



The Lake Flyer

Winnebago Audubon Society, Inc.

NOVEMBER 2006

All programs and activities are free and open to the public

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Rush Lake Restoration Project Update

Thursday, November 16 – 7:00 p.m.

Evergreen Retirement Community, 1130 N. Westfield St., Oshkosh (follow signs to lower level)

Timothy Lizotte, Wildlife Biologist for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, will discuss the restoration of Rush Lake in the southwest corner of Winnebago County. This is one of the few prairie potholes east of the Mississippi River and has a long history of being a waterfowl haven – great for birders and hunters. There is so much lead on the bottom of this shallow lake that it poses a health hazard for waterfowl. A committee of concerned landowners, hunters, birders and government agencies have come up with a plan to make this a better place for wildlife and people to enjoy. Tim will bring us up to date on the work being done there.

This is a joint program with Wild Ones natural landscapers. Treats will be provided after the program.

Upcoming AUDUBON Activities

Saturday, January 20: Toward Harmony with Nature natural landscaping conference. WAS will be selling books and Leopold benches.

Saturday, February 3: Backyard Birdwatching Workshop

Thursday, March 15: Ice Cream Social and Show & Tell

Saturday, April 14: Annual Sandhill Crane Count

Thursday, April 19: Annual Potluck and Special Program by "John James Audubon"

Thursday, April 26: Annual Meeting / Elections

May: Birdathon and Picnic

Early June: Birds & Wildflowers on Washington Island

WATCH FOR DETAILS IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS.

BIRDATHON 2006 RESULTS

The results are in! Four teams, 112 Birds and \$960.00 raised for environmental education. Team honors go to the Wissink Team (Janet and Steve; Anita and Gerry Carpenter) who saw the most birds: 83, including two lifers for Janet; the Hansen Team (Carla, Jan Moldenhauer, Jackson Medley) for the most money raised: \$684.00, thanks to Jan's great skills at getting contributions; the Rill Team (Kay and Russ) who found many birds under difficult circumstances; and the McKasy Team (JoAnna, Jennifer Rothe, Josh Demski) who took time out of their busy collegiate schedules to participate.

Special thanks go out to our contributors: Doris Thomas, Al Ackerman, Tom Underwood, Marty Petersen, Susie Gustke, Leanne Monroe, Rachel Hickey, Paula Stosering, Terri Schumacher, Alison Cesnovar, Brian Schaefer, JoAnn Kindt, Carol Fenrich, Brad Larson, Mary Ann Busse, Dick Campbell, Scott Chicoine, UW Oshkosh Credit Union, Deb Vorcauteran, Dexter Schaub, Jan Moldenhauer, Lynn and Tom McKasy, Steve Wissink, Dave Moon, J & J Pagel, Russell Rill, Jane Zuern, Gil Roderick, Roger Rose, Louise Coumbe, Jan Scalpone, Don & Carol Meton, Zaiga Freivalds, Jackson Medley, Mike Hansen, Richard Hansen, Bob Hansen, Carla Hansen, and Kimberly Clark Corporation (matching donation). Their generosity will help Winnebago Audubon in its promotion of environmental awareness and advocacy.

Thank you to Carla Hansen for coordinating this event!



Pat Nichols, Elaine Coll and Steve Wissink dig, or cut and dab poison on the trunk of non-native, common buckthorn invading Sullivan's Woods.

BUCKTHORN ERADICATION AT SULLIVAN'S WOODS IN OCTOBER

On October 28th, a gorgeous sunny Saturday, a group of 10 of us ventured out to Sullivan's Woods near Fisk, to see what we could do about the invasion of buckthorn into the area. Gary and Elaine Coll and Breck Speers, who found out about the workshop through the UW Oshkosh announcement emails, joined Janet and Steve Wissink, Pat and John Nichols, Zaiga Freivalds, Jan Scalpone and Louise Coumbe, for a mid day hike and adventure getting rid of seedlings to multi-trunked trees, learning about all the various ways to get rid of buckthorn. We saw and heard sandhill cranes flying over. Janet and Steve saw an immature bald eagle. Pat, John and Steve saw an owl that we determined was a great horned owl, attempting to roost in some of the large oaks in the woods. We also came across a number of frogs soaking up the sun at the pond in the middle of the woods. Several warblers were flitting through the shrubs. We all dug, pulled, lopped, cut and poisoned buckthorn until around 2 pm when we decided we'd made enough of a dent in the problem to call it a day. Some time this winter we plan to burn the brush pile that we created. It was a great day, we got some good exercise and met some new friends. I hope everyone gets out in the woods before it's too late this year! – *Pat Nichols*

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Check out a new website that Audubon will be contributing local information to in Oshkosh. It's oshkoshnews.org and it's a blog. Look under the area for Environment and you'll find Audubon. This is a new effort to reach out to people in the area and let them know what's happening. It is also a place to send your thoughts on different things that are posted. Your Audubon Chapter (WAS) plans to post our events and special notices on this site. Check it out!

