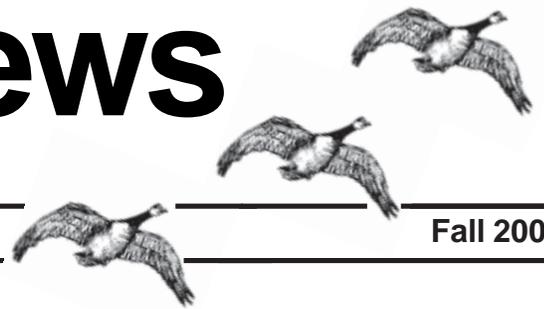




Refuge News



Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Fall 2008

2008 Volunteer of the Year: Jim Wicks

Jim Wicks has spent nearly ten years sharing his time with our Refuge visitors. He is enthusiastic, welcoming, a story teller and great at interacting with visitors. He has worked a regular four hour desk shift since he began volunteering in 1999 and has gone beyond that contribution by not only helping with many special events but taking the initiative to create and prepare a number of special workshops. He has developed, conducted and provided supplies for youth fish carving and art workshops and has done the same (*with the help of former volunteer Weldon Slater*) for duck calling workshops. His art skills have been put to the test making many special event signs. The refuge appreciates his energy, ideas and many hours of donated time.



2009 Volunteer of the Year - Jim Wicks

Spotlight: Harbor Island



Harbor Island NWR Located in Lake Huron

Harbor Island National Wildlife Refuge, named for the 150 acre harbor it nearly landlocks, is one of several satellite refuges managed by Seney. This 695 acre island, purchased from The Nature Conservancy in 1984, was established as a National Wildlife Refuge to preserve and enhance the island's unique ecosystem.

Located in Potagannissing Bay, north of Drummond Island, it is the largest and highest of some 50 plus islands in the bay, and as such is a significant reservoir for wildlife. Harbor Island supports the major regional habitats including; mixed upland forest (oak-maple), mid-seral stage forest (aspen-ash-birch), boreal forest (cedar-balsam fir), old field (grass-herb) and marsh (rush-pondweed). It's size, elevation, and habitat variety provide niches, used by breeding and migrating birds, not available on many of the smaller adjacent islands.

Harbor Island has the best naturally shaped harbor within a radius of several hundred miles. This sheltered bay is used by boaters for fishing and anchorage. The Refuge is open to the public during daylight hours.

George Orlich 1917 - 2008



George Orlich, 91, of McMillan, Michigan passed away early Saturday, October 11, 2008 at the Shady Lane AFC Home in Lakefield Township.

Born April 24, 1917 in Hurley, WI, George was a 1935 graduate of Wakefield High School. Following high school, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) at Camp Germfask before being drafted into the U.S.

Army immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Upon returning home, he returned to Germfask to work for Seney National Wildlife Refuge. During his early years there, he was involved in the development of the Refuge as a heavy equipment operator. His legacy can still be seen in the 7,000 acres of open water created from a system of dams, ditches, spillways, dikes and pools. He retired in 1973 after 37 years of service at Seney.

New Information Now On-line

Peer-reviewed papers, theses, dissertations and miscellaneous reports conducted on Seney Refuge are now listed on the Refuge web site. Some have links directly to the paper. You can view them at: www.fws.gov/midwest/seney/research.htm.

SNHA Meeting

The Seney Natural History Association will hold its next board meeting, open to all members and the public, on Wednesday November, 12 at 1pm at the Refuge

Did You Know . . . One of the only terrestrial insect species that maintains its body temperature through the winter is the honeybee. Thousands of these bees cluster together in a compact ball to conserve heat, achieving an average temperature of 64°F in the center and 50°F on the periphery.



My Internship at Seney National Wildlife Refuge

By Miriam Johnson

This summer I interned at Seney Refuge and had the greatest experience of my life to date. I came in thinking that the job would give me a chance to learn about the UP and its wildlife, something that, as an English major from the lower peninsula, I did not know enough about. I anticipated that getting out into nature, my favorite thing to do, would be the essence of the job. What I found, however, was that the job was much more than just getting into nature. Instead of an unforgettable experience with trees, water, and animals, it was more of an experience with people who were unforgettable, and who taught me a new way to see the world.

I should have guessed when I applied as a Visitor Services intern, that I would end up making connections that would change me for life. After all, the people who came and went in this place all tended to share my love of nature as well as many of my values. I remember meeting people from as close as Ann Arbor, to as far away as France or Germany, but no matter where they were from or how different our cultures, I could talk to them about nature and they would respond with enthusiasm. Not only had I never been able to talk to so many adults as their equal, but also I had never met people quite like these adults, so honestly interested in nature and wildlife.

A few weeks into my internship, I created the program, "Painting Seney's Scenery." It was an invitation for anyone to come to the Visitor Center and paint a landscape. At the first session, only two people showed up: Kathy, a painting enthusiast from Newberry, and her grandson. Kathy proceeded to show up to my program every single week until the last one at the end of July. I had worried that my program would be a flop, but Kathy's excitement about the beauty of the refuge and the fun of painting it was infectious. Other people began to show up at the program and, inspired by Kathy, we painted for hours upon hours. The beautiful pictures that resulted from our work were wonderful, and I was able to display them with pride. Kathy, and all the others who showed up to my program, reminded me of the joy of painting. Because of their encouragement, I will continue with my painting wherever I go.

Finally, there were the people who I saw the most: the staff of the refuge, the researchers, and the interns, who I both lived and worked with. They taught me almost everything I now know about the ecosystem, about plants and animals, and about life. I came to them unable to identify birds and trees, barely knowing anything about the earth and its dynamics. My world was very egocentric, and I thought only about other humans striving for their own happiness and ultimate perfection. In college, everyone shared my views, whereas at Seney, I was the minority of one. People at Seney were there to help wildlife, not humans, and this was normal. Slowly, I came to understand their perspective, and I grew to share it. I now see the earth not as a place where people and their intelligence rule the day, but a place where everything, including wildlife, has a place in an extremely complex system that cannot be tampered with too much by people with all their short-lived vanity. I came to realize how directly my life is connected with my environment, and really, how tiny and insignificant I am compared to it all.

In essence, I came back from Seney as a new person with a new mission in life, and a more realistic view of my own culture, not to mention that I made some life-long friends. I will never forget this experience at Seney Wildlife Refuge and I thank the forces of fate or whatever brought me to such a place, as well as my employers, for changing my life so drastically, and giving me an experience that I will never forget.