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Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | ALGOMA

Winter Comes Alive in Algoma

S now drifts, iced-over lakes and barren, leafless trees mark the winter countryside with a special kind of pristine beauty. Outdoor enthusiasts anxiously await winter and its opportunities in Algoma for cross country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and ice fishing.

There is something special about quietly ice fishing, sitting over an eight-inch hole cut through two feet of solid ice and waiting patiently for a hungry fish to take the bait. A magical moment occurs when a trout or northern pike pokes its head into the hole and comes to the surface to introduce itself to the angler more properly after a long battle of wills; one combatant above the hardwater and the other below. Whether bucket sitting outside in the elements or in a wood firestoked ice shack, ice fishing in the Algoma area is more than a pastime; it's an obsession for many avid anglers.

There's more to the area than great ice fishing opportunities. The Ahnapee Trail connects Algoma to Casco, Kewaunee and Sturgeon Bay and offers over 50 miles of perfectly groomed snowmobile trails. These winter thoroughfares connect to hundreds of additional miles of trails that wind through Kewaunee and Southern Door Counties. Cross country skiers and hikers can also enjoy the

groomed snowmobile trails and the pathways of many local county and city parks. Winter is a great time for bird watchers.

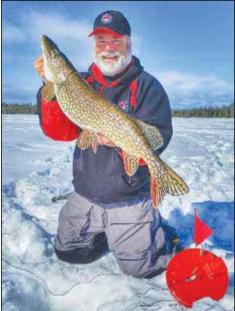
Bird City Algoma is host to a wide variety of birds to watch and note, including finches, warblers, hawks and owls. Eagles frequent the lakeshore where open water provides them with abundant prey for food on land and in the water.

Experience for yourself the great fishery that Lake Michigan and its tributaries have to offer. And if you want BIG fish, beautiful scenery and a fresh look at Mother Nature, check out Algoma.

From Capt. Lee and the crew aboard the Grand Illusion 3, good luck and good fishing.



Lee Haasch is an Algoma charter captain with over 50 years of Great Lakes fishing experience. He's been writing and giving seminars on fishing for over 35 years. For charter information or fishing reports, connect with Capt. Lee at fishalgoma.com, 888-966-3474 or 920-255-0604.





www.algoma.org Fishing. Festivals. Fun!

ALGOMA!

WINTERTIME IN ALGOMA

Winter time brings out the best in a small community. Algoma has much to offer the outdoor enthusiast Snowmobiling, hiking, cross-country skiing, ice fishing are just a few of the many activities we offer outdoors. For the indoor person, try bowling, winery tours, dining and of course, shopping in many of our fine shops!





Across the peninsula, the Bay of Green Bay is only a short 15-minute drive to trophy walleye fishing.

TOM LUBA

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Advance planning on a cold winter's night can mean fish like these on a pleasant summer outing.

Catch more in '24 dvance planning this winter can help you catch more fish this season. Start by knowing when species get active, spawn and relocate for the rest of the season. Northern pike spawn in 36-40 degree water; walleye 38-40 degrees; bass 58-62 degrees;

Advance Planning

bluegill, crappie 65 degrees. Spring always starts shallow; the rest of the season will find them deeper. I suggest starting with lake maps, especially on areas you want to visit but haven't yet fished. Guides like Sportsman's Connection provides you with maps that

point out shallow and deep water and locations for timber, stumps and rock, as well as species present. They may also help you uncover other good areas on lakes you currently fish. Most Wisconsin lakes have weed growth and weeds are their number one hideout.

Check your map for points that extend to deeper water and curves and turns in the depth. Straight lines at one depth are usually not good, but where the depth breaklines curve, or bend in and out, can offer a lot

of hiding areas. Cover makes them better. Retaining walls, rocky riprap and boat docks are good, especially if deep water is near.

Fish tend to go deeper during the cold season. If you can find places where the fish winter, that's where to start as the water warms.

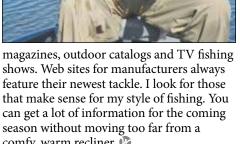
Docks with tops closer to the surface are best, but if they park bigger boats and pontoon boats, the fish use them as cover. Getting a bait in the small area beneath the motor can be a jackpot, as motor use causes a washout hole deeper than the rest of the area.