PICNIC POINT ARTICLE IN OSHKOSH NORTHWESTERN

You may have seen an article recently in the Oshkosh Northwestern regarding a parcel of land known as Picnic Point on Lake Winnebago. It is a parcel of land that is currently on the list of property with potential to be sold to make money for the state of Wisconsin. The Winnebago Audubon Society Board of Directors supports transferring the title of this land to the DNR which has adjoining property. This parcel is one of the very few undeveloped pieces of land on Lake Winnebago and deserves to remain so. We encourage all of our members to let state officials know that the loss of this property to development wouldn't be worth as much to the state as having it undeveloped is to the benefit of the people of the State of Wisconsin. - *Pat Nichols*

Gift Giving Ideas

AUDUBON CALENDARS:

Wildflowers, Raptors, Arctic, Walking: \$10
Songbirds: \$11

AUDUBON BIRDS:

At \$6.00 each, these singing birds make a great stocking stuffer for the all the "kids" in your life. Several species to choose from.

WISCONSIN NATURE CALENDAR:

Only \$10, this phenological calendar benefits Audubon's Land Fund for Wisconsin.

Available at the Nov. 16 program or by contacting Janet at 920-589-2602 or wiss@centurytel.net

AWARD NOMINATIONS BEING ACCEPTED

The WAS Board of Directors wants to invite nominations for next year's award for efforts at educating the public on environmental issues. Please contact any Board member with your suggestions and the reasons why you believe your nomination should receive the award. Remember that WAS members can be found in all the following areas: Oshkosh, Omro, Winneconne, Larsen, Pine River, Pickett, Berlin, Green Lake, Poy Sippi, Van Dyne, Redgranite, and places in between. Maybe you know of someone in your community who is deserving of this award. We plan to make these awards annually to deserving people.



Badger Tracks

By Anita Carpenter



HIKING THE NARROWS

At fifty-seven degrees, the Virgin River runs cold this mid-September day. The clear, green water seems fast as it pours, ripples and gurgles over the rock-strewn riverbed at fifty-one cubic feet per second. Today my sister, Elaine, and I are hiking up this meandering river into a slot canyon called the Narrows in Utah's Zion National Park. We wait for the forty-something nighttime temperature to rise, then hop on the shuttle bus for the ride to the end of the line. We then hike the mile-long Riverside walk with many other tourists, most not as adventuresome as we. Then the moment of truth has come, the river beckons.

We each select a hiking pole, which are really well-polished tree branches that are lined up along the canyon wall. All have been used by previous river hikers and returned to their spot for others to use. I choose a five-foot branch with a two-inch diameter.

Many curious tourists wander onto the sandbar to enjoy the spectacular view and to watch us depart. Our first challenge is to negotiate a small rapids as we cross the fifty-foot wide river. Water depth is only eight inches, yet the current is swift. We cautiously enter the oh-so-cold water. Unseen rocks are slippery and we don't want to be the first hikers to fall in! Each step is slow and deliberate. I'm clutching my pole with both hands. It quickly becomes apparent how important a sturdy hiking pole is to maintain balance.

We reach the opposite shore where the walking is relatively easy but soon we're in the river again. About 60% of this hike involves walking IN the river. Each river step requires concentration but walking on the river bank allows us the opportunity to look around. The scenery is glorious. Red canyon walls composed of multi-colored sandstone layers rise straight up hundreds of feet. The layers are muted shades of tans, rusts and browns, some running horizontally, others uplifted to vertical – a testament to major earth movements and upheavals in the geologic past. I see colors, patterns and textures that remind me of Navajo and Pueblo blankets and pottery. Were these canyon walls the inspiration for their art?

Ferns and small plants cling to narrow ledges. Sapling Fremont cottonwoods maintain tenuous rootholds on the sunnier, wider banks. I see two different basking butterflies but they're frustratingly out of reach for identification. A Say's phoebe flycatches for insects.

We hike on, frequently crosscrossing the river. The lure of what's around the next bend pulls us onward. It's still sixty degrees cool but the sun is trying its best to reach and warm us in the canyon depths.

Rounding one sunlit bend, I see my first California sister, a three-inch black butterfly with one dime-sized tangerine spot on each forewing. With shallow wingbeats, it drifts on canyon winds. Another individual descends from the canyon rim as if lowered on a spider web. It seems to enjoy the sunlight and warmth as much as I do.

The canyon narrows. The water deepens. I wish I were a foot taller. I stumble in a 2-1/2 foot deep hole in a rapids and almost

fall in. I'm wet to my waist and my arms and chest are soaked. With much effort and trepidation, I finally make it across the river, take a deep breath (really a sigh of relief) only to find two enormous ten-foot boulders blocking passage to the shore. It's either climb up or walk or swim in chest-deep water around. I scramble up and over only to discover another boulder behind it, then another one. No turning back now. On we go. We conquer these boulder obstacles, then the going gets easier again.

