

# Refuge Reflections

A Publication Funded by Seney Natural History Association for its Members.

## Seney Natural History Association

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## Manager's Corner

by Mark Vaniman



Wow – has it really been a whole year? They say time flies when you're having fun and I can certainly attest to the truth of that statement. It definitely doesn't seem like a year since I packed up our house (for the sixth time) and made the trek to Seney. And what a year it has been! After 25 years on the prairie, Seney is quite a change for me. I am amazed at the habitats, the wildlife and, most of all, the people.

As you may know, 2010 marked the 75th anniversary of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge was established in 1935 by Executive Order for the protection and production of migratory birds and other wildlife. The Refuge encompasses 95,238 acres, of which 25,150 acres are designated wilderness. The land that makes up Seney NWR was once heavily logged, burned, ditched, drained and cultivated. However, the harsh conditions of the UP would not provide a hospitable environment for settlement and agriculture so Mother Nature stepped in and reclaimed the newly abandoned land. What you see today is a result of natural processes with, in some areas, a little boost from Refuge Staff.

Management of the Refuge is based on establishing legislation but always considers "Wildlife First." After that, according to the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997, we manage for the Big Six; hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, interpretation and education. Any activities outside of this list, and not considered routine management tasks, must be found to be an appropriate use and also compat-

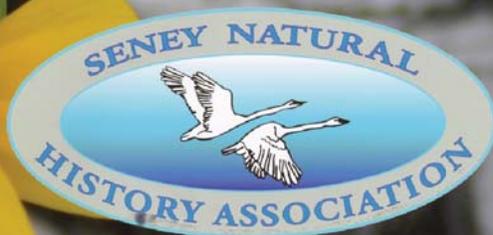


Photo: Paper Birch Tree.  
Credit: Mary Taylor,  
2010 Photo Contest.

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# Seney by Way of Senegal

by Sara Hollerich

You could say I ended up at Seney in a round about sort of way. I started my career with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 1998 with the Student Career Intern Program in Lander, Wyoming at the Lander Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office and have been on the move ever since. I have lived in Grand Junction - Colorado, Quincy - Illinois, Wapello - Iowa, and Prairie City - Iowa with the service. In 2007, I decided to take a break from the USFWS and follow a life long dream of mine by joining the Peace Corps. At the time I was working at Neal Smith NWR in their Visitor Services Program having a great time working with schools, teachers, special events, and a whole host of other activities, but I was feeling the itch to move and try out a new place. Being single with no kids and in my early 30s I felt, "no time was like the present," to cut the few ties holding me down and jump head- first into unknown territory, so I applied.

I never thought in a million years I would go to Africa. To me it was always one of those scary places where disease and corrupt governments were rampant. I never imagined going there except for the longing I felt whenever I watched nature programs; I really wanted to see an elephant, lion, or one of the many other amazing animals roaming there wild and free. Alas, the part of Africa which was to be my home for the next two years was a far cry from elephants, lions, and wildebeests, but I did see a few warthogs, some monkeys and a very scary troop of baboons.

In September 2007, I flew to Senegal, West Africa where I was to work with the Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie near St. Louis. I was an ecotourism volunteer which meant I helped them with their visitor services program. It was a great experience but I think I left more changed than any influence I had on my work partners. In the interest of space I will leave you to find out more about the park at which I worked by visiting their website at <http://sites.google.com/site/languedeparbarienational-park/>. I am also willing to come and talk to groups about my experience – I only need to be asked.

After being in the Peace Corps for two years it has been a bit of an adjustment coming back to America, finding a job, and having a schedule to stick to. I still can't believe

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Photo: Ruffed Grouse. Credit: Michael Youngblood. 2010 Photo Contest Entrant.

## A Sweet Tweet!

by Sara Hollerich

It will forever go down as the most productive survey I have ever filled out. When I got the notification that Refuges participating in the “Birder Friendly Refuges” survey would get a special prize, I never dreamed it would be this big.

A few weeks after filling out the survey I was surprised by a box in the mail. The contents were numerous books (nearly 20 in all) with no sign of who they were from or what they were for. Mystified, I cataloged the books and hauled them over to the front desk at the Visitor Center. A week later I received an email explaining the windfall. It was for filling out the survey.

Over the next month and a half two more boxes of books arrived, several pairs of binoculars, a spotting scope with a tripod, three backpacks, and two GPS units in all. Add all that to the 10 pair of butterfly/birding binoculars (they have a close focus of 18” to inspect butterflies and dragonflies up close and personal) already purchased this summer. We now have a plethora of binoculars to choose from for people with different interests. So, when you come to visit next summer feel free to check out one of our new pairs of binoculars or take a “Birder Backpack” out on the trail for a spin. ✨

## Nature Nut Column



Dear Nature Nut,

I have heard that Bald Eagles pull out their talons when they get too old and dull. This seems odd, is it true?

