

I’m sure that many of us will be interested in the results of Northland’s research project. I know that I will. Species diversity is critical to ecological balance. We can only hope that a healthy population of creatures shares our home on the rock. And personally, I would like to meet the rest of scaredy-bear’s family.



## SUMMER 2017 PROGRAMS

### **Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. *Spring Bird Migration on Madeline***

Annual bird hike with Victoria Erhart, MIWP Board member. Bring your binoculars; see warblers and other spring migrants. Location: Pavilion at the Town Park.

### **Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. *MIWP’s 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting & Reception: A Storied***

*Wilderness: Rewilding the Apostle Islands* Speaker: James Feldman, environmental historian and author, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh. At the Madeline Island Museum. (see detailed announcement, page 5)

### **Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. *Apostle Islands A–Z***

Speaker: Neil Howk, recently retired assistant chief of interpretation and education, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Explore the diverse flora and fauna of the Apostle Islands: animals, birds, and plants. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

### **Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. *Adapting to Climate Change in the Apostle Islands***

Speaker: Randy Lehr, co-director of the Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation, Northland College. Learn about the potential impacts of climate change on the Chequamegon Bay /Apostle Islands ecosystem and how communities might adapt to a warmer, wetter, and windier climate. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

### **Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. *It’s a Small World After All – Everything You Wanted to Know about Spiders and More***

Speaker: Larry Weber, teacher, naturalist, and book author. Spiders are very common almost everywhere, but most of us don’t know much about them. Learn about our local spiders, their hunting habits, life cycles, and more. Bring your live spiders for identification. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

### **Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. *Impenetrable Ice, Large Lakes, and Changing Coastlines:***

*Evolution of the Lake Superior Region* Speaker: Dave Ullman, Assistant Professor of Geosciences at Northland College. What are now the rolling hills and scattered lakes of a gentle Midwestern landscape were once covered in a blanket of flowing and grinding ice, sculpting the underlying terrain and leaving behind many telltale markers of a changing climate. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

*(Summer Programs, continued on page 4)*

*(Summer Programs, continued from page 3)*

**Wednesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. *Suspicious Content: Sediments and Soils of the Apostle Islands – Part 2*** Speaker: Tom Fitz, Professor of Geology Northland College. This presentation will be about the sediments left in the Chequamegon region at the end of the last glaciation, the soils that have developed on those glacial-age deposits, and the formation of our modern beaches. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

**Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. *Thousand Miler – Adventures Hiking the Ice Age Trail*** Speaker: Melanie Radzicki, will discuss her recent book about hiking 1100 miles through Wisconsin's forests, prairies, wetlands, and farms, past geologic wonders carved by long ago glaciers, and into the neighborhood bars and gathering places of far-flung small towns. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

**Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. *The Lake is the Boss*** Speaker: Bob Mackreth, Retired Park Historian of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. A popular souvenir for tourists who visit Bayfield today is a tee-shirt emblazoned with the adage, "The lake is the Boss." Join historian Bob Mackreth for a look at some memorable occasions when mortal men and women learned that Gitche Gumee always has the final word. At the Madeline Island Museum, co-sponsor.

***Guided Trail Hikes* 9:00 – 11:00 AM, possibly until 12:00, depending on chosen route**

Join us as we explore and hike the rustic trails of Madeline Island. MIWP members will guide all hikes, which will wander through ancient hemlock stands, along old Lake Superior shorelines, and hopefully encounter an abundance of wild mushrooms. Exact routes will vary pending trail conditions. A hike may be an out-and-back or shore-to-shore route. Note, these trails are primitive; good hiking boots and an adventurous spirit is required.

**Locations:**

- **NE Trail hikes** will meet at the Burrough's trail head, 2.5 miles north of Benjamin Blvd on the North Shore Rd
- **High Ridge hikes** will meet at Town Park pavilion

**Dates:**

**Saturday, August 12<sup>th</sup>** Guide: Ned Hancock – NE Trails

**Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>** Guide: Henry Harmon – High Ridge Trail at Town Park

**Saturday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>** Guide: Bonnie Matuseski – NE Trails

**Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>** Guide: Steve Mueller – NE Trails

**Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>** Guide: Keith Sowl – High Ridge Trail at Town Park

**Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup>** Guide: Fred Koerschner – NE Trails. A potluck picnic to follow this hike; all are welcome

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



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

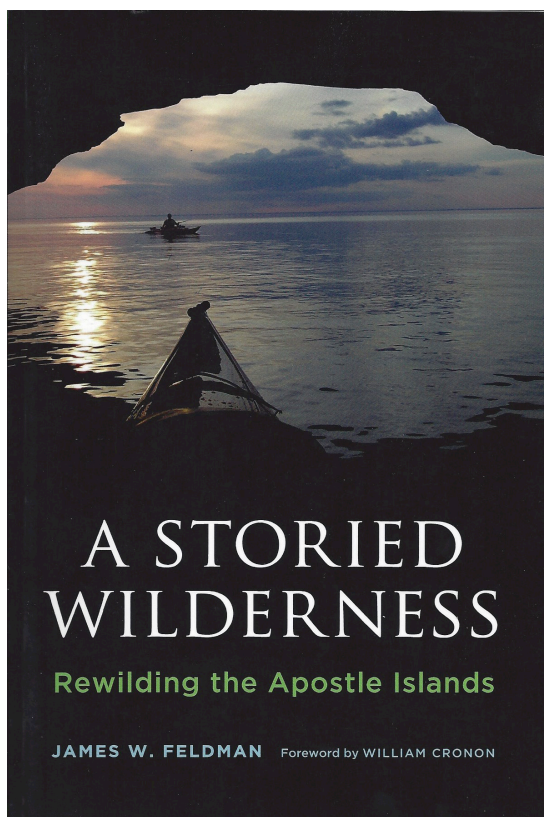
The Wilderness Preserve will be hosting its 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting this coming Memorial Day weekend, Saturday May 27<sup>th</sup>, at the Madeline Island Museum. The event will be an evening reception with an informal buffet of elegant and hearty hors d'oeuvres, choice wine service, and coffee/tea and assorted desserts. A social gathering and food service begins at 7:00 pm, with the program beginning at 8:00 pm.

