

Greetings WOCA members and prospective members.

Sorry for the long delay between newsletters. Rest assured, we've been busy!

You should have received the first draft of our August agenda via email yesterday. Now is also a good time to renew your WOCA membership, The membership application form is available on the WOCA website: www.w-o-c-a.org. Should you have trouble downloading the form, just let me know and I'll email you the current PDF form.

I'll attach a conference registration form when I send our summer newsletter in late June to early July.

Please note that I've attached a copy of our most recent bylaws, which were last updated in summer 2004 and OK'd at the 2005 conference. Enough things have changed the past 12 years to warrant another update, which we can discuss when meeting Aug. 10-12.

A lot has happened since we met in July 2016, so let's get into it.

1) 2017 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER: Our scholarship committee – Secretary/Treasurer Laurel Steffes, Art Barlow and Bob Wilberscheid – chose Ms. Shay Spatz of Westfield and UW-Stevens Point to receive the 2017 Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association/Outdoor Heritage Education Center scholarship.

Congratulations, Shay! We have invited Shay to join us at our Aug. 11-13 conference at Trees for Tomorrow to receive the ceremonial \$1,500 check.

The scholarship is a joint effort of WOCA and Outdoor Heritage Education Center in Hazel Green. In addition, WOCA member Jenny Sereno donated \$250 of the scholarship money. For this year's total, WOCA contributed \$750, OHEC contributed \$500 and Jenny Sereno provided the rest.

Laurel reported that we received 12 applications for the scholarship this year, so it definitely helped to increase the amount to \$1,500.

2) WOCA OPPOSES BUDGET ATTEMPT to KILL WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES MAGAZINE: WOCA went on record in March to oppose the Walker Administration's attempt to kill the DNR's "Wisconsin Natural Resources" magazine. Here is the text of our letter that was sent to members of the Joint Finance Committee, Assembly Natural Resources Committee, Gov. Walker and DNR Sec. Cathy Stepp:

March 13, 2017

Dear Gov. Scott Walker and DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp,

During the March 4-5 weekend, communities from Argyle to Onalaska, Oshkosh to Waukesha and points in between honored conservation giant Aldo Leopold with hikes, film screenings and readings of his seminal book, "A Sand County Almanac." Leopold's enduring legacy was formed here in Wisconsin, and helped him teach the world the importance of natural resources and conservation in the citizenry's everyday life.

Members of the Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association make our living writing, broadcasting and photographing stories about Wisconsin's outdoors. We're attuned to articles, publications and broadcasts about outdoor recreation, and many of us subscribe to Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine. It's a valuable resource in our work, and an important publication for promoting the state's outdoors and natural resources. We find your efforts to

shut down this successful, self-sustaining magazine particularly troubling at a time when market forces are shutting down or scaling back print publications and outdoor pages, and schoolchildren are increasingly sedentary and addicted to their screens.

Wisconsin Natural Resources and its extensive archives have long filled a vital educational/informational niche in this state. It presents information in an understandable format, covering subjects that aren't always commercially marketable but are none-the-less irreplaceable. Wisconsin's past, present and future are intertwined with its natural resources; as is their care, use and enjoyment by an informed citizenry. Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine and its predecessor, the Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin, introduced generations of adults and schoolchildren to the state's abundant wildlife and the wild places that belong to them.

For instance, the magazine energizes and instructs citizens in how they can help slow exotic mystery snails from invading trout streams, round gobies from entering Lake Winnebago, and Eurasian water milfoil from taking over Northern waters. It has inspired many professional resource managers to pursue their passion of working with citizens to provide top-notch hunting, fishing and other nature-based recreation. It has also helped Wisconsin outdoors enthusiasts, industry and other users understand and address complex ecological problems like mercury in our lakes and wildlife, wetland destruction and contaminated sediments.

We see no purpose in eliminating this 98-year-old magazine and long-lived resource. Wisconsin would lose an educational voice, direct communication to the DNR's constituency, and a vehicle that records the story of our state's natural resources. Its subscribers are a unique audience that likes to learn about and support DNR programs, and eagerly pays for this information. Further, for Patron License buyers – clearly the DNR's most loyal supporters – it's a tangible year-round connection.

No money will be saved by eliminating this subscriber-funded magazine. And Wisconsin Natural Resources does not duplicate the content of commercial publications. It has always strived to avoid competing with the private sector by focusing on DNR programs and refusing advertising. Its mission is singular: explaining in layman's terms the latest natural-resources science, and how top natural-resources managers from our best universities are protecting the lands, waters and wildlife that belong to all Wisconsin residents.