Rivers normally shed ice before lakes. And they may have spring walleye spawning runs. Usually, dams will draw early season spawners. Water levels will fall during summer, but fish in current, like smallmouth bass and walleye, are used to being mobile and more apt to strike as opposed to more sedentary lake fish. Make sure your bait is heavy enough to hit bottom in the heavier current, and go lighter as the

water drops to avoid snagging.

A hidden reason to fish rivers in summer is the opportunity to check out areas when the water is lower. Rocky shorelines can be productive as the uneven placement can carve out little holes in the rocks that block current. Lower water can reveal how the areas are shaped. A number of species seek these areas out in higher water and they can really pay off. Also, rock is stable, but trees and stumps can be moved over time by the steady heavier current. Your depth finder can help you discover new bottom cover.

Many lake reviews will give you an idea of what baits to use for which species and there are bound to be new lures featured in



shows. Web sites for manufacturers always feature their newest tackle. I look for those that make sense for my style of fishing. You can get a lot of information for the coming season without moving too far from a comfy, warm recliner. 🕨



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On The Cover

One inviting theme rings true in our January-February issue as our many tourism partners cast their "spotlights" on things to do and places to see in cities, towns or counties across Wisconsin.

Trails! Thousands of miles of meticulously groomed trails to snowshoe, cross-country ski, ATV, snowmobile, UTV.... how you create another trail tale...or 12... this winter is simply up to you.

Thanks to Donahue Super Sports (DonahueSuperSports.com) and Media Works WI (mediaworkswi.com) for this issue's cover photo.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Prepare to launch. And let it snow!

MERCURY

CRESTLINER

TOM CARPENTER Take a Winter Bird Hike *Capturing the joy of the mixed flock*

ooking for a simple, fun and enjoyable way to fill up a winter morning or afternoon? Take a winter bird hike. The name of the winter birding game is the "mixed flock." Here's how to hike in and hunt down one of these loose but entertaining little bird groupings, spot and identify its members, and understand the behaviors you're witnessing.

Pick out a nice sunny day, preferably one with little or no wind. Those are just nice conditions for a birding hike (use skis or snowshoes if you wish), and they are also the conditions when birds are most likely to be out working the countryside.

There's no need to get out at the crack of dawn, or even early in the morning. The midday hours between 10 am and 2 or 3 pm are probably best for bird activity. That's when temperatures are at their "peak" for the day and birds burn the least net energy while foraging.

Conduct your bird hike in any winter woodland. Mature hardwoods are great, especially brushy oak, aspen or other hardwoods, but most any mixed forest will do.

Walk slowly along, binoculars in hand. Stop and look often. Use the glass and your ears. You will often hear a winter mixed flock approaching before you see it. Listen for the buzzing *chickadee-dee-dee* calls of black-capped chickadees, the nasal *yank-yank-yank* calls of whitebreasted nuthatches, the *per-chic-o-ree* of goldfinches, and the excited *pik-pik-pik* calls and spirited tree-drumming of woodpeckers.

Get a line on the birds' path of travel and slowly work in front of their route. Admire the birds close-up from behind binoculars.

The following are some of the birds you can expect to see in a mixed winter flock in the Wisconsin woods.

Black-Capped Chickadees

These energetic, black-capped and black-bibbed little fellows are familiar to most folks. Watch chickadees work tree branches for bug eggs, larvae, seeds, buds and other forage.

White-Breasted Nuthatches

These handsome blue-capped, white-bellied birds cling to tree trunks and probe bark crevices for forage while circling tree trunks from the top down.

Brown Creepers

These nondescript, brown-and-buff little birds with curved bills complement nuthatches perfectly. How? Creepers work a tree trunk from the bottom up, covering territory and angles the nuthatches miss on their trip down.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers

Downies are smaller than hairies, but the birds look similar: Black-and-white checkered backs, white bellies, long-and-stout beaks, with handsome red patches on the



Black-capped chickadees anchor the mixed songbird flocks of Wisconsin's winter woodlands.

back of the male's heads. Woodpeckers drum and pound into bark to dig for forage that other flock members can't access.

