

# Refuge News

Fall 2011 Newsletter

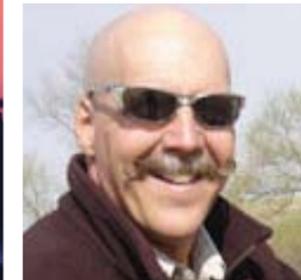
A Publication Funded by Seney Natural History Association for its Members.

## Seney Natural History Association

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### Manager's Corner by Mark Vaniman



Fall has got to be my favorite season – besides the other three. Temperatures are moderate, the colors of the leaves are spectacular and there is just a sense of change in the air. Simple things like a cool morning before dawn can take my mind to a duck blind in North Dakota or a grouse hunt in Michigan. The memories from working and living on National Wildlife Refuges these past 30 years are plentiful and nearly all are wonderful. I count the memories made, and those to come at Seney, as some of my most dear. Of course, when I think of the places Susan and I have lived, what comes to mind most often is the people we now know and have known. This is especially true here in the UP where we have met and enjoy an eclectic mix of personalities from around the Midwest and the United States.

Fall also coincides with the end of one fiscal year and the beginning of another. It is a time to look back at what we have done and what we hope to accomplish in the next 12 months and beyond. Of course these planning efforts are tied to our expected funding for the coming year and this year, like many others, the rumors of widespread cuts are rampant. It's no secret that Government spending is a contentious issue and the effects of budget cuts on the Refuge System may be tough to take. This has happened before and will undoubtedly happen again, but I am confident we can continue on a positive path that benefits both wildlife and people. It is amazing the amount of work we get done and the programs we provide due, in large part, to the Seney Natural History Association and our volunteers.

Without volunteers the visitor center hours would need to be reduced or even eliminated, some much needed infrastructure work would go un-accomplished

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Seney Natural History Association  
1674 Refuge Entrance Road  
Seney, MI 49883



Answers page 10

# What am I?

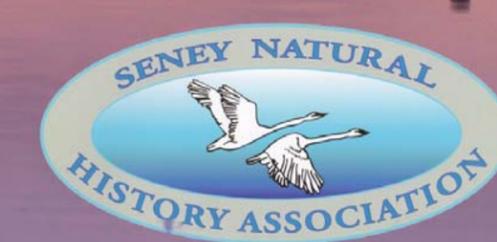
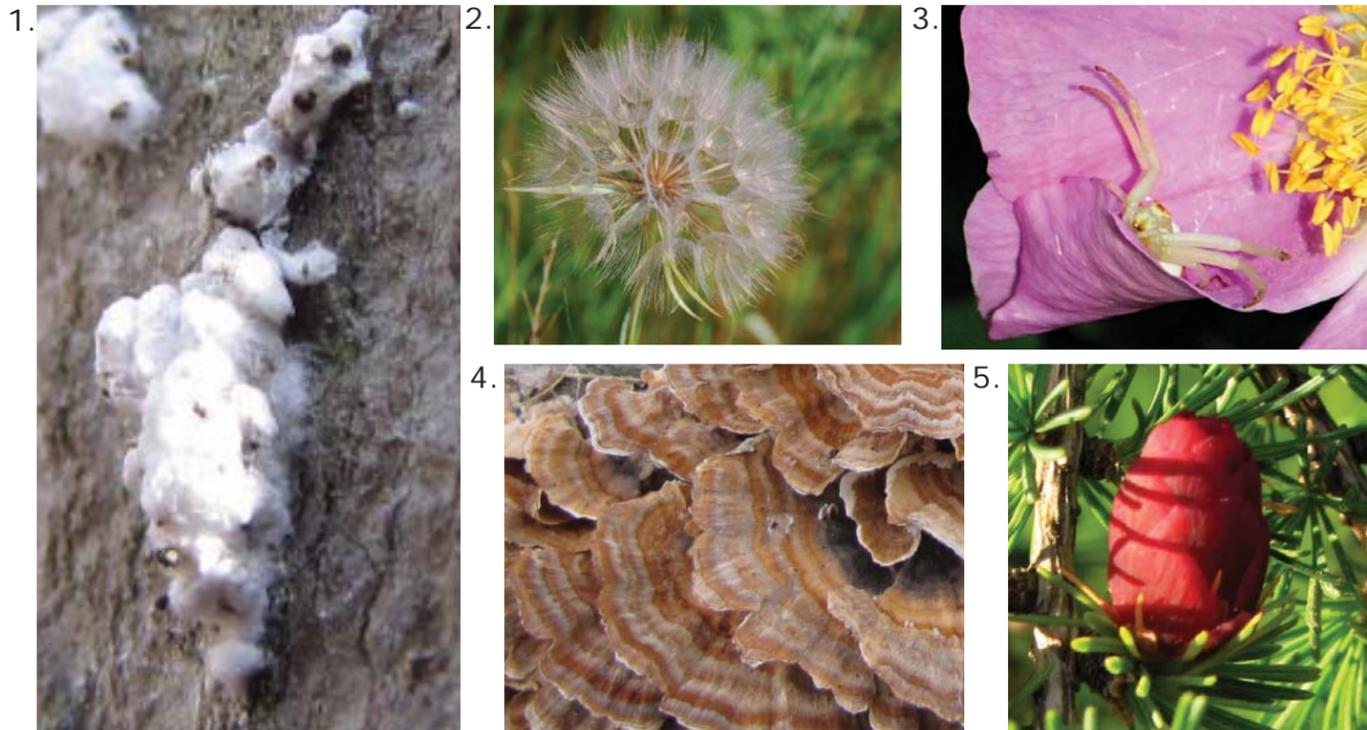


Photo: Trumpeter Swans at Sunrise.  
Credit: Dawn Kopp, 2011 Photo Contest.

