

Refuge News

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

Seney Natural History Association

Manager's Corner

by Mark Vaniman



Winter number five in the Upper Peninsula. One of the things that I really like about the UP is the four very distinct seasons. This winter, so far, has been very distinct with the early freeze, more snow earlier and, my personal favorite, the subzero temperatures. It has been said, and I can't remember by whom, that there is no such thing as bad weather – only bad clothing. With that in mind winter is a wonderful time to experience the Refuge. Most of the wildlife that succumbs to the annual zugenruhe (and some of our volunteers as well) have retreated to warmer climes to the south. With the exodus of most species these are quiet times on the Refuge. Most of the wildlife observations consist of evidence; scat, tracks, sounds etc. On a recent trip into the snowy backcountry we followed the trail of a small pack of wolves and observed their travels and wanderings for more than a half mile. Snowshoe hare tracks are easily visible in the snow although I rarely see the individuals. An interesting track left by an otter was discovered while we snowshoed along the Pine Ridge Nature Trail along with lots of smaller tracks left by various tiny mammals going about the business of survival in the frozen landscape. We were treated to a quick glimpse of an ermine that crossed the entrance road in front of us one afternoon – as he scampered across the snow all that we could easily see was the black tip of his tail which looked like a furry insect bouncing over the snow. And of course, our bird feeder is crowded with chickadees, goldfinches, woodpeckers and red squirrels, all taking advantage of the free meal provided for their benefit.

Looking back at 2013 we have survived the

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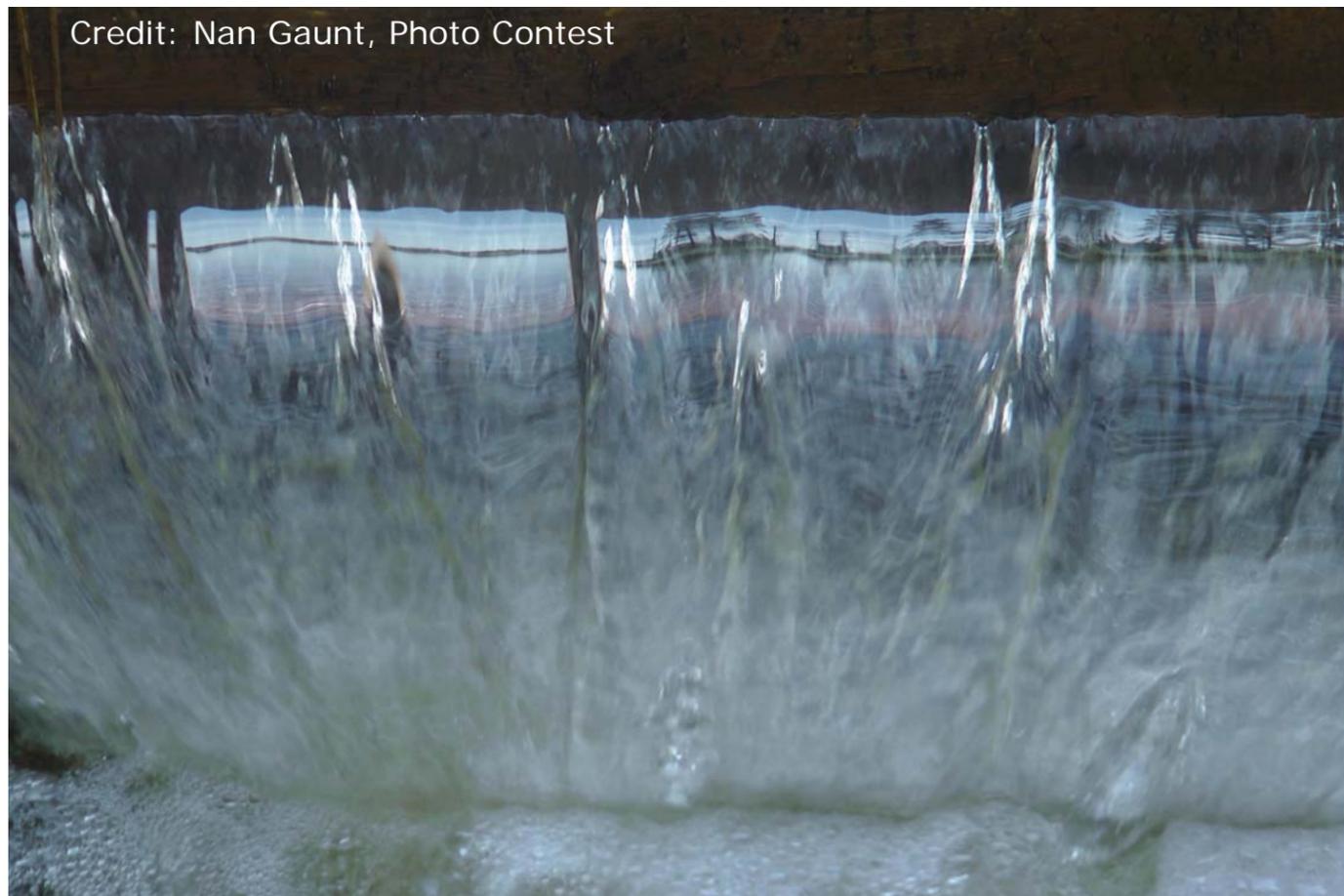


