

Front Desk at the Visitors' Center - Lisa KC

Working at the Visitor Center is a joy! I love meeting all the Bong visitors! Everyone is welcome!

Currently, this is my first season with Bong but my fourth season with the Wisconsin DNR! I have been blessed to work for Northern Highland American Legion State Forest as a Campground Host in Rustic Campgrounds (no running water or electricity) and Kettle Moraine South at Ottawa Lake as a Visitor Associate much like what I do here!

Bong is very special to me. I started hiking here and camping here back in 2001. I even winter camped here when that was still allowed.

Besides working at Bong, I love creating my artwork which you can check out at Spectrum Gallery in Racine and Lemon Street Gallery in Kenosha! This fall, I will be in a special exhibit at the Overture Center for the Arts Gallery in Madison this fall.

Please come say hi! I love hearing all about your camping adventures and have a s'more for me!!!!

Ryan Meisel Concert July 19

With rain earlier in the day and possibly more predicted, about 50 people attended the event enjoying his unique sounds. Thank you, Linda D, Kris W, Tom H, Emily C for helping set up the merchandise table. There was \$42 in sales—the “Snap Snakes” are a favorite. And thanks to Emily, Melody and Kris for taking down and loading Carol's car.



Night Sky Viewing

Tom H hosted a star gazing after the concert. Members Carol D, and Melody enjoyed the view. We had 2 dads with a daughter and son who were entranced by the telescope and asked many questions; a couple from Chicago who spent almost an hour asking questions about the sky and the park. They also were glad to hear about our two campgrounds. The evening sky had a waning crescent Moon, and of course, we saw the Big Dipper. Tom explained how to find the Little Dipper which looks like it is pouring into the Big Dipper. Both belong to the constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor respectively, which translates to the ‘Big Bear’ and the ‘Little Bear’. The Pleiades stars or Seven Sisters were also pointed out.

Perseids Meteor Shower Viewing August 12th-Try your own backyard.

NASA Observe the Moon Tom announced that October 4 is NASA Observe The Moon. He plans to set up his solar system, host a discussion, do a telescope clinic, and then a moon watch, please plan on attending, possibly even helping out that day/evening.

Merchandise. If you haven't visited the gift counter, there's turtle and heron patches, heron magnets and lapel pins. Snap snakes, salamanders and wood flex snakes are delighting everyone. Boonie hats for sun protection are \$10, always a smart investment. New walleye spinner colors are on earrings—hand made by Carol. Short sleeve tie dye t-shirts will be arriving soon.

Animal Display in the Lobby

Mickey - female, Eastern Fox Snake

Martha/Marty - female, Eastern Plains Garter Snake

Sal - Eastern Tiger Salamander

Vinny - male, Midland Painted Turtle

Frank - male, Midland Painted Turtle

The reptile animals in the lobby draw visitors in for a peek into their tanks.

The Fox Snake has many large reddish-brown or chocolate brown blotches—Mickey has the large circle “head” with two smaller circle “ears”. The Fox Snakes live in a variety of open habitats including marshes, sedge meadows, prairies and old fields. Their diet consists primarily of rodents and ground-nesting birds. Mickey enjoys defrosted mice.

The eastern plains garter snake is a medium-sized (to 40 inches long), slender snake. It can be identified by its three light stripes that run the length of its body. The basic color of the body is brown; the dorsal (back) stripe is yellow-orange; the side stripes are yellowish-gray.

Information on turtles and salamander in their tanks in future Heron issues.

See DNR for a listing of Reptiles and Amphibians in Wisconsin <https://widnr.widen.net/s/fcmrotsuqk>

Thank you to Maggie and Kathy for sewing the curtains that cover the base of the metal tables, hiding the supplies below.

Live Snake Encounter

July 26 was the past Live Snake Encounter in the Auditorium. Visitors learned about snakes and how they eat! They watched as Mickey was fed a mouse! You will even get the chance to touch or hold our education snakes. For the timid, you can touch Mickey with one finger/one second to feel the texture of leathery skin.