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Photo: Moon Over Seney. Credit:  
Bryan LaFollette - 2011 Photo  
Contest

## Who is "The Wilderness Gal" and why is she here?

by Mandy Salminen



Photo: Rachael Carnes.  
Credit: Mandy Salminen,  
SNHA Intern.

"The Wilderness Gal" arrived at Seney in late September. Rachael Carnes has been referred to as "The Wilderness Gal" because many of us knew only that she was here to do some sort of work regarding our Wilderness Area. Maybe you don't even know there is a Wilderness Area within Seney National Wildlife Refuge. Do you know what a Wilderness Area is? When someone says the word wilderness, what do you think of? Do you think of a large wild area of land thick with vegetation? How about an extensive land area that spans on and on for miles? Or maybe you think of a tract of land that is unsettled, uncultivated and has been left in its natural condition. In September 1964, Congress defined Wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." In the face of an increasing population, expanding settlement and growing mechanization, Congress established the National Wilderness Preservation System to secure federally owned "Wilderness Areas" for the American people of present and future generations. Wilderness areas are almost always at least 5,000 acres in size (although there are exceptions, Seney NWR manages Huron NWR and Michigan Islands NWR both of which contain small tracks of wilderness), mostly biologically intact, free of industrial infrastructure and open to low impact recreation. The 25,150 acre Seney Wilderness Area was established in 1970 and contains the Strangmoor Bog. This National Natural Landmark is one of the best examples of a patterned peatland remaining in the lower 48 states.

Rachael is here to collect and organize wilderness information that will help us understand and better manage the Seney Wilderness Area. For years, managers of public lands have not been sure of how to manage these wilderness areas. Many thought that there was a hands-off management approach to these lands, yet management possibilities were unclear. For example, in a Wilderness Area that has a history of fire, should prescribed burning be used or should managers wait for fire to happen naturally? If a fire does start in a Wilderness Area, should it be put out or

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Photo: Clear-winged Hummingbird Moth.  
Credit: Conrad Warren, 2011 Photo Contest.

## THANKS BECKY!

by Jennifer McDonough



Photo: Becky Pritchard, Volunteer of the Year.

The 2011 Volunteer of the Year award goes to Becky Pritchard.

For nine years Becky has been working a shift at the Visitor Center desk. During her shift she not only assists with the public but also straightens, organizes and restocks the bookstore. Her attention to detail during these self-imposed tasks is appreciated.

This year Becky also stepped up to fill in for the bookstore manager. During the times the manager was gone, Becky placed orders, processed orders, labeled merchandise, dealt with storage of merchandise and, again, did so with excellent attention to detail.

Becky regularly assists with inventory and spring cleaning and this year helped to reorganize the bookstore displays, creating a refreshing new layout for the very small space.

Becky's efforts and interactions are always carried out with bubbly enthusiasm. Her curiosity, excitement about the natural world, approachability and attention to detail make her a joy to work with.

The fact that she makes an awesome ice cream pie doesn't hurt either. \*



Photo: Short-tailed Weasel. Credit: Steve Hillebrand, USFWS.

## Nature Nut Column

Dear Nature Nut,

Can you please explain to me which animals in our area turn white over the winter and how and why it happens?



Sincerely,  
Fascinated

Dear Fascinated,

What an interesting question. Seney National Wildlife Refuge is home to three seasonal color changers, the snowshoe hare, the short-tailed weasel (also known as an ermine) and the long-tailed weasel. Over the summer months these animals are darker in color, nicely camouflaged for life in the forest. But, during the winter, they turn as white as the snow. Many scientists have studied how these animals accomplish this feat. On the other hand, the question as to why this happens is not as easily answered as you may think.

First, let's briefly talk about how this is accomplished. Studies show that the coat or pelage (pronounced pell – edge) color change is initiated by three factors: heredity, a change in day length and falling or warming temperatures. After all, the long-tailed weasel can be found as far south as Central America. Only those located in the north (above 40° Latitude) change color completely, while those in the middle of the country change partially, and those in the south stay brown year round.

To successfully change color, the animal has to gradually shed its coat. For weasels, this change takes

Continued on Page 13

# Nature Nut Column

Dear Nature Nut,

I hear you have a place at Seney NWR called the Strangmoor Bog. Where does the name Strangmoor come from? And what is a flark?

Sincerely,  
Dumbstruck

Dear Dumbstruck,

What a great question, I was wondering that myself. The word strangmoor is a German term for a string bog (also known as a patterned fen, patterned peatland, or Aapa peatland...). The Strangmoor Bog National Natural Landmark represents a good example of this type of wetland landscape. A more detailed definition is given to us by a gentleman named W. H. Drury. A strangmoor is "a bog on whose surface are patterns, festoons or nets of vegetation growing on mossy ridges between which are present patches of standing water or sedge meadow."

A flark is just one part of a string bog. Although there are many parts to string bogs I will focus on six terms commonly used while speaking of them – flarks, strings, hummocks, bog ridge, bog forests, and pine islands. First, the word flark is a Swedish word that means an elongated wet depression separated by



Photo: A view of the Strangmoor Bog from the ground. Notice the different types of vegetation marking each type of landscape. Credit: Alan Rebertus.