Photo: Snowshoeing in a Storm. Credit: Jack Cook, 2013 Photo Contest.

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



Credit: Nan Gaunt, Photo Contest



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www.fws.gov/refuge/seney
www.facebook.com/seneyrefuge
www.flickr.com/seneynwr

Email:
seney@fws.gov

Photo: Woodpecker Holes. Credit:
Dustan Hoffman, USFWS.

Welcome a New Intern

by Dustan Hoffman

Dustan "Dusty" Hoffman
Visitor Services Pathways Intern
Dec. 30-Feb. 27 & May 12-Aug. 23
Hometown: Green Bay, Wisconsin



I love nature and people, and I feel that of all the wonderful and meaningful things we experience in life, none of them would matter if we didn't have people to share them with. I enjoy conversation with local people to help me learn about the places I visit and work. In return I have a

great deal to share with people about my exciting roller coaster of a journey from living in a cave to nearly dying on a mountain in Alaska. I have completed a B.A. in Environmental Biology at Saint Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota, where I moved to twelve years ago so I could pursue a life as a fly fishing junkie. Since the spring of 2012 I have been grinding out a Masters in GIS at Saint Mary University in Winona, MN while working at the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. There have been some incredibly influential people I have met while working for the USFWS who have served as my mentors, friends, and role models. Recently, they have helped me learn the true meaning of a phrase I had heard several times in life but it never really stuck, that is, "Good luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." I feel lucky to have the opportunity to be in the U.P. at Seney NWR under a staff I have heard such wonderful things about. My goals at Seney are: to grow into my career by learning from others, aim to meet the needs and expectations of the people and position, truly learn the ecology of the Refuge, and fish as many different trout waters as possible. I look forward to sharing time with all of you! *

2014 Winter Fun Festival at Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Need something fun to do with your kids? Seney National Wildlife Refuge and Seney Natural History Association will be hosting a Winter Fun Festival on in coordination with "Pure Curtis" on February 15th and 16th, 2014. The days activities will include hourly movies, guided skiing and snowshoeing events as well as Visitor Center exploration and fun activities.

The films being shown are kid friendly, fun and educational. Join us at the Visitor Center Auditorium for the shows which are open to the public and are free of charge. Hot chocolate, coffee, tea, popcorn and cookies will be provided. Please bring a mug.

Saturday, February 15th - Visitor Center will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday's Line Up

We will show a different kid friendly wildlife or conservation movie each hour.

