



Making Waves



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Finding Refuge in My Town



by Ann Runstrom



What makes a town a great place to live?

Many of my friends would respond "somewhere near good fishing!"

I agree that an environment which supports healthy populations of fish and wildlife would also be a healthy place for people. So, living next door to a wildlife and fish refuge should mean that at least a healthy environment is nearby.

Beyond that, people working together and volunteering their time and talent for their community is what makes a town a great place to live. Friends of the Refuge Headwaters is just such a group of people.



On February 23, children in the Winona (Minnesota) community found "their" refuge a great place to fish. Staff from the La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office aided the Friends group and refuge staff in hosting a kids' ice



A young and enthusiastic angler enjoys ice fishing at the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge - Winona District

fishing event at the McKnally landing on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge – Winona District.



It was a good day to be glued to a hole ... not a television!

Ice fishing holes were pre-drilled and waiting when the children arrived. Experienced anglers helped the kids get their tackle and bait set up and then instructed them on how to fish through a hole in the ice. Numerous ice shacks were in place for protection from the wind and cold and high tech fish finders were utilized to enhance the probability of success.



When chilled or hungry, kids could go into a warming tent for some hot chocolate and a snack. Though the action was slow, the result was a good sample of the resident species of fish. In all, one northern pike, one yellow perch, one bluegill, and one black crappie were brought up through the ice. The kid's already know this, but "It isn't the catching, it's the fishing that is important."

Thanks to the refuge, their friends group, and the Winona community for making this town a great place to live ... and play.

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The Pursuit of Happiness

by Mark Steingraeber



As U.S. citizens, we believe that "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" are inalienable rights endowed to all of humanity.

But what makes one happy?



For the 8th grade class at Aquinas Middle School in La Crosse, the continuing search for answers to this question should help guide these

students to personally satisfying occupations in the years ahead. That was the keynote message delivered to 78 students here on March 1 by a human resource expert from a major employer in the community during the school's annual Career Day.



Fishery biologist Mark Steingraeber recounts his career path with students at Aquinas Middle School



Steingraeber's pursuit of happiness has included work with a variety of fish. Clockwise from top left: brook trout, lake sturgeon, paddlefish, and kokanee salmon.

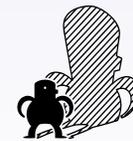
In keeping with the 'quest for happiness' theme, La Crosse FWCO fishery biologist Mark Steingraeber participated in this annual event for the ninth consecutive year by describing the educational path and life-journey that began to lead him toward a satisfying natural resource career in service to the nation more than 30 years ago.



Information on the duties, responsibilities, and requirements of a professional fishery biologist for the Service was likewise described while images of the diverse work performed by Service fishery biologists around the country were projected for display. The importance of communication, information technology, math, and interpersonal skills was stressed in whatever career a student might select.



A career fair followed this address with eleven occupations represented in 2013. Students selected from among these to attend four 20-minute presentations given by a local professional employed in that occupation. This morning program culminated a month-long Guidance Department plan to encourage students to think about career options for the future.



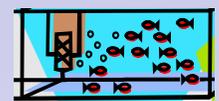
Students were also encouraged to closely examine potential career choices by actively participating in job-shadow and volunteer opportunities available to them in high school and college.

The pursuit of happiness. In my case ... fish! What more could one ask for?



School's Out ... for the Afternoon!

By Nicholas Bloomfield



Over the last several weeks, the La Crosse FWCO has been the beneficiary of two high school interns coming to help out around the office.

Ryan Vue, a junior at La Crosse Central High School, and Justin Kammer, a senior at La Crosse Logan High School, hope to enter a field in natural resources or biology and had the opportunity to intern at several local stations.

Along with our office, they're also working with the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the La Crosse District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

They leave school early two afternoons each week to gain valuable on-the-job experience.



Ryan Vue (left) and Justin Kammer (right) are seniors at La Crosse's Central and Logan High School, respectively. Both earn academic credit for their volunteer efforts at the FWCO.

Unfortunately, February and March aren't the greatest times to be working for a fisheries office in Wisconsin. However, they have been extremely helpful in some of the projects we have going on at the station.

We cleaned and installed a small fish tank for the display area that will house native minnows and darters. They helped clean and prepare mussels for the new display cases. They have also been instrumental in the ongoing moving process in the garage and the woodshop as well.



We appreciate all of their hard work and wish them the best in the future!

Muscling in Some Mussel Conservation



By Ann Runstrom



The Upper Mississippi River Mussel Coordination Team (MCT) held its annual meeting at the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin, on February 20-21.

The team consists of biologists from state agencies in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois, the University of Minnesota, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, the National Park Service, Exelon Generation (a power company), and Ecological Specialists (an aquatic environmental consulting firm).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff from the La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Genoa National Fish Hatchery, Twin Cities Field Office, and Rock Island Field Office also participates as members of the MCT.



Zebra mussels smother a native mussel

Topics of discussion at the meeting included: zebra mussel monitoring; research on zebra mussel control strategies; propagation and survey results for two federally endangered species (winged mapleleaf, Higgins' eye pearlymussel); habitat monitoring, restoration, and survey activity planning for the upcoming field season; and standard guidelines for mussel sampling.