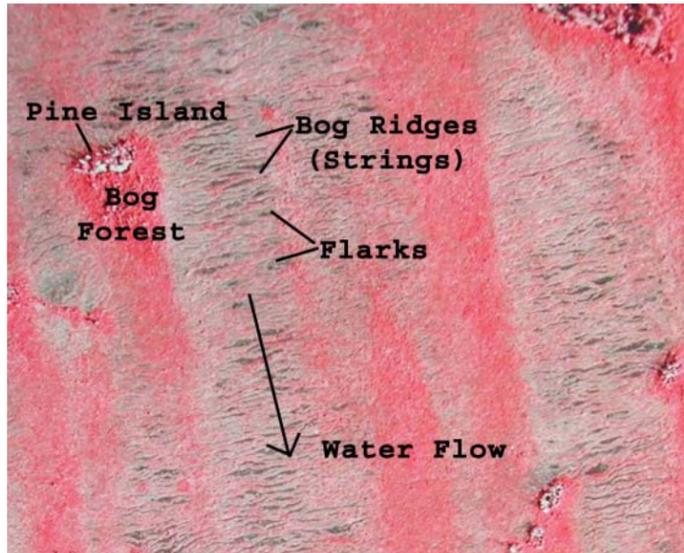


Photo: An infrared aerial photo of the Strangmoor Bog. Credit: USFWS.

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Plants commonly associated with each of the types of topography.	
Flark (low spot – runs parallel to the bog ridge)	water horsetail, purple pitcher plant, three-way sedge, bog rosemary, small cranberry, sedges, asters, algae and rarely willows
Bog Ridge/String/Hummock (higher spot – runs parallel to the flark)	leatherleaf, bog rosemary, small cranberry, shrubby cinquefoil, pitcher plant, blue flag iris, round-leaved wintergreen, juniper haircap moss, stunted tamarack, asters and royal fern
Bog Forest (higher spot normally found at the dryer end of a pine island and runs perpendicular to the flark and bog ridge)	tamarack, red maple, black spruce, eastern white pine (rare and stunted), bog birch, leatherleaf, bog Labrador tea, dwarf red blackberry, sphagnum moss, other various types of mosses, grasses, sedges and ferns
Pine Islands (extinct dunes which run perpendicular to the flarks and bog ridges)	Red pine, white pine, black spruce, northern white cedar and paper birch
Information taken from: Heinselman, M.L. 1965. "String bogs and other patterned organic terrain near Seney, Upper Michigan." <i>Ecology</i> 46: 185-188.	

# A Moment for Management: Afforestation

by Sara Hollerich

For approximately 100 years several old farm sites have persisted at Seney NWR. These relics were created before the Refuge was established in 1935 on the best soils the local lands had to offer, which really isn't saying all that much. Seney's soils are generally fair to poor, good for growing mostly pine forests. However, these sites, dominated by deciduous trees, represented the best soils and were therefore identified as sites for agricultural fields. They were first clear-cut, then farmed by settlers to provide food for people and/or



Photo: Intern Jennifer Field coaches a young woman digging up a small red pine to transplant in an open field. Credit: Karen Palmer, SNHA Intern.

the livestock used in logging and later special use permits were issued to local farmers/ranchers to grow hay and row crops for wildlife cover and food. More recently, wildlife managers have stopped managing these fields in this manner and have started the slow process of afforestation (conversion back to native forest by succession).

You may wonder why, in the face of changing management, Seney NWR was still using haying in some of these old fields to keep them open as recently as 2008. Basically, these open fields provide habitat for birds like the American woodcock, bobolink, and northern harrier, all species Region 3 (the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Midwest Region) has prioritized for conservation. If wildlife managers had not intentionally kept these fields open, they would have eventually reverted back

into forest.

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), published in 2009, outlined a change in those management practices, a strategy that is beginning to be implemented on the refuge. The goal is to manage for more natural habitats/ecosystems on the refuge and to use afforestation on five of the six old farm fields. Currently there are 1,302 acres of old fields scattered throughout the central portion of the Refuge. Over the next century, Smith Farm (22 acres), Sub-headquarters (64 acres), Conlon Farm (39 acres), Chicago Farm (97 acres) and the dry open area of Driggs River Road will be slowly converted back to forest (see map on page 15). This leaves Diversion, the largest of these former fields, which will remain open land for the birds mentioned above. Moreover, because most of the species listed above also utilize open wetlands (the native, non-forested habitats at Seney), management for more natural landscape patterns should not adversely impact populations to any real degree.

Management to promote succession in these fields will vary and be adaptive. If left alone, these fields would eventually revert back to mixed hardwood forests. However, that could take a very long time. It is difficult for seeds to penetrate the sod layer of an old field. If the seeds are unable to make it to mineral soil, they may dry up and die before germinating. If a field is shallowly plowed and disked, the seeds are more likely to fall on mineral soil increasing their chance of germination. In some



Photo: A scout carries a young red pine from the forest to the field for transplanting. Credit: Karen Palmer, SNHA Intern.



Photo: A scout pauses to admire his transplanted tree. Credit: Karen Palmer, SNHA Intern.

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# Attention Hunters: Changes in the 2011 Hunting Regulations

by Greg McClellan

Starting with the fall 2011 hunting seasons, there will be a couple of significant changes to hunting regulations at Seney National Wildlife Refuge. The first change is the elimination of the use of toxic shot for hunting all species except white-tailed deer and black bear. The second change makes it illegal to possess bait while on the Refuge. Deer hunters often state they choose to hunt at Seney NWR because baiting is not allowed. Therefore, in 2010, the Refuge submitted changes through the Federal regulatory process to change the Refuge specific regulations found in 50 CFR 32.41 under Seney National Wildlife Refuge. The changes were approved and noted in the Federal Register, Vol. 76, No. 14, dated January 21, 2011.

## The New Regulation

For Migratory Game Bird Hunting (common snipe and woodcock) and Upland Game Hunting (ruffed grouse and snowshoe hare) the regulation now reads, "Shotgun hunters may possess only approved non-toxic shot while in the field".