- 10 a.m. Wolverine: Chasing the Phantom
- 10 a.m. Guided Snowshoe
- 11 a.m. Magic of the Snowy Owl
- 12 p.m. The Animal House
- 1 p.m. Garbage: The Revolution Starts at Home
- 2 p.m. Walking with Ghosts (Lynx)
- 2 p.m. Guided Ski (meet at Robinson Road Northern Hardwoods Cross-country Ski Trails trailhead)
- 3 p.m. Coyote: America's Top Dog



Sunday, February 16th - Visitor Center will be open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday's Line Up

We will show a different kid friendly wildlife movie each hour.

- 1 p.m. Wild City
- 1 p.m. Guided Ski (meet at Robinson Road Northern Hardwoods Cross-country Ski Trails trailhead)
- 2 p.m. El Lobo, Song of the Wolf
- 2:30 p.m. Guided Snowshoe
- 3:00 p.m. An Original DUCKumentary



Snowshoes will be available at the Visitor Center for families to try for free.

We have both children's and adult's sizes.

Cross-country skis will not be provided. Please remember to bring your own.

Dress in layers for comfort.

The descriptions of these films are borrowed from the producer's websites.

2014 Winter Film Festival at Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Tuesday nights in February at 6:30 p.m.

All films will be shown in the Visitor Center Auditorium at Seney National Wildlife Refuge. All shows are open to the public and are free of charge. Hot chocolate, coffee, tea and cookies will be provided by the Seney Natural History Association. Please bring a mug. Watch previews of this year's films on the Seney Website at www.fws.gov/refuge/seney.

February 4th



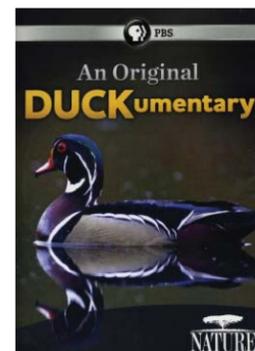
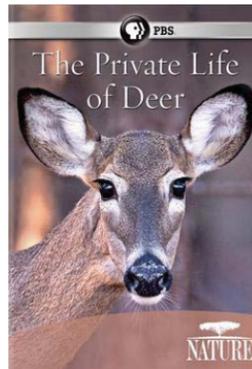
Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time
73 Minutes - The first full-length documentary film ever made about legendary environmentalist Aldo Leopold, Green Fire highlights Leopold's extraordinary career, tracing how he shaped and influenced the modern environmental movement. Leopold remains relevant today,

inspiring projects all over the country that connect people and land.

February 11th

The Private Life of Deer

60 Minutes - From our kitchen windows, we spot them, nibbling away at our gardens and shrubs. But once they retreat from our view, where do the white-tailed deer go? Scientists outfit deer with night vision cameras and GPS tracking equipment that reveal the hidden world of white-tailed deer in a whole new light, allowing us to see them not as common backyard creatures, but as intelligent, affectionate family members.



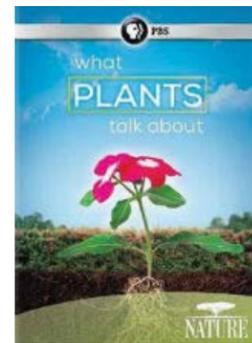
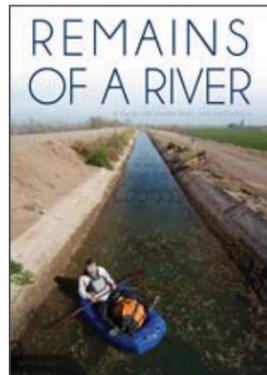
An Original DUCKumentary

60 Minutes - Ducks are true originals. There are more than 120 different species of ducks in all, a fantastical group of complex characters. Ducks have a talent for survival, and life stories filled with personality and charm. Each bird is more fun than the last, and will leave you wanting more.

February 18th

Remains of a River: From Source to Sea Down the Colorado

45 Minutes - From the mountains of Wyoming to the lettuce fields of Mexico, past dams and reservoirs and diversion canals, through plains and canyons and the lights of Las Vegas, Will Stauffer-Norris and Zak Podmore hiked, paddled and slogged their way down the Green and Colorado Rivers to the sea. Remains of a River is their unforgettable story.



