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### Willow River Rod & Gun Club News

Club President Brian Headlee has generously donated a computer for club use. Thanks Brian! The Winter Archery League has wound down with 6 1/2 teams shooting Spot League. The Bush League showed an increase for 2009-2010 in team participation. The Summer Archery League begins Tuesday, May 4th. Costs are \$25 per shooter with Youth fees set at \$10. Work nights are scheduled to get ready for the 2010 season. Trap League begins on April 22nd. A Turkey Shoot is set for Sunday, April 18th.

It has been determined that the present trap shed is of the right dimensions to house a new voice activated trap when one becomes available. Some upkeep on both trap houses have to be performed.

The club is still looking for a few more light poles to be used on the club land.

Both the pistol and rifle ranges need work with a work day planned soon.

Plans are moving forward for the Park Art Fair and Fun Fest Booth club fund raisers.

The New Richmond Spring Hunters Education Class graduated 28 students, while the Bow Hunting Education Class graduated 3 students according to Lead Instructor Ron Roettger.

The club's membership presently stands at 416. When ground conditions are favorable, the land telephone line will be reburied.

Funds were allotted for a crossbow donation to the St Croix Count Alliance Habitat Banquet, a hunters' education seminar to be held this summer, the 3D Archery Shoot and 3D Archery score cards.

### Cedar Lake Ice Out

Over the last 31 years Don Demulling Jr. and his dad have kept an accurate record of ice out dates on Cedar Lake. From 1980 to 2010, the earliest ice out recorded was March 22nd, 2000 while the latest was April 24th, 1996. Ice out is defined by Don as Cedar

Lake being able to be reached shore to shore via boat travel.

This year with the recent warm temperatures, Don recorded Cedar Lake ice out on March 31st more than three weeks earlier than last year. The ice out dates over the last 31 years span 33 days and highlights the fact that nothing in nature is predictable. Below is a list of the recorded Cedar Lake ice out dates:

April 18th	April 24th
March 28th	April 18th
N/A	March 30th
April 10th	March 31st
April 11th	March 22nd
April 9th	April 15th
April 7th	April 16th
March 25th	April 12th
April 6th	April 13th
April 17th	April 9th
April 5th	April 9th
April 7th	March 31st
April 10th	April 8th
April 19th	April 23rd
April 8th	March 31st
April 4th	

### Controlled Burn on Stanton Prairie WPA – by Tom Kerr –USF&WS

With the early spring, we have already been able to burn several grassland fields on area Waterfowl Production Areas. People often ask why we burn. As one example of why we use controlled burns to enhance wildlife habitat, I'll look at the Stanton Prairie Waterfowl Production Area located between 200th Avenue and 210th Avenue in Stanton Township. The 232 acre WPA was purchase in 2005 using Federal Duck Stamp dollars and is managed for the prairie grassland, wetland and savanna habitat historically found in St. Croix, southern Polk and Dunn Counties.

In late March, the Fish and Wildlife Service conducted a controlled burn, covering approximately 129 acres

of the 232 acre WPA. The purpose of this burn was to reinvigorate the cool season brome grasses on the unit and knock back some of the brush in the 18 acre oak savanna restoration area in the center of the burn unit. The WPA had never been burned since the FWS acquired it in 2005 and much of the cool season brome grass was growing with less vigor than when it was originally planted as part of a CRP contract in the 1990s. As these stands of brome grass get older, they typically do not grow as tall and provide less cover for nesting wildlife. Fire is used to remove the thatch layer on the ground, return nutrients to the soil and blacken the soil so that it warms up and the grass responds with growth. Controlled fires early in the season tend to help reinvigorate these cool season fields and also produce less smoke since the grasses have not started to green up yet.

For the savanna restoration on the Stanton Prairie WPA, this controlled burn is part of a long term project to remove the trees and understory that have grown up among the burr and white oaks. These trees, including many invasive species such as buckthorn, Siberian elm and even native species such as box elder, are very aggressive and if left unchecked would eventually take over the savanna again. Through a combination of fire and chemical treatment we are able to set back these invading species and prepare the savanna for seeding to a combination of native grasses and forbs. With the tendency of many of these invading species to re-sprout aggressively, it will take several years of fire and chemical treatment before this restoration area can be returned to the grass and forb understory found in oak savannas.

For more information on the St. Croix Wetland Management District or to download an aerial photo of the Stanton Prairie WPA, check out our website at [www.fws.gov/midwest/stcroix/](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/stcroix/).