Skeptical

Dear Skeptical,

You are right to be so. This is part of an urban legend known as the “Bald Eagle Rebirth”. It claims that when a Bald Eagle reaches the age of 40 it spends about 150 days regenerating itself by plucking out its talons and feathers and beating its beak against a rock until it falls off. Then it allows the talons, feathers, and beak to re-grow so it can live another 30 to 40 years.

This couldn't be further from the truth. Despite the fact it would starve to death because it would be unable to catch or eat food, the oldest known wild Bald Eagle only lived to be 28 years old. Eagles do go through an annual molt. Molting starts in the spring with the feathers on its head and neck, next the body and flight feathers, finally finishing with the tail feathers in late fall.

The beak of a bird is made of keratin, the same material as our fingernails. Consequently, a bird's beak grows from one to three inches a year depending on the species. This allows the beak to sharpen on its own over time. It grows from the base and inside to the outside which allows the outer portions of the beak to break away providing a continually sharpening surface. The talons, which are fingernails, behave in much the same way.

Dear Nature Nut,

Why are all those pine trees turning yellow and dying?

Concerned

Dear Concerned,

The trees you are referring to are Tamaracks, which are not pines, and they change color and shed their needles making them a deciduous conifer. Deciduous trees are trees that lose their leaves in the fall. A conifer is a tree that has cones. Most trees with needles are evergreens such as pines. Just remember that not all trees with needles are evergreens.

The Tamarack turns yellow in the fall as the plant stops making chlorophyll in preparation for winter. As the color of the Tamarack's needles (leaves) fades, you can see the golds and yellows that have been masked by the blue-green coloration all summer before the needles finally drop off entirely, leaving the tree bare for the winter.

*The questions in the Nature Nut column come from questions posed by visitors. \**



Photo: Tamaracks in the fall.  
Credit: Sara Hollerich USFWS

## A Tribute to Dr. Richard McNeill

Keeper of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge Herbarium  
by Jennifer McDonough



In 1939 a herbarium collection was started at Seney National Wildlife Refuge. In 1991 a cardboard box containing these herbarium specimens was discovered by the administrative technician while searching for a pair of rubber boots in a rundown building. The box of specimens was "rescued", brought to the office, and unused monies from a plant identification project were used to purchase a herbarium cabinet. Interest in maintaining the herbarium collection waned until 1995 when Dr. Richard "Dick" McNeill arrived as a volunteer and soon became an eager herbarium trustee.

Dick McNeill grew up in Detroit, served during World War II, and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. Dick's academic career started by teaching in Arcadia followed by teaching seventh grade and eventually middle school and high school biology in Traverse City. After earning his doctorate (1971), Dick taught biology, ecology, wildlife conservation, and environmental health at Ferris State University in Big Rapids. Upon retiring in 1983, Dick and his wife Elsie bought a place in Grand Marais, Michigan, about 30 miles north of Seney National Wildlife Refuge where they spent many summers. In 1992, Dick and Elsie moved to Grand Marais full time and sought out volunteer opportunities at the Refuge soon after.

Dick brought his passion for science and teaching with him to the Refuge. He shared his knowledge and excitement with hundreds of visitors each year and had an influence on dozens of interns headed out into natural resources careers. Although Dick's interests varied he had a passion for plants and a desire to do more at the Refuge. He became involved with the Refuge's herbarium collection, and over more than a decade made a significant contribution to the organization and development of this collection.

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# Fishing and Foraging on the Refuge

by Dale Maxson



With most of my belongings stuffed into my '95 Jeep Grand Cherokee, I pulled into the River Road Quarters on a warm July evening. My primary goal for the season was to gain visitor services experience with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Like other interns before me, I felt called to explore the land behind the bunkhouse. I was amazed by the quality of the timber. Growing up in Illinois, you get accustomed to briar patches and multiflora rose tearing through your jeans

anytime you feel like going for a hike in the woods. But up here... it is so clear. I kept walking around the woods until I hit the Manistique River. I knew there had to be fish in there, but what kind? I'd never fished a river quite like that before. That was the beginning of the loss of all normalcies in my life. Besides, work only lasted from 8am-5:30pm... what was I supposed to do with the rest of my time? I considered it an obligation to my job that I find out precisely what kind of fish were swimming in the river behind the bunkhouse.