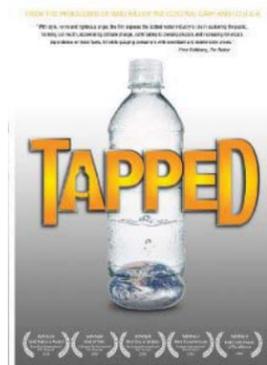
What Plants Talk About

60 Minutes - Hard core science is effortlessly integrated with a light-hearted look at how plants behave. Scientist J.C. Cahill takes us on a journey into the "secret world of plants," revealing an astonishing landscape where plants eavesdrop on each other, talk to their allies, call in insect mercenaries and nurture their young. It is a world of pulsing activity, where plants communicate, co-operate and, sometimes, wage all-out war.

February 25th

Tapped

75 Minutes - Is access to clean drinking water a basic human right, or a commodity that should be bought and sold like any other article of commerce? This timely documentary is a behind-the-scenes look into the unregulated and unseen world of the bottled water industry - an industry that aims to privatize and sell back the one resource that ought never to become a commodity: our water.



Nature Nut Column

Dear Nature Nut,

I was talking with a friend who told me that ruby-throated hummingbirds ride the backs of geese during migration. This seems sort of far-fetched; they are so tiny, can they migrate on their own?

Sincerely,
Puzzled

Dear Puzzled,

Although it may be hard to believe hummingbirds, including our ruby-throated hummingbird, do in fact migrate on their own. Although we will likely never know who started this tale it isn't too hard to imagine how it was started. After all, ruby-throated hummingbirds are so tiny! How could they fly all the way to their wintering grounds in southern Florida and Central America? Most of the birds would have to cross the Gulf of Mexico or hug the coast to make it to countries such as southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica! But that is exactly what they do. Ruby-throated hummingbirds are reported common in Cuba during the month of April as they stop by for a rest. People have even witnessed the hummingbirds flying low just over the tops of waves to make it to land as they fly north during the spring migration.

Most species of North American geese, on the other hand, do not even overwinter in the same place as the ruby-throated hummingbird. They spend their winters in the southern United States or northern Mexico. For this legend to be true, geese would have to fly the hummingbirds to their wintering ground then come right back to where they spend the winter. It is highly unlikely that geese are so thoughtful.

In the book "The Big Year" by Mark Obmascik the author explains the flight of a



Fun Fact

Picky, picky. That nuthatch throwing out all of the seeds from your feeder is really weighting it options. It only selects the heaviest seeds for consumption and storage.

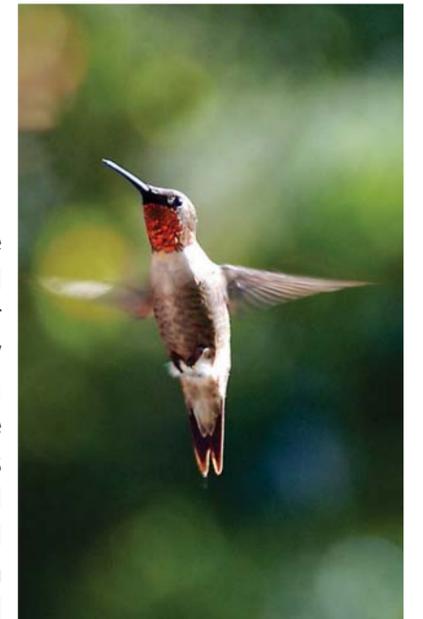


Photo: Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Credit: Carol Foil, Flickr Creative Commons.



Photo: Canada Goose. Credit: Dave Burns, 2013 Photo Contest.

The descriptions of these films are borrowed from the producer's websites.

If evening activities are cancelled due to weather at local schools, the makeup night will be Tuesday, March 4th at 6:30 p.m.

Year” by Mark Obmascik the author explains the flight of a hummingbird over the Gulf of Mexico. I have included portions of the writing here for your enjoyment.