## Why the Change?

Since 1991, waterfowl hunters have been restricted to non-toxic shot for waterfowl hunting in the United States. Lead poisoning, caused by ammunition, has been documented in more than 130 wildlife species worldwide including birds, mammals and reptiles. Non-toxic shot has been proven to be effective in hunting loads, and reduces the chance of secondary effects associated with lead shot. Similar regulations prohibit the use of lead sinkers by anglers on the Refuge.

## The New Regulation

For a long time there has been a general regulation noted in the 50 CFR 32.2 (h) and the hunting brochure that reads, "The unauthorized distribution of bait and the hunting over bait is prohibited on wildlife refuge areas." The change approved through the Federal Register that will be in effect for Big

Game Hunting (deer and bear) now reads, "We prohibit baiting and **the possession of bait while on the Refuge.**" (The bolded section is the new language.)

## Why the Change?

During the 2005 to 2010 deer hunting seasons, we have documented several illegal baiting violations on the Refuge and have received additional unconfirmed reports. This new regulation will help us to combat this problem.

As noted in the Seney NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) under Refuge Vision we state that, "Seney National Wildlife Refuge will continue to be a place... where wildlife comes first... where management decisions are made in the best interest of wildlife...". The primary objective of our hunting program is to provide quality hunting experiences. We believe the new changes in our regulations will help us meet the standards we set forth in the CCP.

You can view a copy of the Federal Regulations regarding Seney National Wildlife Refuge at <http://goo.gl/vXyPV>. A copy of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Hunting brochure are available on our website [www.fws.gov/midwest/seney](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/seney). Happy hunting!



Photo: Ruffed grouse drumming.  
Credit: Conrad Warren, 2011 Photo Contest

# The Photo Contest Helping to Solve Mysteries

by Sara Hollerich

Look, listen, sneak, click, sort, print, mail... The hunt for the perfect photo to enter into the Seney Amateur Photo Contest has several of our guests on the hunt year after year, and boy do we love seeing their pictures. Not only are they a treat for our eyes, but, from time to time, they help us fill in gaps in our knowledge.

This year, two contestants helped us fill in a couple of those gaps. Candice Massey turned in a photo of a mystery plant. Its bright red seed pods had baffled the staff for weeks, until finally, with a little help from our friends Wil and Sherry MacKinnon, we were able to identify the plant as Sticky Tofieldia (*Triantha glutinosa*). The plant is normally found restricted to presettlement wetland remnants. This particular plant was found growing in the ditch on Seney's portion of M-77. One of its defining characteristics is the bright red seed pods, which can be seen in late summer. This happens to be the photo Ms. Massey captured. In the spring, its crisp, white spikes of blossoms set this plant apart from others. There are hundreds of



Photo: Sticky Tofieldia.  
Credit: Candice Massey,  
2011 Photo Contest.

squirrel on the Marshland Wildlife Drive. Previously, we were unsure if this species could be found on the refuge. It was listed as "absent?" in our Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Most guidebooks exclude the Upper Peninsula from its range, although it can be found in Wisconsin and Michigan's Lower



Photo: Fox squirrel.  
Credit: Conrad Warren,  
2011 Photo Contest.

Peninsula. According to the book "Mammals of the Great Lakes Region" by Allen Kurta, the fox squirrel has extended its range over the last two centuries due to logging. Logging practices over time have helped create the types of habitats it prefers. Now, with photographic evidence, we have added it to our mammal species list as a rare sighting. If Mr. Warren had not entered this specific photo into the contest we would not have known this species existed on the refuge.

Each photo entered into the contest is unique and helps visitors share their experience with others. Not only do we find photos that help solve a mystery from time to time, much like the two photos mentioned above, but sometimes a photo teaches us about an animal's behavior. Anne Chase, submitted a photo of a muskrat swimming with a milkweed. I always assumed that since milkweeds are toxic to some animals, they would not bother to use them. Now, if I could only figure out what that muskrat was going to do with his prize??? For now this will remain an unsolved mystery...

Just in case you are wondering what else we do with the photos entered into the photo contest here is a quick list. Some of the photos entered in the contest have been used on our

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# Congratulations to the 2011 Seney Amateur Photo Contest Winners



*Gray Wolf* - Cathy Federighe  
1st Place Wildlife Category



*Common Green Darner* - Dawn Kopp  
2nd Place Wildlife Category



*Dewey Spiderweb* - Dawn Kopp  
3rd Place Wildlife Category



*Foggy Paper Birch* - Atlee Hart  
2nd Place Plant Category



*Dog Watching Swans* - Kimber Reagle  
1st Place Recreation Category



*Shelf Fungus* - Teresa Holmes  
3rd Place Plant Category



*Jack-in-the-Pulpit* - Atlee Hart  
1st Place Plant Category



*Looking for a Frog* - Jan Barrett  
3rd Place Recreation Category

Left: *Hungry Monarch Caterpillar*  
Samantha Griffith  
3rd Place Youth Category



*Monarch Caterpillar* - Andrew Cole  
1st Place Youth Category

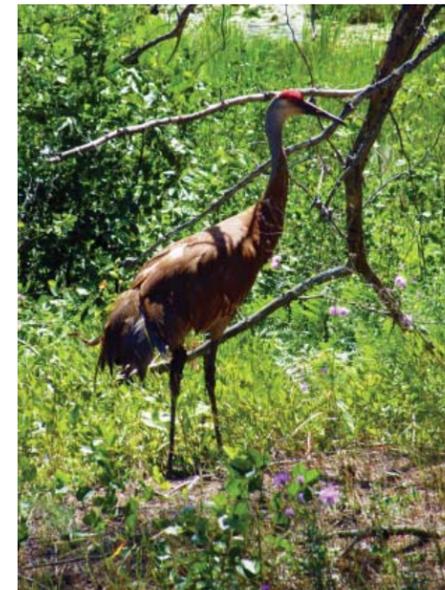
Center:  
*Sit... Relax...*  
Teresa Holmes  
2nd Place Recreation Category