Tufted Titmice

Bonus bird! You might occasionally see these silver-gray, crested cousins of chickadees in winter flocks. Watch for the big, beady black eye, listen for a buzzy whistle-call.

American Goldfinches

Listen for the sprightly *per-chic-o-ree* and *chew-chew-chew* calls of elegant-looking, olive-gray, black-winged winter goldfinches. Goldfinches work the very tips of branches, as well as shorter plants, and dried flower heads, seed pods and tall grasses, for seeds.

Take a winter bird hike. A mixed flock of songbirds works perfectly together to make sure no food source goes untapped in the winter forest. It is a wonderful biology lesson for any birdwatcher, and the color, sound and activity you witness is surely a joy on a winter day.

Hartman Creek State Park *Taking pristine beauty and serene settings to new levels*

Any natural areas boast pristine beauty and serene settings, but Hartman Creek State Park arguably takes such attributes to the next level throughout its 1,417 acres, thanks to a network of small bodies of water known as the Chain O' Lakes.

Located on the outskirts of Waupaca, this park is operated under the auspices of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and is open year-round with a variety of activities available. The robust list of amenities and activities includes boating, camping, horseback riding, mountain biking, picnicking and swimming.

Hartman Creek State Park offers a unique landscape, thanks to the glacial terrain. It is situated on the Green Bay Lobe of the last continental ice sheet. Scientists believe a glacier in the area had melted and reformed on multiple occasions, creating a series of ridges that have provided the backdrop for today's rolling landscape.

The spring-fed Chain O' Lakes, noted for their crystalclear waters, are the main attraction. Hartman Lake, which includes a 300-foot sandy beach, is within the entire park site. A designated swimming area is included within the site in the warmer months.

The park site also includes several other lakes within the chain network, among them Knight, Manomin, Marl and Pope lakes. Visitors can enjoy the beauty of these jewels through a variety of activities, including boating, canoeing and kayaking. The state DNR does permit gas-motored watercraft on these lakes, though they must be set to the slow-no-wake speed.

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Outdoors

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WHO SAYS DIAMONDS ARE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND?

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The Perfect Gift for Valentine's Day.

For well over a century, the American Beauty rose has stood as a symbol of everlasting love, elegance, feminine strength, and beauty both inside and out. To capture the delicate and fleeting magic of a blossoming rose and make it last forever is no easy feat, but the Henry American Beauty rifle does just that.

Taking center stage on both sides of the rifle's receiver cover is the iconic American Beauty rose surrounded by intricate floral scrollwork. The rose and other flourishes are mechanically transferred onto the nickel-plated receiver cover using a plate hand-cut by Master Engraver Heidi Roos. This meticulous process helps retain the original artwork's bright cuts, further enhanced with vibrant 14kt rose gold plating so the petals appear as if they're in bloom. A flowing banner beneath the flower reads, "AMERICAN BEAUTY."

The rest of the American Beauty rifle's materials and features continue the timeless design and flawless function that Henry is known for. The rifle features gorgeous genuine American walnut furniture, a fully adjustable semi-buckhorn rear sight, a bright brass beaded front sight, and the famed blued steel octagon barrel, which is drilled and tapped under the rear sight to accept a cantilever scope mount. The buttplate and barrel band are nickel-plated to match the receiver cover. Chambered for .22 S/L/LR, the capacity of the traditional magazine tube is 16 rounds of Long Rifle or 21 rounds of Shorts.

To commemorate the years spent together and the years to come, the American Beauty rifle is the most special gift you could give, to be admired at the range, in the field, or hanging above the mantel with pride.

Henry American Beauty Model: H004AB Caliber: .22 S/L/LR Capacity: 16 LR / 21 S



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Wisconsin Fishing Expo is Back for 2024 *More vendors than ever!*



he 2024 Wisconsin Fishing Expo (WFE) will take place from February 23 - 25 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. Practically every fishing product imaginable will be available among the 345-plus booths in the center's Exhibition Hall. There will also be incredible deals on boats from 13 dealers representing over 30 brands. For 2024, WFE has online ticketing to help make the lines quicker, with occasional deals or merchandise popping up online.