We urge you to sustain this vital foundation of Wisconsin conservation into its second century. Please reconsider your budget proposal to eliminate the magazine, and offer instead your pledge to provide the editorial independence and financial support this vital publication has earned and deserves.

Sincerely,
Patrick Durkin, WOCA president
Robert Haase, WOCA vice president
Laurel Steffes, WOCA secretary and treasurer
David Zeug, WOCA board member

3) WOCA STATUS as a NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION UPDATED: Many thanks to WOCA Secretary/Treasurer Laurel Steffes for updating our status as a nonprofit organization with the IRS. Laurel also worked with former WOCA treasurer Tom Muench to transfer our banking services and savings account from Tomah to Madison.

3a) SHOULD WOCA OPEN a PAYPAL ACCOUNT? Laurel is checking into this option, which would allow members to pay annual dues and other items online. The cost for PayPal Cost is 2.9 percent plus 30 cents per transaction. They would provide a patch and icon to paste on our

website. We can discuss this option in August, or share your thoughts with Laurel and me by email.

4) NEW WOCA LOGO: Laurel Steffes worked with a graphic artist to create a new WOCA logo. We needed something that we could more easily use in today's digital world, from business cards to engravings. I hope you'll like them. Thanks to Laurel for all her work, and for getting us a great bargain in the deal: \$400. To receive these images for your use on business cards, stationery, etc., email Laurel at Laurel.Steffes@gmail.com. Laurel hopes to have membership cards ready to hand out in August. To save Laurel lots of extra work mailing cards, please make plans to attend the conference so you can receive the cards in person. ;-)



is a member in good standing of the Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association for 20____.

President



5) WOCA

NONSTOCK FILING MADE: I filed WOCA's Form 5 as a Domestic Nonstock Corporation Annual Report in late December with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions - Division of Corporate and Consumer Services.

6) NWTF Honors SMALL and LABARBERA: The National Wild Turkey Federation awarded its top media awards to WOCA members Mark LaBarbera of Hazel Green and Dan Small of Westby. They were named “Outdoor Writers of the Year” for their conservation reporting via radio, TV, web, magazine and newspapers.

NWTF national secretary Robert Higginbotham and Wisconsin chapter president David Burke presented the award to LaBarbera and Small at the Wisconsin state NWTF convention at Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, in January.

The national non-profit Outdoor Heritage Education Center, of Hazel Green, produced the educational one-hour special, which showcases Wisconsin's successful restoration and management of wild turkey populations over the past 40 years. LaBarbera was executive producer, and Small hosted the one-hour special.

“Wild Turkeys in Wisconsin” also won first-place awards from the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers in the hunting and open categories of the Association's annual Excellence in Craft competition. The duo also produces the annual “Deer Hunt Wisconsin” TV specials with DNR, SCI Chapters, Whitetails Unlimited and other partners.

Wild Turkeys in Wisconsin can be seen online at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo6G_MhTVwRa25K07uwpaYg.



NWTF national secretary Robert Higginbotham and Wisconsin chapter president David Burke presented the 2017 media award to Mark LaBarbera and Small at the Wisconsin state NWTF convention at Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, in January.

7) NEW JOB for SERENO: WOCA member Jennifer Sereno has left her post with the DNR's central communications office to work for the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, which includes work to improve land-use and habitats in the Yahara Basin to reduce phosphorus,

sediments and chloride entering the system. Jenny plans to retain her WOCA membership, and I encourage everyone to thank her for her work at the DNR, and for her generosity in supporting the annual WOCA scholarship. She donated \$250 each of the past two years.

8) WOCA 2018 Conference DATES: I've reserved our dates for the 2018 conference at Trees for Tomorrow. Unless I hear an outpouring of objections, we'll meet July 20-22, 2018, at Trees for Tomorrow.

9) 2016 WOCA CONFERENCE SET ATTENDANCE RECORD: Secretary/Treasurer Laurel Steffes said our July 2016 conference attracted 30 dues-paying and registration-paying attendees, which is the most any of us remember at the conference. Of course, if anyone cares to dispute this as a record, we'll demand an official group photo to verify. ;-) Let's do our best to set another record in August!

Here's our official group photo from our 2016 conference:



10) THROWBACK PHOTO: Tim Eisele sent along this photo from the WOCA 2005 meeting in Eagle River. Sandy Lotto, who had been the naturalist at Trees for many years, was building her own log home. After the meeting, she offered to take a bunch of us out to see it. Tim can't identify all of the people in the photo but Kenny Salwey, far left, talked to us that year and joined WOCA, and Lisa Gaumnitz, and Roger Sabota are in the front row. Jim, who lived in Eau Claire and passed away a few years later and I forget his last name right now, is toward the back right and of course Larry Van Veghel is in front. Ann Sayers, who had been PR for Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters and went to the Int. Crane Foundation, is in front row. Gene Cooper is in the back row. Tim thinks the fellow in the blue cap was from Illinois and he has passed away.