Fishing in Illinois is different than here. In Illinois you hike out to the creek with whatever gear you can slap together... stiff rod, 14lb line, split shot, and good-sized hooks... and spend your time soaking worms or chicken livers. You use such heavy tackle because you are fishing for Channel Cat (*Ictalurus punctatus*) and you'd like to come home with a nice four-pounder, but these guys can reach weights of 40, or even 50 lbs. Not to mention the friends this guy hangs out with: Freshwater Drum, Blue Catfish, Bullhead, Buffalo and other hefty bottom-feeders. But that isn't the way to fish up here... and I learned that quickly after my first night of getting skunked out on the Manistique River.

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## Announcements

### 75th Anniversary

A presentation about the history of Seney NWR is now available for civic organizations. If you are interested in booking a presentation please contact Sara Hollerich (906) 586-9851 x16.

### Bird Feeders

Remember to wash your bird feeders monthly and keep food off the ground when possible so birds aren't feeding in their own feces. Keeping things clean will help keep your feathered friends happy and healthy. Dirty bird feeders can spread diseases!

### Go Green!

If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically please email [Sara Hollerich@fws.gov](mailto:Sara.Hollerich@fws.gov) and be placed on the email list. If you do this, we will remove your name from the mailing list. If you wish to continue to receive a hard copy as well, please specify.

### Weekly Radio Spot

Tune into Eagle 96.7 of Newberry every Tuesday morning between 8:45 and 9:00 am to listen to a weekly Refuge update.

### Seney Goes Social

Fan us on Facebook to stay up to date on the happenings at Seney. Become our contact on Flickr and see up to date photos of the Refuge.



# Volunteers of the Year

Jim and Ethel Wells have been volunteering for the Refuge since 2003. They always seem to be available and willing to fill in for a variety of tasks and have taken the initiative to carry out several projects on their own. Jim and Ethel work



a weekly, four hour shift at the visitor center desk where they enthusiastically greet visitors, answer questions, and encourage appropriate enjoyment of the Refuge. Besides their weekly shift they often fill in during other vacant desk shifts and have volunteered for the following list of tasks:

- Ethel created a distribution list and they regularly distribute brochures to area businesses
- Assist with programming for school groups
- Assist with special events including presenting at Scout Day
- Jim maintains all the fishing line collection containers
- Jim drives the bus for Wildlife Wednesdays and morning tours
- Ethel assisted with tallying volunteer information for an annual refuge report
- Ethel initiated a discussion and brought ideas to the board regarding upgrading our donation box
- They host all of the interns for dinner at their house
- They attended last year's Harbor Island CCP open house

Jim and Ethel are a pleasure to work with and we thank them for their time and efforts. \*

# Thank You

This year volunteers provided over 5,000 hours of service. That is as much as 2 ½ full time staff members.

Volunteer works included:

- Working the front desk at the Visitor Center
- Bookstore operations
- Administrative duties
- Trail building and repair
- Mowing
- Recycling program
- Herbarium assistance
- Distribution of publications
- Outreach events
- Special events
- Bird counts
- Maintenance work
- Air quality measurements
- Drive bus
- Leading programs

We would like to say "Thank You" to all of our volunteers. We couldn't do it without your support! \*



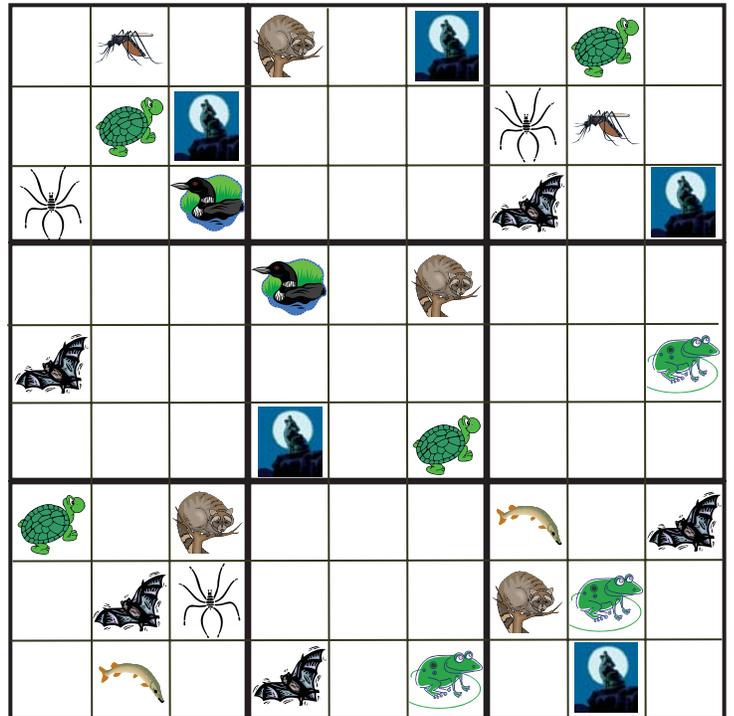
2010 Volunteers who attended the Volunteer Recognition Dinner. Back Row: Kathy Mallory, Connie Trick, Rob Giles, Bob Beaker, Joe Kolder, Barb and Jeff Brockway, Dave Fleischmann, Dee and George Phinney, Liz Hill, Jim Wicks, Tom Kenney, Dan Phillips, Steve Ford, Jack Glascock, Dean Fitzgerald, Jim Wells, Victor Hughson, and Bart Spratto. Front Row: Shirley Harkness, Fanny and Roman Schlabach, Mary Beaker, Pat Foldenauer, Marge Wicks, Sue Fleischmann, Becky Pritchard, Judy Phillips, Claudia Slater, Cristyne Kihm, David Badgley, Carol Campbell, and Ethel Wells.