Dan Durbin, one of the owners of the expo, said that inventory levels are about where they were pre-pandemic, so consumers can expect to see packed booths and plenty of boats to choose from.

"Anyone who waited too long last year to pick up their favorite bait or to order a new boat may have found themselves disappointed," Durbin said. "Boat dealers are stocked back up to pre-pandemic levels."

Jeff Bast, of the expo ownership team, said that the show is well-rounded, as well as a means to give back to the community. "We allow dozens of non-profit groups in each year to exhibit for free or reduced rates," he said. "From vets' fishing groups, to women's' groups, to those who help get inner-city kids out on the lake - this is our way to grow fishing and the groups that support it."

WFE Bingo for kids 12 and under is back this year and sponsored by ACME lures. "The kids can travel through the show with their parents and visit seven specific booths where a vendor will mark their bingo card," said Don Kirby, the floor manager for the event. "When they reach the final turn-in spot, they'll get a prize package consisting of lures, stickers, candy and more."

Other featured attractions will include the Bumper Boats exhibit, the Outdoor Heritage Education Center's Touch of the Wild trailer, a fishing pond, face painting, balloon animals, trout pond and the always popular minnow races.

The WFE strives to provide some of the most knowledgeable seminar speakers in the industry. This year's expo will include huge names like Larry Smith, Doug Wegner, Capt. Greg Karch (Free Rod Combos and Gear for Kids), Sara Trampe, Rob Manthei, Kenny Jackson, Bill Schultz, Hunter Engleman, Nicole King, Curtis Checci, Jim Crowley, Dale Helgeson, and many more.

"Whether you want to learn about bass, walleye, muskie, panfish, or carp shooting, we

Chicago, Milwaukee Muskie Expos *Coming on fast like a 50-inch follow*

The Muskie Expos in Chicago and Milwaukee, coming on fast like a 50-inch follow on a cold November morning, are a must-attend event for every muskie fishing enthusiast and almost as exciting! Take advantage of this unique opportunity to learn more about the sport and connect with other muskie anglers. Bring the entire family.

If you're looking for an entertaining and exciting way to spend a day or a weekend, check off the dates now! The Chicago Muskie Expo is the first major muskie show of 2024 and will take place at the Kane County Fairgrounds, 525 South Randall Road, St. Charles, Illinois, from January 19 - 21. Show hours are Friday, January 19, 2 pm - 8 pm; Saturday, January 20, 9 am - 5 pm; and Sunday, January 21, 9 am - 2 pm. Parking is free, and admission at the door is \$15 for a day and \$25 for a threeday ticket. Children 16 and under are free! Refreshments are available at the show.

The Milwaukee Muskie Expo is a month later at Washington County Fair Park, 3000 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, Wisconsin from February 16 - 18. Ticket prices and show hours are the same as Chicago and parking is free. Food and refreshments are available at the show.

At both Muskie Expos, you'll find a wide



Tammy Ellis of Wausau caught and released this 47-inch muskie casting the Wisconsin River on May 29, 2023. Photo by Mike Ellis. range of vendors and exhibitors showcasing the latest in muskie fishing gear, boats, and information. Discover what's new for 2024, including techniques, lures and other products. This is a great opportunity to learn from some of the most experienced muskie anglers on the planet during seminars and workshops. You'll also be able to speak with resort owners and guides to learn about and select lakes and destinations to target your muskies in 2024.

The Muskie Expos aren't just about shopping and education - they're also a great way to connect with other muskie anglers, make new friends, and speak directly with muskie anglers from across the US and Canada. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a beginner, you'll discover many ways to find muskie fishing success.

Mark your calendar and make plans to attend the Chicago or Milwaukee Muskie Expo. You won't be disappointed. For more information, connect with www. muskieexpo.com or info@muskieexpo.com.



Lauren Kubiak of New Berlin caught and released this 40-inch muskie trolling the Manitowish Chain on November 3, 2023. Photo by John Kubiak.



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BOB SPIERINGS Bob's Bear Bait From spring to fall, we have it all

A nd just like that, the 2023 season is over and the 2024 bear hunting season is approaching. We would like to thank all hunters who we were able to assist throughout the year. Hopefully many of you enjoyed a successful 2023 hunt. As always, we will be here throughout the approaching season to provide you with all of your bear baiting needs.