11) 2016 WOCA SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTED: Milwaukee, WI – The Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association awarded its inaugural scholarship to Marquette University graduate student Theresa Soley. The scholarship was presented by Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Outdoors Editor and WOCA member Paul Smith.

Soley is completing a master's degree in communication with an emphasis on environmental topics. In applying for the scholarship, she noted, "I grew up in Milwaukee and loved the zoo, sailing and heading to Kettle Moraine State Forest to look for snakes with my father." She noted she chose conservation as her career focus after seeing large tracks of rainforest converted to cattle pasture in Brazil.

In recommending her for the award, Marquette Professional in Residence Joe Brown said, "One of the things that stands out about Theresa is her infinite love for the outdoors...Writing independently, Soley produced a feature length article about Great Lakes fish being introduced into South American lakes. This article was published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel; the Smithsonian followed up with its own article a few months later." Soley's article explores how invasive trout are choking out a native small fish that is a staple of the Aymara people in Brazil.



12) BOB HAASE PUBLISHES "Bob's Fly Tying Tips and Techniques"

Bob said he finished writing his book, "Bob's Fly Tying Tips and Techniques," and it is available as print on demand through Amazon.

The book is 8-1/2x11 in size and is 128 pages long. It has over 130 tying tips plus chapters on Threads and Thread Control, Characteristics and Substitution of Materials, Modifying Fly Patterns, Organization of Tools and Materials, Teaching Others to Tie, and step by step instructions on how to tie 12 of my favorite patterns, and more.

Bob has been tying flies for 65 years and still tie a few thousand every year. He received endorsements from David Whitlock, Bill Sherer, and David Seligman. He has written articles for Wisconsin Trout Unlimited and other publications like Fly Tyer Magazine, but this is his first attempt at writing a book.

13) GLENN HELGELAND PUBLISHES "IN THE LAND OF THE BEAR," by Dennis Geurink. This is an inside look at the excitement, mystery, danger and adventure of hunting huge, aggressive brown bears; and traveling in Russia from 1991 through 2011, a time of political turmoil when the Soviet Union was evolving into Russia.

In addition to hair-raising stories of lethal brown bear attacks on people and livestock, bears digging up coffins in cemeteries, bears invading camps, and brown and grizzly bear hunting in general, the book contains historical perspective of what was happening politically at that time in Russia, detailing how the Siberian people lived, worked, survived ... and how they viewed ordinary Americans. (Favorably.)

Geurink was the first American guide/outfitter to take clients to the brown bear capital of the world. Nearly 70 percent of the world's brown bear population is in Russia. Russia is a

game rich country, because few residents are allowed to own firearms; thus there is little hunting activity.

The book is 286 pages, 6" x 9", paperback. For details on the book, or to order online, go to www.targetcommbooks.com. Retail price is \$21.95.

Geurink, a Michigan native, is a retired teacher and was once the Midwest Regional Editor of *Field & Stream* magazine. He wrote a newspaper weekly outdoor column for nearly 40 years. He guided/outfitted in Siberia from 1992 through 2011, when he sold his outfitting business, then bought it back just recently because he couldn't stay away. He missed the adventure, the hunting, and the people he worked with in Siberia.

14) HELPING KIDS: Mark LaBarbera wanted us to help the Oconto River Kids organization identify youngsters with a life-threatening illness who would like to go on a free bear hunt. Please share this link with doctors, nurses, friends and families who could help connect the youngster with this opportunity. <http://www.ocontoriverkids.com/>

15) DURKIN REPLACES MUENCH ON WISCONSIN CONSERVATION HALL OF FAME BOARD: Just another bookkeeping item: I'll represent WOCA on future meetings and votes involving the WCHOF. It holds an annual review/vote of prospective inductees in early November, and then hosts its annual induction ceremony in late April.

16) ENERGY FAIR is JUNE 16-18: The annual Energy Fair east of Stevens Point attracts about 13,000 people. It's put on by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA). If you're interested in covering/attending this event, contact Gina Miresse, MREA Development Director, 715-592-6595 ext. 113; gina@midwestrenew.org. The main event is June 16-18 in Custer. Miresse said it's shaping up to be the show's best year yet, with the recent announcement of [JB Straubel, CTO of Tesla](#) is the keynote speaker on Saturday.

That's all for now. If you have any news you want to share in our summer newsletter, email it to me asap.

Best,
Pat

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