# Fun Page

## Aniduko

Solve the puzzle by placing a picture of an animal in each 1x1 box. The trick, each row, column and 3x3 box must contain each of the following animals. If this boggles your mind go ahead and assign each animal a number then solve it like a traditional Sudoku puzzle.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  = Raccoon = 1  |  = Frog = 6   |
|  = Loon = 2     |  = Spider = 7 |
|  = Bat = 3      |  = Wolf = 8   |
|  = Mosquito = 4 |  = Pike = 9   |
|  = Turtle = 5   | <b>Good Luck!</b>  |



Solution page 13

## Answers to "What Am I?"



1. Black Bear claw marks on an American Beed tree.



2. Underside of a bolete mushroom.



3. Owl pellet complete with bird bones.



4. Underside of a Labrador Tea leaf.



5. Monarch Butterfly.

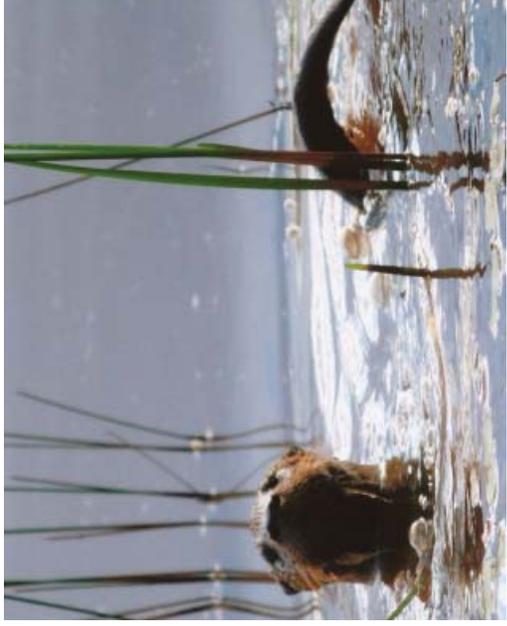


6. A slug.

# Congratulations to the 2010 Seney Amateur Photo Contest Winners



Barbara J. Hysell  
Cedar Waxwing  
1st Place - Wildlife



Nicole Oleckowski  
River Otter  
2nd Place - Wildlife



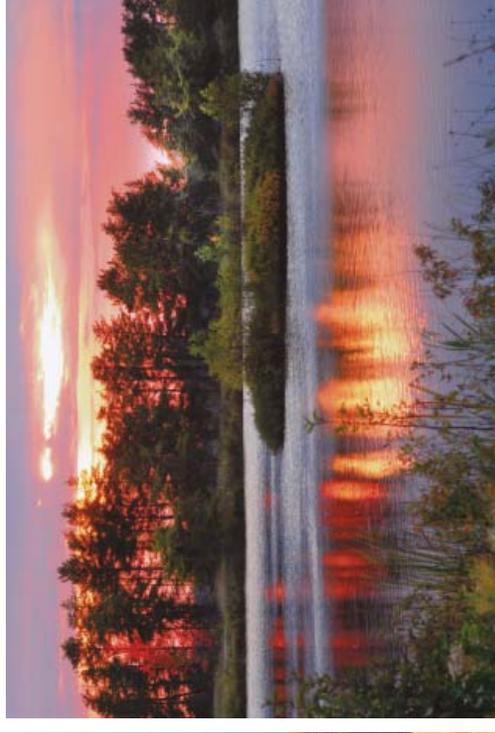
Charles Klinger  
Eastern Chipmunk eating Columbine  
3rd Place - Wildlife