This year's program features environmental historian and author

**JAMES FELDMAN**

### ***“A STORIED WILDERNESS: REWILDING THE APOSTLE ISLANDS”***

How did the Apostle Islands become wild? How do we understand the meaning of human history in places we today value as wilderness? Dr. James Feldman will explore these questions as he discusses the environmental and human history of the Apostle Islands.



*The Apostle Islands are a solitary place of natural beauty that rise out of Lake Superior. Now designated a wilderness area, efforts are underway to "rewild" land that has been shaped and reshaped by people for centuries. This book tells the story of how we came to equate human activity exclusively with the loss of nature and wilderness when in reality all our wildernesses are products of complicated interactions between human and natural processes. James W. Feldman is Professor of Environmental Studies and History at the University of Wisconsin.*



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

Reservations can be made (through May 22<sup>nd</sup>)  
by contacting:

MIWP Treasurer, Ned Hancock

4503 Arden Avenue, Edina MN 55424 ☞ (952-920-0908) ☞ Email at: ktwj@aol.com

***(maximum 100 guests)***

***Venue: Madeline Island Museum***



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

We also offer summer educational programs and guided hikes as an opportunity to expand our knowledge of nature around us. This year we will hold a record nine summer programs and six guided summer hikes.

Last year we asked for your input on what our organization's priorities should be going forward. Based on your comments and our mission we have organized our work into four major areas:

- 1) Education
- 2) Land Management and Trails
- 3) Invasive Species Management
- 4) Land Acquisition

In each of these areas we are scoping our work to maximize effectiveness within the constraints of the resources we have. Additionally, we will continue to request input from our members as to other areas we should prioritize.

**THANK YOU** for your continued support of the Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve. We have accomplished much in our first 30 years and with your help we look forward to preserving and protecting Madeline Island's natural areas for many years to come.

Often, we are asked by members what they can do to help. Here is where we need you:

- 1) **Experience the Preserve's protected areas on the Island.** Take a hike on one or more of the MIWP trails.
- 2) **Provide us with your comments, concerns, opinions, input** on what our organization is doing and what we should do in the future.
- 3) **Volunteer to help MIWP.** We have a dedicated volunteer board but are always in need of additional assistance.
- 4) **Please renew your membership in the Preserve.** If you have already renewed this year we ask that you consider an additional contribution in 2017. This is especially important now with the current political situation at the Federal and State level.

Our website, [miwp.org](http://miwp.org), is a great place to contact us, make a donation, print trail maps, or find out anything else about MIWP. You can also make a donation using the form included with this newsletter.

## MONARCHS CROWNED AT 4TH OF JULY PARADE

*By Victoria Erhart*

Incredibly, we did it again. The 2016 MIWP Fourth of July parade float "Milkweed, the Magic Monarch Maker" took home the Big One, the Grand Sweepstakes award, the most coveted prize in northern Wisconsin, by my count anyway. It's like the Oscar for parades, and we couldn't be prouder. Did you ever see such a gorgeous swarm of enormous orange butterflies? And the astonishing realism of those big fat striped caterpillars, wiggling and wriggling? A heartbreaking story, but it was told with such hope and compassion that it left the crowd breathless. Marvelous!



Less marvelous, I'm afraid, are the plans for 2017. Due to circumstances way beyond our control, there is a shake-up in parade management for this year only, and we are a little behind in planning. But I am quite sure that there will be a float, and I am very sure it will be a delightful surprise to everyone involved. Please join us; friends, relatives, children and dogs, EVERYONE is welcome. Meet at the Marina ½ hour before parade time (which typically starts at 10:30 a.m., but check with the Chamber of Commerce) under the MIWP banner. For questions or comments, call Pixie Martin at 715-747-2522 in early July.



## MIWP Board of Directors



### Officers

Fred Koerschner, Pres.  
Steve Mueller, Vice Pres.  
Tom Atmore, Sec.  
Ned Hancock, Treas.



### Directors

Dan Engstrom  
Victoria Erhart  
Phil Greenberg  
Adam Haecker  
Jane Howard  
Thomas Kromroy  
Pixie Martin  
Bonnie Matuseski



### Advisory Council

John Coffin  
Robert Coffin  
Kevin Dooley



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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \$1000 Benefactor   ☐ \$500 Sustaining   ☐ \$100 Supporting   ☐ \$50 Contributor   ☐ Other

☐ Please make my gift anonymous.

☐ Gift in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Gift in honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Send gift card to: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your generous contribution!**

Your dues are tax deductible. Membership is through December 31, 2017

Please make checks payable to MIWP and send to:

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