The spread of the exotic zebra mussel, which can smother native mussels, has caused drastic declines in native mussel populations. Zebra mussels were carried into the Upper Mississippi River via commercial and recreational navigation made possible by the current lock and dam system.

Under the authority of the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued its final Biological Opinion in 2000, finding that continued operation and maintenance of the Corps' 9-foot navigation channel on the Upper Mississippi River System will jeopardize the continued existence of the Higgins' eye pearlymussel. As a consequence, the Corps has since provided funding for much of the mussel restoration efforts here. Partner agencies on the MCT also contribute extensive staff time and resources to complete mussel conservation activities in the basin.



Propagation success!

As a member of this dedicated group, I know that in spite of current fiscal restraints limiting agency funding, the passion of the individual members of this team and their interest in the welfare of our Nation's mussel resources will ensure that critical conservation actions continue.

Upcoming Events



Mark Your Calendar Now!

Whitney Genetics Laboratory
April 5

Dedication - 1:30 pm
Open House - 3 pm to 6 pm
Fish & Wildlife Resource Center
Onalaska
(see invitation below)

La Crosse Earth Fair
April 21, 11 am - 5 pm
Myrick Hixon EcoPark, La Crosse

Mississippi River
Research Consortium
April 24 - 26
Radisson Hotel, La Crosse

Unwanted Medication Collection
April 27, 10 am - 2 pm
Four La X County Locations
(see page 4 for details)

Hope to See You!



Help Us Celebrate
The new addition to the La Crosse Fish Health Center

The
Whitney Genetics Laboratory

Building Dedication and Open House



1:30 to 6 pm April 5, 2013
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Resource Center
555 Lester Avenue, Onalaska, WI



April 5, 2013

Whitney Genetics Laboratory

Building Dedication 1:30 – 2:30 pm
Cake and Refreshments 2:30 – 3 pm

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Resource Center
Open House 3 – 6 pm

Hosted by
La Crosse Fish Health Center and
Whitney Genetics Laboratory
La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
Law Enforcement
Ecological Services

555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650
608-783-8444

Medication Drop Off



Saturday, April 27, 2013
10:00AM—2:00PM

****** 4 Drop Off Locations ******

**Drop-off
sponsored by:**



- 1** **Viterbo Fine Arts**
Parking Lot
929 Jackson Street, La Crosse
- 2** **Onalaska Police Dept.**
415 Main Street, Onalaska
- 3** **CESA #4**
923 E. Garland St., West Salem

YOU CAN BRING:

- All Prescription Medications
- Over-the-Counter Medications
- Tablets
- Capsules
- Liquids
- Creams
- Ointments
- Aerosols
- Patches

Please **do not bring** Sharps, Needles or Hazardous Materials to these locations.

- 4** **La Crosse County HHM**
6500 State Road 16, La Crosse

YOU CAN BRING:

- All Prescription Medications
- Over-the-Counter Medications
- Tablets
- Capsules
- Liquids
- Creams, Ointments
- Aerosols, Patches

The following are accepted only at HHM :

- Needles/Sharps
- Mercury Thermometers
- Fluorescent Lamps and Electronics
- Household Wastes (Paint, Cleaners, Pesticides, Oils, etc.)

Businesses - Call 785-9999 for details regarding disposal of business waste.

Check www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/solidwaste/HHM/ or call **785-9999** for more information and future drop off dates.



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Volunteers & FUMFS**



**Let's Make
Waves!**

**2013 Service
Opportunities**



What	Where	Who	When
Pike & Walleye Spawning	Genoa NFH	Genoa NFH	April - May
Fish Health Assessments	Genoa NFH	LaX FHC	April - May
Mussel Propagation	Genoa NFH	Genoa NFH	April
River Education Days	Trempealeau NWR	LaX FWCO	May 14-15
Veterans Fishing Day	Tomah VA Hospital	LaX FWCO	May 15
Friends Youth Fishing Day	Genoa NFH	Genoa NFH	May 18
River Clean-Up Day	Miss. River-Pool 8	LaX FWCO	June 1
Youth Fishing Day	Necedah NWR	LaX FWCO	June 1
Trout Fest	Coon Valley	LaX FWCO	June 15
Youth Outdoor Fest	Pettibone Park	LaX FWCO	July 13
River Adventure Day	Miss. River-Pool 9	LaX FWCO	July 16
Mussel Surveys	Rivers in WI & IA	Genoa NFH	July - August
Sturgeon Tagging	Genoa NFH	LaX FWCO	August
Winged Mapleleaf Survey	St Croix River (MN/WI)	Genoa NFH	September
Goby Round-Up	Illinois River	LaX FWCO	September
Wild Fish Health Surveys	Mississippi River	LaX FHC	July - August
Electrofishing Surveys	Mississippi River	LaX FWCO	April - November
Data Entry	Onalaska	LaX FWCO	Year Round



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fishery Program Offices

Genoa National Fish Hatchery
55689 State Road 35
Genoa, WI 54632
(608) 689-2605

La Crosse Fish Health Ctr
555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650
(608) 783-8418

La Crosse Fish & Wild. Cons. Office
555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650
(608) 783-8417

**Friends of the Upper
Mississippi Fishery Services**
555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650
608-783-8417
<http://fumfs.org>