“The hummer was fading fast. When the storm first hit, sweeping from land to coast, her fat globs were already thin. Now they were gone. All she had for energy stores was muscles. Each wing-beat ate more away. She was cannibalizing herself...”

“Gulf catastrophes were common enough that Mother Nature, through evolution, had hedged her bets. To prevent the destruction of an entire species by one horrible storm, many species, including the ruby-throated hummingbird, had two kinds of birds – those that migrated over land, and those that migrated over water. Land migrants knew about raptors. Water migrants knew about willpower.

“The hummer was finally within striking distance of the coast. Rain fell in sheets. She had the biggest heart, proportionately, of any warm-blooded animal, and she was pushing it to the hilt. Her lungs, like those of all birds, remained fully inflated, but hers were turbocharged by nine special air sacs that pumped like bellows and kept the oxygen coming. She was turning weaker faster.

“Then, over the waves, she saw it: land!...”

“She dropped on a hackberry like a hailstone from the sky.

“She was weak. She had lost so much fat and muscle on her eighteen-hour journey north that she now weighed one-tenth of an ounce. She and nine friends could be mailed together for the price of a single postage stamp. But she had done it. She had conquered the Gulf. She was alive.”

As miraculous as it may seem these tiny birds that weigh about as much as three standard size paper clips can make the flight all by themselves.

Sincerely,
The Nature Nut

*The questions in the Nature Nut Column came from questions posed by visitors. This month the was column written by Sara Giles. If you have a question you would like the Nature Nut to answer email Sara_Giles@fws.gov and put Dear Nature Nut in the Subject. **

Manager’s Corner Continued from page 1

sequester, the shutdown, threats of another shutdown and some fairly serious budget cuts. However, we did get a lot of valuable work done. The Riverside Dike project was successful and we will gather more data during the upcoming field season. The project will continue with the removal of additional dikes per our Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Our fire program and Visitor Services Program are thriving because of our staff and the good will of the Seney Natural History Association. Winter may appear to be a slow time but we are busy here at the Refuge planning our strategy for the upcoming year – sort of winter survival mode like our winter residents on the Refuge.

As mentioned earlier, winter is a great time to experience the Refuge. Layer up with the proper clothing and come on out; Matt and Don are keeping the Northern Hardwoods Cross-country Ski trails well groomed and the entire Refuge is open to skiing, snowshoeing and hiking. Winter is a great time to experience the Seney Wilderness, especially if one wants to revel in the silence of the season. There are no swans trumpeting, loons calling or the other various squeaks, squawks, burbles, coos, cheeps and chirps – just the silence of a dormant landscape and the wind whistling through the trees. Sometimes hearing nothing is the best sound of all. *

Ski Trails

Snow conditions for cross country skiing and snowshoeing at the Refuge are in prime condition. Come out and enjoy the 10 miles of ski trails groomed once per week.

Contest Rules and Regulations

1. All entries must be photographs taken at Seney National Wildlife Refuge or the Whitefish Point Unit.
2. Up to five entries (total) per person may be submitted - no more than three per category with exception to the youth category. Youth may enter up to five photos with any subject in their age bracket.
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 of your photo Refuge staff will scan the photo for you. Note that scanned photos are not always as high quality as photos submitted electronically. Photos may not be matted nor should there be any frame or border surrounding the photo (digital or otherwise). Photos may not display the name of the photographer on the front of the photograph.
5. Mail or deliver the printed entries to:
 - Seney National Wildlife Refuge
 - c/o Photo Contest
 - 1674 Refuge Entrance Road
 - Seney, MI 49883
6. Electronic copies may be mailed with the printed copy or emailed to seneysvs@gmail.com, the subject line should read "Photo Contest". Entries are accepted year round.
7. On the back of each printed photo, please attach a signed permission form with your contact information. Photos lacking the signed permission form will be disqualified.
8. All entries must be received by August 31, or they will be entered in the following year’s contest.
9. Photos that have been altered to combine two or more photos will be disqualified. Photos that use replication or other techniques to add details to a photo will be disqualified.
10. Anyone whose photo has been disqualified will be notified before the voting begins.
11. If a minor is pictured in a photo an "Agreement of Use of Likeness in Service Products" (USFWS form 3-2260) must accompany the entry forms can be found at (<http://www.fws.gov/forms/3-2260.pdf>), copies can also be found at the Visitor Center or mailed to requesting individuals.
12. All entries will be retained by the Refuge and may be used for a variety of reasons including but not limited to 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.