Something that you might not realize is that certain baits are actually better at certain times of the year. From spring to fall, we have it all!

Spring baiting is too often overlooked since it's several months before hunting season opens. However, it can greatly increase your odds of harvesting a bear come September. Bears have a phenomenal memory and are known to check out old bait sites hit up in previous years and prior months. If you have your site set up in spring when bears move the most due to mating season, you'll increase your odds of having more bears visiting once the season officially opens. Spring is the perfect time to put out low quantities and "lighter" baits, like cereals, just enough for a snack without it being overfilling. Plus, it saves you a few extra bucks and a backache.

Summer is when most hunters start baiting, as the berries start to ripen, making it the ideal time to match what you

find in the woods. Raspberry, blueberry or any fruit filling are great products to use during this time.

As many of us have experienced, about two weeks before the season opener, your number of bears coming to bait typically decrease as more of their natural foods ripen. This is the time that can make or break your entire season. In preparation for winter, bears start to seek out foods high in protein and fats to help put winter weight on fast; typically acorns and other nuts and seeds. Stay ahead of the game by providing bears with high quality bait filled with nuts, seeds and other enticements like oils that are high in proteins or fats.

Of course, no matter the season, you should always put out scent every time you bait. Let me say that again. Always put out scent, every time you bait. From sprays to smears, scent is your biggest driver to get more bears into your bait site. Scent is also an indicator to bears that you baited recently, which encourages and invites them in to check it out sooner rather than later.

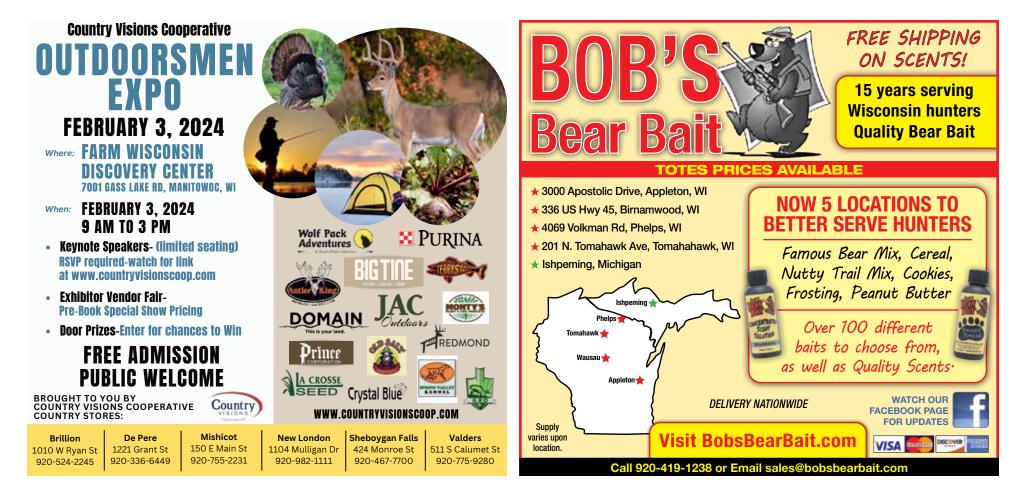
For more great tips this this season stop in and chat with us. We have multiple staff in our 16th year in the bait business with over 23 years of combined experience bear hunting. Bob's Bear Bait carries a large inventory of bear



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bait in Wisconsin with locations in Appleton, Birnamwood, Tomahawk, Phelps and Ishperming, Upper Michigan. We take pride in our easy, convenient to use bags of Bear Mix and Trail Mix. Our variety of blends and our mixes keep the bears coming back over and over again. See you in our stores!



A Special Landscape Memories of the deer season

The buttery yellow sky was growing darker and darker. Time moves rapidly when the deer season is coming to a close. A barred owl hauntingly unleashed a drawn-out whine nearby. It was lonely and chilling as it echoed through the suddenly dark forest.