Atlee S. Hart  
Misty Morning  
1st Place - Landscape



Candice Massey  
Rainbow  
3rd Place - Landscape



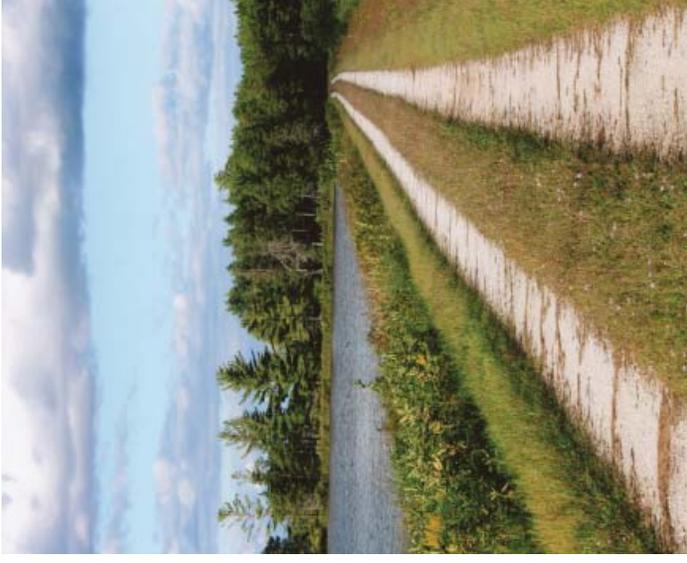
Candice Massey  
Sunset  
2nd Place - Landscape



Anne Springsteen  
Little Girl with Flower  
1st Place - Public Use/Recreation



Julie Christiansen  
Photographer  
3rd Place - Public Use/Recreation



Nicole Oleckowski  
Refuge Road  
2nd Place - Public Use/Recreation



Barbara J. Hysell  
Common Milkweed with Bee  
1st Place - Plants/Plant Like



Atlee S. Hart  
Common Milkweed Seeding  
3rd Place - Plants/Plant Like



Kimber Reagle  
Winter Leaves  
2nd Place - Plants/Plant Like

## A New Option to Connect with Schools

Seney Natural History Association (SNHA) is offering area schools a new option. With bussing for field trips being cut from school budgets, SNHA decided to help by offering some area schools \$100 per field trip to help cover the cost of bussing for a maximum of three trips annually. To get the money, the school must submit a request to SNHA and work with visitor services staff to provide appropriate activities and programs for the students. National Wildlife Refuges and friends groups have been working together to come up with creative solutions to get kids outside and foster a connection with nature. \*

## Geocaching

Geocaching is a global scavenger hunt of sorts, where folks hide a cache in a unique place and post the coordinates online along with some hints for others to attempt to find the cache. With the rise of GPS technology, this pastime has become a popular activity. As part of the 10/10/10 celebration, we organized 10 virtual caches throughout the Refuge. They are considered virtual caches since there won't be a container or item hidden at the site. For example, one of the sites is located in the Seney Wilderness Area.

The seeker must take a picture of him or herself at the site with the defining feature, and bring the picture back to the Refuge office or Visitor Center. If they are the first to log the cache, they will receive a trackable geocoin which they are to then hide in another cache. The geocoin has its own website, which tells a little about the goals of the coin. In the case of our geocoins, their goal is to get out and see as many wetlands as possible. You can find the sites on [www.waymarking.com](http://www.waymarking.com) \*



## Announcing the 2011 Amateur Photo Contest

The photo contest has grown from three categories in 2009 to four categories in 2010, to seven categories in 2011. New categories include youth (13 and younger), teen (14 to 18), and a special assignment category which will change annually. A plants category was added in 2010 to the existing categories of wildlife, public use/recreation, and landscape.

The special assignment this year is "The Art of Hunting/Fishing – not what you shoot or catch but how you do it." We want to encourage you to take part in two types of shooting this fall and enter the 2011 photo contest. We want your shots from the field of people actively engaged in hunting/fishing. What we don't want is a "trophy photo". Get creative! Send in photos of your hunting camp, stalking your prey, sitting in your blind, shooting, preparation for departure, fishy pursuits, the sky is the limit!!! We are looking forward to seeing what you can come up with. \*

## Pop Quiz

How much do you know about Seney NWR?