Online Voting: Cast your vote for your favorite photos from September 10th to October 20th. See the website for information on how to cast your vote. www.fws.gov/refuge/seney/events/photo_contest.html

Detach Here

Detach Here

Title of Photo: _____

Print Name: _____ Email: _____

Street Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Circle Category Entered: **Wildlife; Public Use/Recreation; Landscape; Plants; Special Assignment; and Youth**

I, the provider, affirm that the photo described on this sheet, was taken by me alone in my private capacity and automatically qualifies for a U.S. copyright. I agree to irrevocably dedicate those copyrights to the public domain. As a result of the image being in the public domain, the USFWS, or anyone else, may freely publish, reproduce, use and/or distribute this image in any media without your approval or permission, with no monetary compensation to you and without temporal or geographic restriction. However, if the USFWS uses this image, it agrees to credit the provider where possible. I, the provider, understand that if the foregoing representations concerning copyright ownership is determined to be incorrect or false, resulting in the USFWS, the U.S. Government, or Seney Natural History Association being sued for copyright infringement, I agree to indemnify the USFWS, the U.S. Government, and/or the Seney Natural History Association for any resulting expenses arising from defending and/or settling such litigation. If you would like to grant restricted usage rights to your photo you may fill out FWS Form 3-2259 available on the internet (<http://www.fws.gov/forms/3-2259.pdf>). Please attach a copy of the form, as well as the information listed above, to back of each hard copy photo you submit.

I agree to the above full copyright release - Signature: _____ Date: _____

If a minor (17 & under) has taken the photo a parent or guardian of the minor must give their permission by signing above. If a minor is pictured in a photo an "Agreement of Use of Likeness in Service Products" (USFWS form 3-2260) must accompany the entry forms can be found at (<http://www.fws.gov/forms/3-2260.pdf>), copies can also be found at the Visitor Center or mailed to requesting individuals.

Congratulations to the 2013 Seney Amateur Photo Contest Winners



Chipmunk - Julie Christiansen
1st Place Wildlife Category



Juvenile Bull Moose - Mary Wojcik
2nd Place Wildlife Category



Snowshoeing in a Snowstorm - Jack Cook
1st Place Recreation Category



Mis-identification, an Eastern Kingbird on the Bald Eagle Sign - George Phinney
3rd Place Wildlife Category



Autumn Reflection on the Manistique River
Keri Boothe
1st Place Landscape Category



White Water Lily - Kimber Pierzchalski
1st Place Plants Category

Left: Adult Piping Plover - Sigurd Utych
1st Place Youth Category



Common Milkweed & Monarch Butterfly
Barbara Hysell
2nd Place Plants Category



Water Droplets on Moss
Craig Pierzchalski
3rd Place Plants Category



Left: Piping Plover Chick
- Sierra Utych
2nd Place Youth Category

Right: True Love Whitefish Pint
Kimber Pierzchalski
3rd Place Recreation Category



Misty Morning Sunrise - Candice Massey
2nd Place Landscape Category



Piping Plover Chick - Sigurd Utych
3rd Place Youth Category



View along the Pine Ridge Nature Trail
Keri Boothe
3rd Place Landscape Category

Right: Birdwatchers
Dave Christiansen
2nd Place Recreation Category



Dew on Spiderwebs - Kimber Pierzchalski
1st Place Special Assignment:
Black & White Category



Common Loon - Richard Borth
2nd Place Special Assignment:
Black & White Category



Trumpeter Swans - Joan Sorenson
3rd Place Special Assignment: Black & White Category