The owl's call reminded me of how suddenly October and November days pass. October arrives in a wash of color. It is Mother Nature's finest hour, a landscape painted with a golden brush in lush reds, oranges and yellows. November flips the calendar page, and with a cold breath Mother Nature coats the gray morning landscape with thick frost. Soon December and January arrive.

It is time to travel back to the deer camps and check the tree stand to make sure it remains sound. These are the days when Canada geese fly overhead in sometimes huge flocks, their zesty sounds filling the morning air with music.

The morning air chills to the bone at

times and the whitetail buck rises from his bed on the ridge, his back covered in hard frost. As he shakes himself, the frost explodes into multi-colored crystals dancing on the first rays of the morning sun, and his hot breath rises into the air in puffy white clouds as he moves cautiously into the shadows of the tamarack swamp. Hunters hope to catch the buck moving, but he often evades us.

At the nearby lake, the gray waves look and feel cold, and the wind seems to howl a mournful sound as it blows relentlessly. In his stand a deer hunter shivers a bit, but intently watches his surroundings. It is a time we have waited for all year, and we don't want to miss a moment.

My opening day was a still, silent morning, the kind of morning the smallest sound is easily heard – a faraway rooster crows, chickadees flit about, the rat-a-tattat-tat of a woodpecker searching for insects under the bark of a dead tree.

I approached the hunt with excitement



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Timothy J Froemming Mortgage Advisor NLMS#280661 First Wisconsin Financial Email: timf@fwfservices.com

Email: timf@fwfservices.com Office: 262-567-5857 | Cell: 414-651-2280 The haunting call of a barred owl signaled the end of the author's deer hunting season.

and enthusiasm, but I found that at the age of 65 such feelings can be hard to maintain. My Dad warned me about this, but as a young man I paid little attention. Now I know what he meant.

About mid-morning, five does and fawns wander through. They are nice to see, I never get tired of it. I poured a cup of coffee from my thermos. Steam rose into the air as I munched on a sandwich for breakfast. Out on the deer stand, it tastes like a meal fit for a king. It turned out those were the only deer spotted on the opener. Sunday was also slow, and then it was back to work for the week.

Thanksgiving morning, flock after flock of swans and geese were flying overhead. Another sign of changing seasons. Saturday the feeling was totally different for me than just a week before. I entered the woods with excitement and anticipation. Now it was a melancholy feel.

It was indeed dark when the spell was broken as the owl called out once again, a ghostly "A-0000-ahhh." I knew my hunt was finished.



OnWisconsinOutdoors.com

I've been hunting the same woods with my Grandfather, Dad and alone for nearly 55 years. Each season is different. This was not my year.

It's January now. I look back. Like all hunts spanning five decades, memories of downed deer aren't the only reasons a hunter is pulled back to the field. I look forward to being on stand again, in 2024.

Calling All Deer Hunters Deer hides for Lions Camp

ach fall Wisconsin Lions Clubs sponsor a state-wide collection of deer hides for children in need. Over 200 Lions Clubs provide collection areas that allow hunters to drop off their hides to be processed. Although the 2023 deer seasons are concluding in January, if you don't have a donation this year, please remember our annual quest in the future.

The project started over 20 years ago to raise money to provide camping experiences for disabled children at the Lions camp in Rosholt, Wisconsin. On average it costs over a thousand dollars a week for a child to attend camp; with the help of hunters, they attend free.

The Lions Clubs, with the generous assistance of hunters, have raised over a million dollars over the last 20 years. Club members prep and salt each hide which is placed on pallets to be delivered to the Rosholt Camp. The hides are then sold to the highest bidder from throughout America and abroad, who then use the hides in the production of coats, gloves, hats, and other articles of clothing.

If you are a hunter, there are collection sites in your area. Call 1-877-463-4969 to find a collection station nearest you.

Help kids who need it most. We want your hides!

DICK HENSKE Missing Tess The joy and ultimate pain of loving a dog

I've had hunting dogs since I was a kid. I always started a pup once my old one was ready to retire.

This year was different. Lucy died last spring. She was a 14-year-old English Setter. Tess, my three-year old, was also an English Setter.