1. Name three native animals which were reintroduced to the Refuge?
2. What year was the first photo contest held at the Refuge?
3. The first recorded sighting of this large, white, fish-eating bird occurred in 1944 with another sighting in the 60's, and again in 1989. It has been sighted several times over the last few years.
4. What was stolen in 1976 when someone broke into the Visitor Center?
5. Name the chick raised by Refuge employees during the Sandhill Crane study in the early 90's which was later sent to a zoo in Minnesota?

# Activities Recap

Wow, what a season for Visitor Services! Things have been hopping here with four interns and two staff members. We tried some new things, some worked while others didn't. Ah well, çe la vie.

## ***Sharp-tailed Grouse Survey***

It was the pilot year for the citizen scientist survey. The goal of the survey was not to get an accurate count of the number of grouse dancing, but was meant to find the error between two observers. The survey offered participants a chance to watch Sharp-tailed Grouse dancing on a lek (dancing/breeding ground), a truly unforgettable sight. Don't worry if you missed out on last year's survey. The dates for next year will be announced in March, but it is roughly the first three weeks of April.



## ***Nighttime Marshbird Tour***

Although the nighttime marshbird tour has changed, instead of accompanying Yellow Rail researchers to band the secretive birds, we did a less invasive driving tour where we stopped at various locations and listened for nighttime marshbirds. Why the change? The Yellow Rail researchers were not banding here this year, but we still wanted to offer a chance for people to get out on the Refuge and search for these birds. Highlights from last year's tour included hearing Yellow Rails, Virginia Rails, Spring Peepers, Gray Treefrogs, Cope's Gray Treefrogs, and Green Frogs and seeing Sora, Trumpeter Swans, Common Loons, Sandhill

Cranes, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, and others. The Refuge truly is a different place at night.

## ***Children's Fishing Day***

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual Children's Fishing Day was a success in part because of a \$2,500 grant from federal funds, \$1000 from SNHA (and numerous volunteer hours) and \$550 in donations from local businesses. Fifty children ages 1-17 and their families participated in the event. It was a beautiful day and the fishing was good. Fish caught included Northern Pike, Yellow Perch, Bluegill, and Bullhead. There were approximately 180 people in attendance for the free fish dinner. The funds helped the refuge purchase additional materials for future Children's Fishing Days. New fishing poles and tackle were purchased for use at the event and for the new fishing pole loan program where children will be able to borrow poles throughout the summer season. Picnic tables were also purchased for the pavilion where dinner is held.



## ***Old Favorites Return***

Wildlife Wednesday tours were operated from 7:00 to 9:30pm each Wednesday night from June through the end of August. Three morning bus tours took their places in August, September and October after the evening bus tours stopped. Painting Seney returned this year. It was originally started by an intern a few years ago and was so popular, one of her frequent students, Kathy Mallory, took it over this summer and hosted painting sessions on Thursday afternoons in June, July and August. Jim Timmons continued to take fellow nature photographers out on tours of the Refuge on Thursday morning from

Continued on Page 12

## **Activities Recap** **Continued from page 9**

June to September.

### **Discovery Stations**

The summer interns decided to host a series of Discovery Stations where people could stop by and chat about the topic at the table or about the Refuge in general. The different discovery stations included "The Wonder of Loons," "Amazing Avian Adaptations," "Nature's Engineer – the Beaver," and "A Hoot in the Woods".

### **Jr. Duck Stamp Art Exhibit**

The Junior Duck Stamp Art Exhibit graced the walls of the Visitor Center for the month of July. Those visiting at that time were able to see the artwork of students who won first place in the competition from around the country. It is truly amazing what these young artists can do!

### **Monarch Madness**

Well, to put it mildly, we got skunked. We didn't see one adult Monarch as they had already left for more flowery pastures. So, the first year of Monarch Madness, a special event designed to catch, tag, and release Monarch butterflies before they migrate to Mexico, missed the mark. Next year we will give it another try a couple of weeks earlier.

### **Scout Day**

Scout Day is an annual event held in late September. The event is offered to Girl and Boy Scouts within the UP and the northern part of Lower Michigan. The goal of the event is to allow scouts the opportunity to achieve a variety of badge requirements and get them interested in the outdoors and their natural environment. This year's Scout Day included 17 sessions which were attended by 159 scouts and 88 adults totaling 247 participants.

### **Fall Color Float**

The first fall color float was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October. It was a cool, sunny day, the leaves were beautiful, and it was a wonderful way to end the season. A total of 18 people enjoyed an afternoon float down the Manistique River. There were a few last minute cancellations due to the cool weather, although when you got out on the water it was very pleasant. A good time was had by all and it was a great chance to talk to Refuge visitors and answer their questions about the Refuge.