Below:  
*Dawn Splendor*  
Candice Massey  
2nd Place Landscape Category



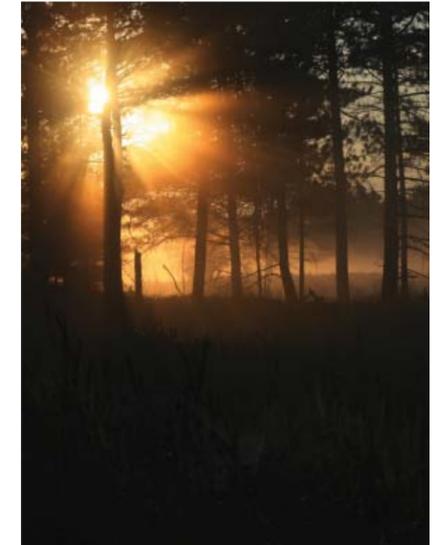
Below:  
*Homeward Bound*  
Atlee Hart  
1st Place Landscape Category

Bottom Center:  
*Little Garter Snake*  
Olivia Merten  
2nd Place Youth Category

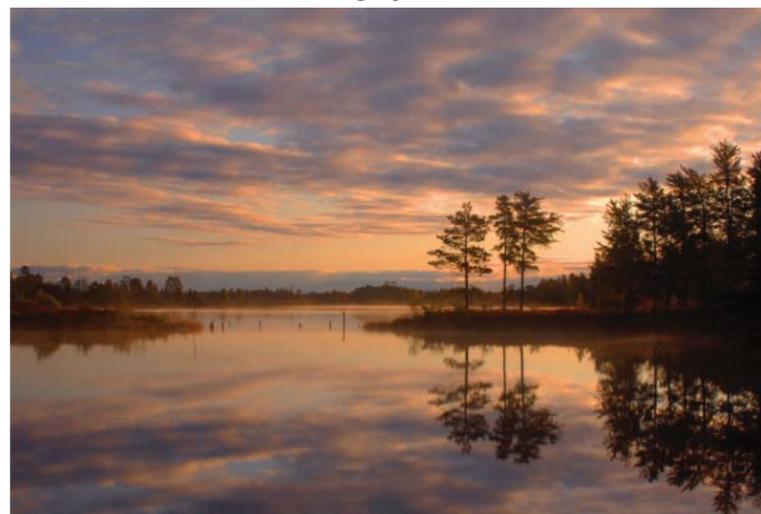


*Sandhill Crane* - Benjamin Hultz  
2nd Place Teen Category

Right: *Dragonfly* - Benjamin Hultz  
3rd Place Teen Category



*Rays of Sunlight* - Bryan LaFollette  
3rd Place Landscape Category



*Reflections* - Benjamin Hultz  
1st Place Teen Category

# 2012 Amateur Photo Contest Announcement

You're invited to participate in Seney National Wildlife Refuge's Amateur Photo Contest. The sole purpose of the contest is to encourage you to visit and enjoy the Refuge. Photos may depict any of the following categories:

1. **Wildlife (Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Spiders, Insects, etc.)**
2. **Public Use/Recreation**
3. **Landscape**
4. **Plants/Plant Like Organisms (Wildflowers, Lichens, Mushrooms, Liverworts, etc.)**
5. **Special Assignment 2012: Macro - Take Time To Notice the Little Things**
6. **Youth (18 and under)**

## Contest Rules and Regulations

1. All entries must be photographs taken at Seney National Wildlife Refuge.
2. Up to five entries (total) per person may be submitted - no more than three per category with the exception of the youth category. Youth may enter up to five photos.
3. Photographers must be non-professional; this is an amateur contest. For the purposes of this photography contest, a professional photographer is considered to be a photographer who has clients, depends on photography for their income, markets their services and/or writes off their expenses as a business owner.
4. All photographs should be submitted as an electronic copy (please send the highest resolution possible) AND in a printed format 5"x7", 8"x10" or 8"x12". Any photos not in accordance with size restrictions are subject to cropping. Black and white or color photos are acceptable. If you are unable to submit an electronic copy, arrangements can be made to scan the image at the Refuge. Note that scanned photos are not always as high quality as photos submitted electronically.
5. Photos may not be matted nor should there be any frame or border surrounding the photo (digital or otherwise).
6. Photos may not display the name of the photographer on the front of the photograph.
7. Mail or deliver the printed entries to:  
Seney National Wildlife Refuge  
Photo Contest  
1674 Refuge Entrance Road  
Seney, Michigan 49883  
Electronic copies may be mailed with the printed copy or emailed to Sara\_Hollerich@fws.gov, the subject line should read "Photo Contest". Entries are accepted year round.
8. On the back of the printed photo, please attach a signed permission form with your contact information. Photos lacking the signed permission form will be disqualified. Permission forms can be found on the website ([www.fws.gov/midwest/seney/photocontest.html](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/seney/photocontest.html)).
9. All entries must be received by August 31, 2012, or they will not be accepted.
10. Digitally altered photos will be disqualified with exception to photos with slight color correction (i.e. brightness or contrast), a shift to black and white, or photos which have been cropped.
11. Anyone whose photo has been disqualified will be notified before the voting begins.
12. All entries will be retained by the refuge and may be used by the refuge or Seney Natural History Association for non-profit publications, webpages and presentations.
13. While extreme care will be taken in handling all entries, the refuge cannot be responsible for any damage to photographs.