## **Fish Facts – from the DNR Website**

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Wisconsin waters are home to 165 fish species; 150 of these species are native to the state and 15 are introduced non-native species.

The sturgeon is the state's largest, and longest-lived fish; in fact, the world's record sturgeon taken by hook and line was a 170-pound, 10-ounce giant hauled from Wisconsin's Yellow Lake in Burnett County in 1979. The state record for a speared sturgeon was set that same year, when a 195-pound lake sturgeon was speared on Pokegama Lake in Vilas County by a tribal member exercising his treaty rights.

The muskellunge, or musky, is the state fish. More world record musky have been landed here than anywhere else. In 2006, for example, anglers reported catching more than 60 musky over 48 inches, including a 53-inch Vilas County fish that weighted 51 pounds and 2 oz.

Walleye are Wisconsin anglers' favorite targets, followed by bass. Collectively, panfish are caught most frequently.

By far, most Wisconsin fish are the result of naturally

reproducing populations. But the DNR typically raises and stocks about 12 million fish of larger sizes. 15,081 inland lakes, 42,000 miles of perennial streams and rivers, 1,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, and 260 miles of the Mississippi River.

Wisconsin boasts 10, 266 miles of trout streams, with 4,136 of those miles being high quality, Class 1 trout streams.

Vilas and Oneida counties in northern Wisconsin boast the world's largest collection of kettle lakes, with more than 2,000 lakes between them.

More than 90 percent of Wisconsin waters are supported entirely by natural reproduction resulting from good aquatic habitat.

Wisconsin annually sells about 1.4 million fishing licenses to adult anglers.

Anglers spent 20.8 million days fishing in Wisconsin in 2006.

Nearly 41 percent of Wisconsin residents 16 and over participate in fishing

Wisconsin is the second favorite destination spot for nonresident anglers

Anglers annually catch 88 million fish and keep 33 million fish of all kinds, releasing the rest to challenge anglers another day.

Wisconsin ranks among the top 5 states in terms of numbers of anglers, behind the more populous coastal states of Florida, California and Texas.

Fishing generates a \$2.75 billion economic impact in Wisconsin

More than 30,000 Wisconsin jobs are supported by fishing

Fishing related activities and sales generate \$200 million in state tax revenues for local and state government. Less than 1 percent is returned to DNR for traditional fisheries management.

381,000 nonresident anglers fished in Wisconsin in 2006, spending a total of 3.8 million days and \$280 million on retail goods.

## **Wetlands – from the DNR Website**

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Spring and early summer brings Wisconsin's seasonal wetlands to life. These so-called ephemeral wetlands temporarily hold water and are usually isolated from permanent water bodies. They are among the most imperiled in the state but are important for flood control and water quality, habitat for migrating birds, especially waterfowl, and for young frogs, turtles and salamanders.

Spring also heightens wetlands' importance in flood control. Wetlands, depending on where they're located in a watershed, can retain a lot of floodwater and reduce flooding downstream.

People often think of wetlands as having open water, cattails and ducks. But Wisconsin has more than a dozen different kinds of wetlands - everything from forests along lakes and streams, to meadows -- even prairies and shrub thickets.



*Jack Rasmussen's nephew Ethan's first turkey taken during 2010 youth hunt.*



*Successful shed hunting in northern Minnesota.*

Wetlands all share the following char

acteristics: water-loving plants, wet soils, and evidence of water.

Wisconsin had an estimated 10 million acres of wetlands before becoming a state in 1848. Over the decades, nearly half of those wetlands, or 4.7 million acres, were drained or filled to make way for farms, cities, roads and factories.

Once considered wastelands and breeding grounds for mosquitoes that brought disease and death, Wisconsin wetlands are now recognized for their many benefits and are carefully protected. In fact, Wisconsin became the first state to pass legislation restoring protections to isolated wetlands stripped by a 2001 U.S. Supreme Court decision. A timeline traces the changing attitudes in Wisconsin about wetlands over the last four centuries. Ephemeral wetlands are hard to define, identify and protect because they tend to be small, isolated, and dry for part if not most of the year. This photo shows a seasonal wetland in southeastern Wisconsin in May, and then what the same spot looks like in drier months.

Wetlands play a critical role in maintaining the overall health and functioning of lakes, rivers, prairies and forests because they're located among these landscapes. They also provide critical habitat for Wisconsin plants, fish and wildlife, clean water, protection from floods, recreation, and natural scenic beauty.