### **The Big Sit**

Originally scheduled for an entire 24 hour period we manned the event from 7:00am to 5:00pm. The Big Sit involved choosing a place; we chose the start of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail, then making a 17 foot diameter circle from which to watch birds. We recorded 25 species of birds using the area. This information was reported to Bird Watcher Digest who initiated the Big Sit.

### **National Wildlife Refuge Week**

The Big Sit kicked off Refuge week which ran from October 10<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>. In celebration of Refuge week we have decided to keep the Visitor Center open annually until the Sunday after Refuge week, October 17<sup>th</sup> this year. The HAM radio operators made a special visit and broadcast from the Refuge on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> speaking with people from all over the country and world. National Wildlife Refuges from all over the country participated in this special event helping to spread the message of the National Wildlife Refuge System. \*

# Wigwam Connector Trail to Re-open

Thanks to the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and volunteers Dave Fleischmann and George Phinney, the Wigwam Connector Trail is finished. It was a hard summer's work for the crew. They had to brush out 2,100 feet of trail, haul gravel to fill in holes, build four boardwalks and one bridge. Their hard work paid off and the Wigwam Connector Trail will be re-opened as soon as the signs are installed.

YCC is a well-balanced work-learn-earn program for youth age 15 to 18 that helps to develop an understanding and appreciation in participating youth of the Nation's environment and heritage. YCC offers gainful summer employment to youth in a healthful outdoor atmosphere.



Photo: Dave Fleischmann, Coty Ott, Melissa Baldini, Jacey Kleeman, Nathan Rahn, Shelby Townley, and George Phinney.

# Volunteers Needed

If you would like to volunteer at the Seney National Wildlife Refuge please contact Sara\_Hollerich@fws.gov or (906) 586-9851 ext. 16.

Volunteers are needed to:

- help organize our photo files,
- work at the front desk, and
- assist with the Painting Seney program.

# Calendar

- **Nov. 13th - 14th.**  
Camping permits for hunters are issued at the office.
- **Nov. 13th - Dec. 1st.**  
Pine Creek and Driggs River Road open to public.
- **Jan. 1st - Feb. 28th.**  
Ice fishing allowed on all Refuge ponds.

See brochures for special regulations and hunting seasons.

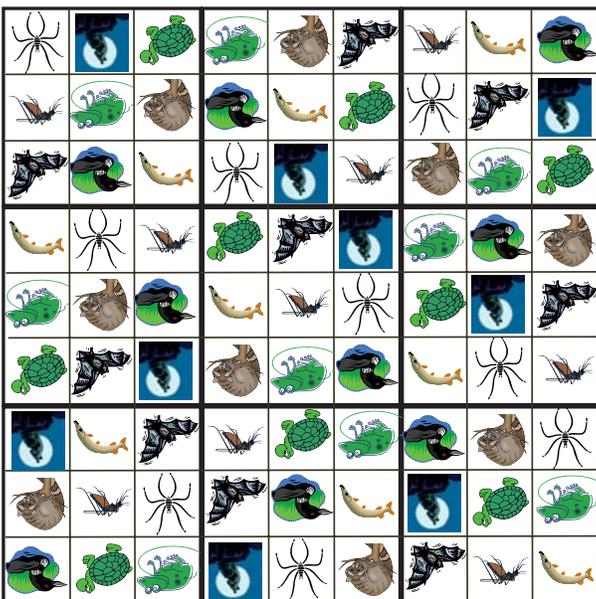


Photo: Eastern Forktail Female (Damselfly). Credit Ruben D. Irizarry, 2010 Photo Contest.

**Managers Corner**  
**Continued from page 1**

ible with the reasons for which the Refuge was established. For example, the use of ATV's or snowmobiles may be a legitimate way to observe wildlife but have not been found compatible with establishing legislation. Thus these types of vehicles are not permitted on the Refuge.

As the summer season fades into fall and our seasonal residents succumb to zugenruhe I am amazed at what has been accomplished over the past 75 years. I also look forward to our contribution to the next 75 years. I am proud to be associated with the people here on the Refuge and the surrounding communities and proud to be part of a team working to preserve the legacy of this wonderful place. \*

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**Seney by Way of Senegal**  
**Continued from page 2**

that I have been home for just a hair over a year and back with the National Wildlife Refuge System for nine months as the new Visitor Services Manager at Seney. My life has changed so much in the last year. I didn't believe it when they told us it would be a bigger culture shock coming home than when I entered the Peace Corps. I don't know if I would 100% agree, but it has been a big adjustment. For one thing, it was certainly a rude awakening to have to get up at six every day to be to work by seven. I was used to getting to the Park around 10am give or take an hour in Senegal. Their schedules were very flexible.