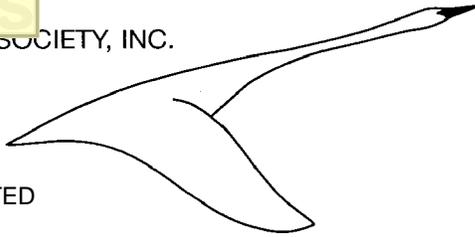
About two miles upriver, two tributaries, each flowing from a different canyon, join to form the larger river. We select the right-hand fork. Now we're definitely in the Narrows, a slot canyon which is only about twenty feet wide with water lapping both walls. More and larger rocks hinder our river passage. I'm concentrating so on negotiating the river that, once again, I forget to look up, forward or back. When I do, the scenery is stunning with the height, shape and colors of the canyon. The play of sunlight on the red walls is magnificent. The sky is a narrow blue slit overhead. One feels so insignificant (and vulnerable) against the backdrop of these towering, vertical walls.

We eventually reach a four-foot waterfall which is the turnaround point. Beyond this spot requires a back-country permit because of the difficult and hazardous conditions. We pause, savoring the moment and accomplishment.

Turning around, we soon break for lunch and perch on a sun-warmed rock. A California sister basks nearby, teasing me because I don't have my camera. We retrace our steps. Walking downriver with the current is somewhat easier and quicker. By trial and error, we've learned how to read the river (darker green means deeper water), where to step and how to approach rapids. Then all too quickly we round the final bend to see people gathered on the sandbar. Our five mile roundtrip, four hour canyon adventure is about over. We cross the final rapids with more confidence than before but we still don't want to slip in. I kiss my trusty pole before replacing it against the wall. We're tired but happy. The unofficial welcoming committee asks us how it was. Only one word describes the experience. Awesome. Secretly, I think they're envious.

Hiking the Virgin River into the Narrows was exhilarating and memorable but this is a hike that is not to be taken lightly. Danger of flash floods, especially in a slot canyon with no place to escape, is always a possibility. Before leaving, we checked with the ranger about weather conditions and found that the rain chance in the area was low. River flow rates are also important. At 51cfs, the current seemed fast but later we discovered that the 51cfs walk was rated as easy to mild. I would not have wanted to hike the river with a faster current. Flow rates are listed daily in the visitors center. Any flow rate under 70cfs is considered ideal conditions. Hypothermia is another danger. We wore quick-drying clothes and fleece. I was dry long before the hike finished. We also hiked in the "heat" of the day. As with any hike in Zion, one must always respect the canyons and especially water because water is so much more forceful and potentially dangerous than it appears. So why do it? Because the experience and the scenery, is – awesome!

WINNEBAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
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RENEWALS: Your mailing label includes your membership expiration date above your name. If you are a "Chapter Only" member the word CHAPTER will appear after the expiration date. Please renew your chapter membership by filling out the application form below. Thank you for helping us save on the cost of renewal reminders.
If you are a member of National Audubon, you will receive renewal notices from National or you may renew by using the form below.

Winnebago Audubon Society Mission Statement: Advance the mission of the National Audubon Society to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity through grassroots efforts of community outreach and advocacy.

AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- YES, I want to become a member at the chapter level and receive the Winnebago Audubon newsletter. I've enclosed a \$15.00 check payable to Winnebago Audubon.
- YES, I want to become a member of the National Audubon Society, and the Winnebago Audubon Chapter. My membership dues entitle me to *Audubon* magazine, and all chapter benefits. I am enclosing a \$20.00 check payable to National Audubon Society.
- I do not wish to receive correspondence or solicitations from National Audubon Society.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Z12 7XCH

Mail this form with payment to:
Pat Nichols, Membership Chair
P.O. Box 184, Oshkosh, WI 54903

Would you like to meet Winnebago Audubon Society members in your community? If so, contact Pat Nichols (920 426-0261) or jvnichols@earthlink.net, membership chair, with a good place to meet in your area. She can send a notice out to others in your zip code and we can get together to meet and find out what your local environmental issues are as well as get to know other like minded people.

Welcome new members! Sister Mary Barbieur, Charles Beyer, Michael Carrick, Aileen King, Diana Laabs, Evelyn Milosch, Jane Resop, Jessica Riley, Carol Seibold, Bonnie Jean Wolfram, Mark Miller, Sarah Wrasse.

We had lots of people renewing this month. We're glad to have you continue your support of National and Winnebago Audubon efforts at preserving wild places and educating people about the environment. This month we had renewals from 23 members/families! Please be sure to try to make it to at least one of our events this year. You'll see old friends and meet new ones.

Thank you for your support.