I'm 88-years old and loved and was loved by my Tess. In June of 2022, "Blastomycosis," a terrible fungal disease, infected her. After a series of medication spanning over a

wning a dog is a great asset to your life. year, and long rehab, she appeared to pull through. My daughters Lori and Kris and granddaughter Julia hand-fed Tess early in the journey, knowing from the veterinarian that if she made it through the first weeks, her chances of survival would increase.

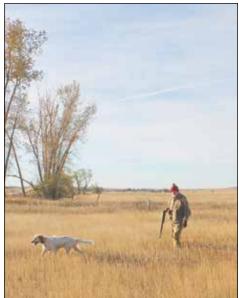
> Even though she had finally tested disease-free in the fall of 2023, a month later she developed a cough. The vet verified that full-blown Blasto had reoccurred. Tess died three days later.

Blasto is an awful fungus that attacks

dogs and humans and lives in our environment, particularly in wood, leaves, ponds and backwaters where I hunted. It hit Tess hard and fast. Her lungs were full of the fungi. In hindsight, I should have kept her on the meds. If you are a dog owner - and especially a hunter - beware of blastomycosis. It is worth your time to investigate this invasive disease online.

Now I have a problem! My five "kids" are pushing me to get a new pup. At my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Wisconsin Decoy & Sporting Collectible Show The perfect place to showcase your gear, and share a bit of history

ave grandpa's old decoys been sitting in your basement for decades gathering dust and you don't even hunt? Do you wonder if that Buck knife passed down across the ages is worth more than you think? You're not even sure what some of those lures are in Uncle Jack's tackle box that compelled him to tell those same classic stories again and again over a glass



of holiday eggnog since you were in grade school?

Bring your decoys, collectibles, lures, knifes, nets, rods... anything to do with hunting or fishing that you may want to sell, see appraised, or just learn more about to the Wisconsin Decoy & Sporting Collectible Show March 8 and 9th in Oshkosh.

\$5 entrée fee brings you in to this great show for one day. Join the Wisconsin Decoy & Sporting Decoys Association for \$10 and enjoy the show at no cost. Purchase a table for \$70 and buy, trade or show off your merchandise. Buy a discounted room at the Hilton and sell, trade or simply look and enjoy the camaraderie from room to room.

But take our word for it. This show is more exciting than a flock of canvasbacks setting over the blocks. See adjacent advertisement for all the details.





Fox Valley Retriever Club

Training You To Train Your Retriever FOXVALLEYRETRIEVERCLUB.COM

Fixing the Flaws *Retriever training in the off-season*

A retriever's job when hunting waterfowl is to sit still and be quiet while the ducks are circling and the hunters are calling. Once the shots are fired, the dog must continue to sit and mark the ducks where they fell. After that it must remain sitting in the boat, or blind, or the dog blind until sent to retrieve. Teaching steadiness is easy enough to do, but adding in all of the distractions of ducks flying, calls blaring, and guns firing raises a retriever's excitement to an extreme level. This is especially true of young dogs.

If you have a dog that likes to whine and make noise or prance around when the excitement starts, a concerted effort will be required to overcome these traits. Doing so will not be easy, but with diligence, effort and time, it can be done.

Joining a retriever training club is one of the most effective ways to fix any issues that a retriever may have when hunting. Clubs provide access to ponds, land, and even ducks to help you create scenarios that mimic the conditions encountered while hunting from a blind, boat, or dog blind. You can then work on correcting and reinforcing your dog's training and teaching it the correct responses. Retriever club members have access to the resources needed during the off-season to consistently work on issues that need to be addressed well before the hunting season.

Not only do retriever owners have access to a club's grounds, ponds, and ducks, but, just as importantly, they can learn from the expertise of other members. Many club members have trained retrievers for years and have experienced and dealt with the issues that virtually any retriever would present. Having access to experts is an excellent way to improve your retriever training.



Tom shares his skills teaching others how to train their retrievers at the Fox Valley Retriever Club. For more information contact him at winddancer. rtrvrs@ hotmail.com or Facebook.

The Brush Buster Portrait of days gone by

Any well-meaning souls have counseled me not to live in the past. I pretty much ignore most of what they say. The past defines who we are, where we have been, and how we came to live in the present.