It has been an amazing year at Seney and I am so happy to be here. There is a whole new ecosystem to learn and a new language with words like yooper, yooperfied, fudgie, sugarbeeters, and trolls. I have been enjoying yooper activities like blueberry picking and found out the wild raspberries up here are red, not black. I am even contemplating the purchase of a new freezer to hold them all. So far I love my new home and plan to be here for a long time to come. \*

**A Tribute to Dr. Richard McNeill**  
**Continued from page 4**

Herbarium specimens are valuable in that they are often used to verify the identity of another specimen and are also official records of the geographic location of a species. They serve as proof that the species actually did occur at the site. Dick systematically arranged all of the Refuge's existing specimens according to *Gray's Manual of Botany* and initiated the preparation of a digital herbarium species list allowing information to be easily retrieved. He personally collected, mounted, identified, and labeled over 200 of the specimens currently in the herbarium. When help with identification was needed, Dick corresponded with nationally recognized systematic botanist, Dr. Edward Voss, to get the answers. During all this activity Dick continued to teach young folks by regularly instructing student interns on properly preparing botanical specimens and working with them to create a usable herbarium exhibit for the visitor center. During his collection forays, Dick often collected and transplanted Refuge plants to the visitor center to help educate visitors about these plants and the benefits of landscaping with native plants.

Dick McNeill passed away on 23 November, 2009 at the age of 83. He continued his volunteer efforts well into 2008. These efforts produced a well managed, professional quality, state recognized herbarium that has been, and will continue to be, a valuable asset to Refuge staff and colleagues.

Seney NWR recognizes Dick's contribution to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Refuge System and the field of botany in the State of Michigan. \*

Photo. Herbarium Specimen. Credit: USFWS



## ***Fishing and Foraging on The Refuge*** ***Continued from page 5***

Since I was limited to fishing from shore, I ended up spending a lot of time scouting the river for likely places I might find fish. I was looking for bends in the river where the current slowed down in pools. Not only did the river have to exhibit that particular shape, but I also had to be able to get down to the water. Once I had found a suitable spot, I setup my spinning rod and reel (in favor of an old French Mitchell reel) with a non-lead split shot, #6 hook with a small nightcrawler, all about 18" under a cork bobber. Throwing a setup like that isn't too tricky, and lets me work with the current to get that worm where I want it: under a tree overhanging one of those pools in the curl of the river. Soon I was catching fish. I never caught anything of really great size but a few keeper Yellow Perch (*Perca flavescens*) and occasionally a Rock Bass (*Ambloplites rupestris*). After I had an idea of what fish were swimming in the river, I decided it was time to move on to the refuge pools.

I found quickly that bobbers were a necessity if you wanted panfish out of the refuge pools. It is easy to spend an afternoon catching Pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*) on the D side of the E-D spillway. If you want a bit more fight, then head out to C-3 Pool to test out the Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*) along the weed beds. I've found that if you really want to catch some pike, hike down nearly to the end of C-3, next to the water control structure. Shiny spoons, like a Red-eye, work really well. A fast retrieve seemed to work out the best for me, as it caught the fish's attention and kept me out of the snags. Catching pike is a treat that I don't get to enjoy back home, plus they taste great! But, as Mark Vaniman once said, "Pike are the okra of the fish world. I like them, but I don't like the slime."

Growing up, springtime was an especially exciting time of year. Not for the Easter egg hunts, but the morel mushroom hunts!

If you've never tasted a Yellow Morel (*Morchella esculenta*) then you are truly missing out. My interest with wild edible fungi started there, but continued on with other common treats like the Sulfur Shelf (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) and Giant Puffball (*Calvatia gigantea*) mushrooms. Most of the wild mushrooms that I've enjoyed have been easy to identify, but Seney offered new challenges in identification. I had never seen so many bolete mushrooms until I arrived at SNWR. Of particular interest is the Butter Bolete (*Boletus appendiculatus*). I found a good clump of them growing down around the Marsh Creek pool. The butter bolete is large, dense, and delicious. I could see how some folks might not care for the texture (they've got a sponge-like layer of tubes under the cap instead of gills), however I find that they fit right in with a nice gravy on rice. Plus, you get the thrill of finding out whether or not you correctly identified your mushroom as an edible species. If you are interested in mushrooms, I suggest that you check out David Arora's *Mushrooms Demystified*. It is a hefty book, but it is well worth the money.

Thanks to everybody who has been a part of my fishing and foraging at Seney. This has been a season to remember. \*



Photo: Orange Bolete. Credit: Dale Maxson.

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# What am I?