Watch the website for the official entry form. Happy Snapping!

*"Who Am I Answers" 1. The white substance secreted by the beech scale (an insect that infests beech trees and one of the components of beech bark disease). Credit: Sara Hollerich, USFWS. 2. Goat's beard puffball. Credit: Teresa Holmes, 2011 Photo Contest. 3. Crab spider. Credit: John Hysell, 2011 Photo Contest. 4. Shelf mushrooms on a downed tree. Credit: Sara Hollerich, USFWS. 5. Tamarack cones. Credit: Kimber Reagle, 2011 Photo Contest.*

# A Youth Delegate's Call to Action

Marco Sanchez, a former intern at Seney National Wildlife Refuge attended the Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation conference held in Madison, WI this summer. His blog on the subject received national recognition, from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Therefore, it was included in this fall's newsletter.

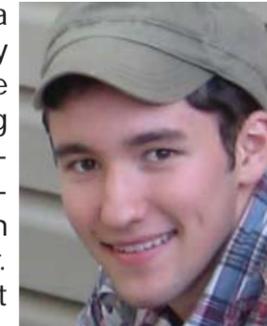


Photo: Marco Sanchez. Credit: USFWS.

## by Marco Sanchez

I could probably spend a long time reflecting on the entire week I spent, but instead I'll just give some thoughts on one of the better highlights from the youth delegate group. We had the wonderful opportunity of having Director Dan Ashe sit down with us on Thursday night. I think I speak for the whole group when I say how cool it was to have him take 45 minutes out of his hectic schedule to answer some of our questions and listen to some of our ideas (and this was just one of the many great experiences the Youth Engagement Team set up for us. Thank you guys!).

During that session I was reminded of how many great ideas my peers are able to come up with when given the chance to speak. We talked at length about the critical need to engage youth, told individual stories of our varying Refuge experiences, advocated for working with partner organizations such as the ones we were a part of, explained the urgency to emotionally connect with people and proposed ways to bring the Refuge concept into cities. In making a case for connecting people to nature through technology, Ryan pointed out that just because we don't go to refuges, doesn't mean we don't care or can't care about them. When Dan asked us if we felt optimistic about the future of conservation, Austin's opinion was that yes, it might be too late to stop the full effects of climate change, but who cares? We don't have time to be negative. On the other hand, Kean responded with a different angle, saying even though we have to be optimistic about people

changing, we also have to assume we have to bring people on board with us. It is our opportunity. Thank you for listening Dan Ashe.

So, I guess this is my call to action for the Service: The next generation has things to say. Things that are audacious, innovative, full of passion. Yes, sometimes things that are amateur. Things that seem impractical. Things that are critical. Our voices need to be heard. Conservation will only get so far without a new dialogue that includes us. We hear all the time about how great leaders need to challenge the norm. Well, I would also say that great communities need to reflect that in order to reach their full potential. The whole point of this conference was to talk about conservation in the next generation. Let's do that in every aspect. It was a big step for the Service to invite some youth delegates to this event and should be applauded! But it's just a start.

Idea: Create working groups of youth who have dialogues about different conservation issues. Connect those with dialogues happening within the Service. Dan Ashe spoke of connecting past traditions with bold new ideas. \*

## The Photo Contest - Mysteries Continued from page 7

new website, [www.fws.gov/midwest/seney](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/seney), and from time to time we may use one on a sign or in a brochure. So, be sure to get out on the refuge this year and take some more great photos. Not only will you provide us with some great pictures to choose from when we are making publications, but you may help us solve a mystery. \*



Photo: Muskrat swimming with milkweed. Credit: Anne Chase, 2011 Photo Contest.

# Art On the Lake

by Karen Palmer



Photo: Intern Mandy Salminen at the *Art on the Lake* Booth. Credit: Karen Palmer, SNHA Intern.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge always makes its presence known at the local art fair in Curtis, MI called *Art on the Lake*, and this year was no exception. Though many artists and patrons are selling their goods, Seney's main objective is education and outreach. We want people to know that one of the largest refuges east of the Mississippi River is practically in their backyard and that we have much to offer any earnest nature enthusiast.

The theme this year was lighthouses, birdhouses, and outhouses. We decided to base our exhibit on the birdhouse portion (although we could have done some very interesting displays concerning outhouses). The display we created had two parts: themed collages and three dimensional representations.

The collages were put together highlighting the history and management of the refuge as well as comparing and contrasting different types of bird nests. There was even a nest display featuring actual nests found on the refuge and an osprey nest replication created by Mandy Salminen.

My favorite part of the day was talking to locals, some of whom have who'd lived in the area their whole lives, that'd never been to the refuge. In most cases we were able to convince them to make an effort to come and visit us. \*

## Monarch Madness

by Karen Palmer

For the second year in a row Seney NWR put on a monarch butterfly tag and release event called "Monarch Madness." This event gave visitors a way to learn about this very special butterfly. It will also

help scientists in their effort to understand the monarch butterfly's migration. The tagging program is a nationwide effort that monitors the insect's migratory patterns. The event was held on August 21st, coinciding with the emergence of the fourth generation of Monarchs. The fourth and final generation of the year is the generation which migrates to the wintering grounds in Mexico and part way back.

We started the day with an interpretive talk covering everything about these insects from their magnificent metamorphosis to their feeding and migratory habits. The talk concluded with a short lesson on safe butterfly catching techniques (safe for both the insects as well as other, innocent, butterfly chasing bystanders) before we gathered up our equipment and headed out into the field.