Butterflies are ordered

Stroll into the Solarium

The magnet butterfly cycle on the metal door invites a hands-on sequence activity. Butterfly larvae are ordered and will be arriving in August. Diane P has set out coloring pages and a tissue tube craft. The children’s reading corner is delightful with an assortment of books with cute “log” pillows for seating. The magnet butterfly cycle on the metal door invites a hands-on sequence.

Reggie, is a male Common Snapping Turtle. He is a huge attraction for our visitors. Thank you to our regular turtle tank cleaning crew: Dave G, Kris W and Lily. Also, thanks to Ray S for putting together a hide-away feature for him, the new feature improves upon the plastic stool that had been his hiding space

Kneehigh Naturalists

We tried Saturdays during the school year and are back to Thursdays for the summer. Check the website for our fall dates.

Aug 14 Crawling & Hopping Insects

Sept. Herons & Egrets

Oct Squirrel Safari

Nov. Getting Ready for Winter

Walkie Talkies

Walkie talkies are available to use, located in the volunteer office. It is suggested we use them when working in areas not near the Visitor's Center or in a small group. Sign out a walkie, give the other one to someone in the Visitor's Center. Remember to return the walkie!!!

Selling Ice

The ice freezer is back in action! We have ice for the campers!! Prices are \$3 a bag.

Firewood Sales

Jan is always working on the schedule: August is complete, but some September's dates are open to arrange. Let her know if you can help.

Entrance Station Plants

I'm learning Latin names; the plants are labeled with both common and Latin names. How many plants do you already know; stop and take a close look. My favorite—Whorled milkweed or *Asclepias verticillata*—it's just fun to say. The plants were donated by the Root River Wild Ones. We had a site visit with them last week.

Nature Explore Family Club

Family Club starts on Thursdays July 31 through Aug. 28. This is for 5-10 year olds accompanied by an adult (siblings invited too!). We will meet at the picnic tables behind the Visitor Center.

July 31 Know a Tree

Aug. 7 Texture Adventure

Aug. 14 Animal Homes

Aug. 21 Hidden Pictures Hunt

Aug. 28 Your Special Path



Summer Heat Wave

As Carol says, what a hot mess we're in: heat index, haze, humidity! Carol D canceled Adopt a Highway (next highway clean up Aug. 5 & 19) and Emily canceled the Wednesday work meeting. But, our volunteers are a tough group; the weather didn't stop a few from continuing their work: gravel was spread at the entrance station by Ray & Linda and Lauren & Nather. Maggie was weeding and watering and setting up signs at the bird blind. Gerry was mowing. The rain on Wednesday was welcomed.

Master Naturalist Training

<https://wimasternaturalist.org>



The last class of the 40 hour training was July 24th. Arlene took a group photo and we celebrated with cake. The Executive Director of Master Naturalist Program, Becky Sapper, attended our last day that started with a hike at the Vista Trail and John Meyer speaking on Citizen Science such as the Frog & Toad Count. The planning committee: Emily, John and Melody set up the displays, invited speakers, arranged publicity... actually started with the planning in February for this July training.

Speakers included

Susan Sander - Natural History & Birds

Marty Johnson & Ola Kotlarski - wildlife

regulations and controlled burns

Emily C - ecology

Craig Helker, DNR - Water Quality

Danielle Marshal - Snapshot WI

Dr. Peter Jacobs - Geology

Laura Schultz - Environmental Justice

Dr. Jessica Orlofske - Aquatic Life (dipping water at the boat launch to ID "bugs is a favorite)

Olivia Burkholz - International Crane Foundation

Amanda Schwabe - Weather & Climate

Program Planning for October /November

Consider teaching a class or leading a hike or hosting a campfire... You could partner with another member and share planning and leading the activity. A walk around the Nature Trail with a focus on plants or a focus on clouds could be fun for our visitors. Submit your plan to Emily; she has forms available. Volunteers will be needed for Eco-Halloween Oct. 18 TBA and the Christmas Greenery Workshop. We also have a traditional Crapatizer (crafts and appetizers) in December.