90 percent of the fish recreational anglers catch nationally spend some part of their life in Wetlands. In Wisconsin, sport fishing generates \$2.7 billion in business and provides \$200 million in tax revenues for local and state government.

Wetlands reduce flooding peaks by as much as 60 percent and the EPA estimates that an acre of wetlands can store 1 - 1.5 million gallons of floodwaters. Nearly 40 percent of Wisconsin's 370 species of birds live in or use wetlands and many important game birds, mammals, fish, amphibians and reptiles are associated with wetlands, among them waterfowl, white-tailed deer, ring-necked pheasants, northern pike and walleye. In Wisconsin, bird-

watchers and wildlife watchers spend \$271 million annually waiting for a glimpse of their favorites<sup>5</sup>.

Polluted runoff from cities, farms and construction sites is filtered by wetlands before entering lakes and rivers. Clean lakes and rivers are the backbone of Wisconsin's tourism industry, which generated \$12 billion in 2007.

The filtering capability of wetlands cuts the cost of treating drinking water. Some wetlands can remove a quantity of pollutants from the watershed equivalent to that removed from a \$5 million treatment plant.

One-third of the plants and animals on Wisconsin's state endangered and threatened list depend on wetlands. Wisconsin wetlands also protect water quality by filtering out polluted runoff, prevent flooding by storing water, and provide recreation for boaters, hunters, canoeists, wildlife watchers and others.

Sixteen organizations and government agencies have created a strategic plan, to help reverse the destruction of wetlands in Wisconsin/ It calls for all citizens to help, protect, restore and explore these valuable natural resources.

Wetlands are protected by state and federal rules and in some places, by local regulations or ordinances as well. Landowners and developers are required to avoid wetlands with their projects; if the wetlands can't be avoided, they must seek the appropriate permits to affect wetlands.

DNR's efforts to improve its wetland permitting program have paid off in shorter waits for landowners on permit decisions and better protection for wetlands. Landowners and developers get permits in an average of 30 days once a complete application is turned in. The average loss of wetlands due to permitted projects has decreased to 250 acres a year, down from about 1,200 annually before DNR's permitting program began in 1991.

More wetland acres are filled for state transportation projects than for any other use the state can track and monitor.

Wisconsin is making progress in restoring wetlands. Private individuals and conservation groups have worked in partnership with state and federal agencies to restore wetlands. In 2007, 2,788 acres were restored, and 827 acres of existing wetlands were improved.

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## Upcoming Events...

- April 15th through July 31st.....It is illegal to allow dogs to run on DNR and Federal Waterfowl Production Area lands during this time unless the dog is on a leash no longer than 8 feet.
- April 21st – 25th.....Spring Turkey Hunt Period B
- April 25th (Sunday).....Early catch and release trout season closes at midnight.
- April 27th (Tuesday).....Blue Thumb Raingarden Intro Class, 6-8 pm, Hudson St Croix County Government Center  
Contact: Aleisha Miller 715-684-2874
- April 28th - May 2nd.....Spring Turkey Hunt Period C
- May 1st (Saturday).....Open inland fishing season (see regulations), Musky season opens south of highway 10,  
Frog season opens and runs through December 31st
- May 4th (Tuesday).....Blue Thumb Raingarden Design Class, 6-8 pm, Hudson St Croix County Government Center  
Contact: Aleisha Miller 715-684-2874
- May 5th - May 9th.....Spring Turkey Hunt Period D
- May 6th (Thursday).....Blue Thumb Raingarden Intro Class, 6-8 pm, New Richmond Middle School,  
Contact: Aleisha Miller 715-684-2874
- May 12th - May 16th.....Spring Turkey Hunt Period E
- May 13th (Thursday).....Willow River Rod & Gun Club's May Meeting, 7 pm, club land, Contact: Brian Headlee at 246-5322
- May 17th (Monday).....Star Prairie Fish & Game Association May Meeting,  
6:00 Dinner & Social, 7:00 Meeting, Don Madsen's
- May 19th - May 23rd.....Spring Turkey Hunt Period F
- May 25th (Thursday).....Blue Thumb Raingarden Design Class, 6-8 pm, New Richmond Middle School,  
Contact: Aleisha Miller 715-684-2874
- May 29th (Saturday).....Musky season opens north of Highway 10

Comments, criticisms or input, please contact Mike Reiter 246-6643 or Jessa Nelson 246-0266

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