We cased the refuge beforehand for potential butterfly hot spots and found that there were very few (high winds probably didn't help) however, we did successfully capture and tag two wild female Monarchs. The true success of the day came from our caterpillar crop. The group of 10 visitors collected almost 20 fat caterpillars! At one point we had to leave them on the milkweed because we couldn't fit anymore in our jar.

After scouring the refuge for butterflies and caterpillars we returned to the Visitor's Center for lemonade and cake, a delicious debriefing. Each child went home with a Monarch Madness Nature Journal and a Monarch Watch bookmark. What a wonderful day. \*



Photo: Tagged monarch butterfly. Credit: Karen Palmer, SNHA Intern.

## Grant Received

The Seney Natural History Association (SNHA) recently received a \$500 grant from the Kodak American Greenways Awards Program. The monies awarded in the grant will help pay for the supplies used to build two bridges which provide access to a newly opened trail. In addition to receiving this award SNHA will be showcased as a national model for its innovative efforts to develop a greenway in the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. \*

## Manager's Corner

Continued from page 1

and several applied sciences programs would be reduced. Using interns this year, with funds provided by SNHA, we continued our buckthorn spraying program, monitored wildlife populations and continued much needed research into the effects of some of our management actions. We completed a large prescribed fire and provided countless hours of programs to the visiting public. Participation in Children's fishing Day was up for the first time in several years and much needed inventory and monitoring work was completed in Kirtland's Warbler Country. Several Youth Conservation Corps projects were completed with the assistance of volunteers. Hours contributed by volunteers freed up regular maintenance staff to complete large projects on C-2 Dike and keep our fleet of vehicles and equipment in top shape. Volunteers also represented Seney at events that we may not have been able to attend. All told volunteers and interns contributed 9,608 hours to the Refuge. The magnitude and impact of this contribution is enormous. If you haven't heard it before, or enough, thanks! By the way we are recruiting some good volunteer roofers as the shingles on the HQ roof are looking a little ratty... \*

## The Nature Nut Column - Color Changers

Continued from page 3



Photo: Long-tailed weasel in winter coat. Credit: Bryant Olsen, Flickr Creative Commons.

longer (anywhere from a two and a half to three months). Hares tend to molt starting with their ears and feet, moving up from their belly and ending with their back, shoulders, and top of their head. If it happens to snow

or thaw before they complete their molt, they become secretive, hiding from would-be predators.



Photo: Snowshoe hare beginning its fall color change. Credit: Traveler7001, Flickr Creative Commons.

As you can see this change in color is important camouflage. After all, animals that are not well camouflaged have a difficult time hiding. Predators use camouflage to sneak up on prey and prey use camouflage to hide from predators. But, the short-tailed weasel spends most of its time under the snow in cavities called subnivalian spaces (the area between the snow and the ground) hunting small mammals like mice and voles which are active under the snow all winter long. Would camouflage help in this situation or would it be unnecessary?

Here we open the door to speculation. Could the short-tailed weasels' color change be an evolutionary leftover? After all, several of the small weasels change color. Maybe it is an unnecessary left over such as a human's appendix, or maybe they really do need camouflage. But, could there be something else that makes the change advantageous?

In the book "Life in the Cold" by Peter Marchand, he raises an interesting question. In general, you find lighter colored animals in the cool, dry north and darker animals in the hot, humid south. This is known as Gloger's Rule. These lighter colored animals seem to be better insulated – but why. Most, if not all mammals living in the north grow longer, thicker coats which help insulate them against the cold. Mr. Marchand goes one step further noting that white hairs, because they lack melanin, are more or less hollow. This provides space for air, and dead air spaces are excellent insulators. Could this be another advantage to turning white in the winter? I cannot find any evidence that this has been studied, but it does pose an interesting hypothesis for future study...

Sincerely,  
The Nature Nut \*

# Scout Day 2011

## Recap

by Mandy Salminen,

On September 17th, 2011, over 100 scouts from near and far gathered together for Seney National Wildlife Refuge's Annual Scout Day. This annual special event allows Girl and Boy Scouts to spend the day learning site specific lessons that will help them achieve badge requirements. Scouts don't just learn about the natural world, they also get a chance to learn lessons and participate in hands on activities that usually don't arise in the classroom. These lessons deal with national and local culture, patriotism, first aid and survival. Scout Day promotes curiosity, a sense of unity, teamwork, play, relationship building and learning in the great outdoors for the younger generation. This event is an effective way for the Scouts to make friends, get interested in outdoor activities, and create great childhood memories with their friends and families.

Everyone from individuals to large packs and troops signed up for this year's event. The participants ranged in age from kindergarten to 6th grade. Each scout participated in four to five sessions depending on which sessions they favored. There were eighteen sessions that were offered this year including old favorites such as Archery, Orienteering, and Tied-up-in-Knots (knot tying). New sessions were added such as Tree Transplanting, Picture Perfect (taking photos), Trapping, and Water Journey (learning the water cycle). All of the sessions were run by our wonderful volunteers and staff.

The new sessions gave Scouts that have been coming for years, something new and fun to learn about and a way to meet additional badge requirements. Overall, the 2011 Seney National Wildlife Refuge Scout Day was a success. Next year, watch for a change in the name of this event as we provide all youth a chance to participate. \*

## The Nature Nut Column - Bog Continued from page 4

raised ridges. The raised ridges are accumulations of peat known as hummocks, strings or bog ridges. Both flarks and bog ridges run perpendicular to the direction of water flow. From the air it makes a striped pattern.

Pine islands, on the other hand, appear to be the remains of ancient sand dunes. The pine islands somewhat restrict the flow of water through the bog which allows peat to accumulate on the downward ("downstream") side of the pine island. This creates enough of a difference in height to allow a different plant community to grow, the bog forest. I hope this helped.

Sincerely,  
The Nature Nut

*The questions in the Nature Nut column come from questions posed by visitors. If you have a question you would like answered please email the Nature Nut in care of Sara\_Hollerich@fws.gov. The Nut will try to answer your question in a future addition of Refuge News. \**

## Volunteers Wanted

Seney NWR is looking for volunteers who would enjoy helping digitally organize the refuge's photos. This job entails scanning, renaming, and describing photos. If you are interested please contact Sara\_Hollerich@fws.gov or (906) 586-9851 ext. 16.

## Calendar

- **Nov. 13th - 30th.** - Camping permits for hunters are issued at the office Sunday, Nov. 13th and Mon. - Fri. during office hours thereafter.
- **Nov. 13th - Dec. 1st.** - Pine Creek, Robinson Road, and Driggs River Road are open to the public.
- **Jan. 1st - Feb. 28th.** - Ice fishing allowed on all Refuge ponds.
- **Tuesday Nights in Feb.** - Every Tuesday night in February join us for the 2012 Film Festival starting at 7pm. Films titles will be announced at [www.fws.gov/midwest/seney](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/seney).
- **Early to Mid April** - Sharp-tailed Grouse Survey.
- **May 9th** - Volunteer Orientation.
- **May 15th** - The Marshland Wildlife Drive and Visitor Center will open.

See brochures for special regulations.

## Who is "The Wilderness Gal" Continued from page 2

extinguished naturally. Which practice would hurt, or trammel, the Wilderness Area more? Does managing wilderness mean managing for minimal human disturbance rather than not doing anything at all? These are just a few of the questions that have taunted managers for years.

To jump-start their Wilderness Character Monitoring program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hired Rachael, along with nine other students, through the Wilderness Fellows Program. Fellows are spending several months at refuges with Wilderness in order to complete baseline wilderness character assessments. That is, they are creating measures that quantify aspects of four specific wilderness qualities. These qualities, based on language from the Wilderness Act, are: untrammeled, natural, undeveloped, and the opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. The idea is that, as these same measures are monitored over time, wilderness managers will be able to determine whether their stewardship actions are allowing wilderness to degrade, remain neutral, or improve. Based on this information, management can be adapted to improve wilderness character. The use of these measures, rather than written descriptions by individuals, provides a consistent way of measuring and quantifying the wilderness characteristics. This baseline data about wilderness characteristics won't tell a manager how to manage the land but will give them a way to think about how actions are going to affect the inherent character of wild lands. For example, trying to eradicate an invasive species from the Wilderness Area might drop the untrammeled value a bit but it will also improve the natural characteristic of the land. Rachael, and the other Fellows, are working very hard to create these measurements for each refuge. Rachael will be at Seney only until the end of November, but this national project won't be complete for several years.

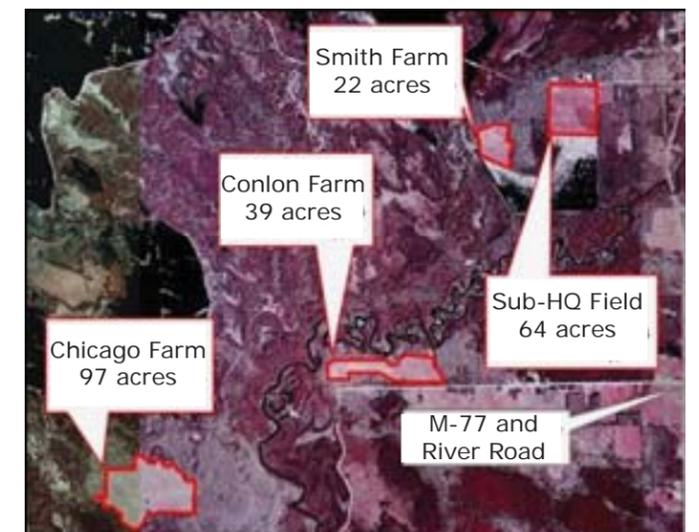
For more information about the Wilderness Character Monitoring Program and the USFWS's involvement visit: [www.fws.gov/refuges/whm/wilderness.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/whm/wilderness.html) or [leopold.wilderness.net/research/fprojects/F014.htm](http://leopold.wilderness.net/research/fprojects/F014.htm). \*

## Management: Afforestation Continued from page 5

cases, the old farm fields may also be seeded, planted with seedlings or have saplings transplanted from the surrounding forests. In addition, in areas where aspens are adjacent to the old fields the aspens may be cut and left which causes the plants to sucker and spread faster.

As trees begin to grow in the fields the grasses will begin to die. Over time some trees will survive and grow larger, the understory will start to fill with plants appropriate to that specific forest type, and eventually a more mature or "steady-state" forest may dominate. The type of forest that will eventually prevail on these old farm fields will depend largely on the types of soils present in that area and native tree seed sources. They may start out with aspen and birch transitioning to balsam fir, maple, American beech, American basswood and black cherry, then finally into a mature stand of sugar maple and American beech, with American basswood, eastern hemlock or white pine.

So far this year, maintenance staff have plowed and disked Smith and Conlon Farms. Interns, scouts, and students have been busy transplanting saplings from forested areas into the Driggs River Opening (a drier site). Unfortunately, we may not see the end results of these labors any time soon, but maybe, just maybe, some of the young people who have had a hand in transplanting a portion of the red and white pines onto these sites will. \*



Map: Old farm fields to be converted to forest.  
Credit: Greg Corace, USFWS.