So it is with painted images. In my home, I have many original paintings from family members. Several of those closest to my heart were painted by my father. As a child, I remember a wooden box full of tubes of oil paints, linseed oil, and brushes. The smells I recall are as fresh as they were when I watched Dad sketching on a canvas, then applying the pigments that brought outdoor scenes to life.

He was not a trained painter, yet his knowledge of flushing birds allowed him to portray moments in time that we shared. I tried to copy what he did. Mallard ducks were a favorite subject. I still have some drawings I made as a young child based on intently watching Dad sketch them out.

One painting stands out from the others, a flushing covey of quail. The scene is a reminder of many days of hunting the hilly bluffs near Morrison, Illinois. These were times when quail were abundant, and our pointing dogs could locate four or five coveys each day. Those of us who lived back then cannot forget the heart-pounding excitement generated by the whirr of wingbeats rocketing out from dense brush. While I engage in many types of hunting and fishing, nothing comes close to the exuberant, startled, pure joy of busting a covey.

Today, the hedgerows of multiflora rose and briar

HENSKE, FROM PAGE 13

age, despite still hunting upland birds from North Dakota to Wisconsin and loving all of my dogs, do I need a new companion? I can't cover the woods and fields for grouse and pheasants like I once did. And I go to Florida for the winter and don't return until spring ice fishing. My kids quickly volunteer to adopt my dogs when I head south.

So, who knows? Life is short! Maybe a rescue dog is in my future. Time will tell. I miss Tess. 🚱



Oil painting by my Dad. Memories of better days past.

filled valleys have been cleared out for the most part. The quail are not present in any great numbers. The farm we hunted for generations has been sold. My father is over ninety years old, and hobbled with knees that will not allow him to roam these hills anymore. He has already handed me his Browning shotgun that downed so many birds, knowing he cannot walk those hills and gullies anymore. There was a time when he was the brush buster, burrowing through the gnarliest brambles with his leather-faced pants to kick out stubborn single birds. He would root around places even our pointers would shy away from. I generally took the easier path, waiting for a shot opportunity up along old railroad tracks after Dad did the dirty work down in the ditches.

I sense my father's time on this earth is just about up. When I realize those autumn bird hunt days are fifty years in my own past, I feel my age, and the cold, and the aches I never had back then. In the painting, as I gaze across those golden fields again, I click off the safety, and snap up my side-by-side 20-gauge once again.

Dick Henske, 88, of Manitowish Waters, and Tess work the fields of North Dakota in October of 2023. He lost his three-year old English Setter to a reoccurrence of blastomycosis in November.





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Opportunity blooms in tax season

TAX PLANNING

Whether you get a refund or end up owing, you have options.

Tax season can be a period of new possibilities – especially when it comes down to what to do with your refund or, on the flip side, how to settle your bill.

If you receive a refund

So you worked diligently with your tax preparer to complete your return, only to discover some of the fruits of last year's labor will be coming back to you as a refund. So, what can you do with your bounty? Here are some possibilities:

- **Start fresh.** Strengthen your finances by paying down credit card or any other non-tax-advantaged debt.
- **Cultivate.** Make some improvements to make your home more valuable, comfortable or energy efficient or get ahead on the kids' tuition.
- Nourish. Invest in yourself (a new gym membership or art classes) or someone else (donate to a charity or sponsor a family or individual in need).
- **Replant.** Use that money to get a head start on this year's contributions to your retirement account or bolster your emergency fund.
- **Plan.** Some say a refund is just a loan you give the government interest-free. Should you reconsider your withholdings so that you come out even next year?

If you end up owing

If you end up owing taxes, you'll need to decide how to pay. However, before you write that check or cash in some of your invested assets, consider how those actions may impact you immediately and over the long run.

For instance, liquidating assets in your investment portfolio to pay your taxes may generate new tax consequences and could impact your long-term investment strategy. And emptying your savings account may leave you vulnerable should another unplanned need for cash arise.

Instead of using the assets working toward your long-term goals, consider liquidity and borrowing options based on the value of your assets, or that offer rewards like cash back or redeemable points. That way, you can access the cash you need to pay your tax bill while keeping your assets where they belong – invested.

Looking to mitigate your tax bill next year? Consider these tips:

- Maximize contributions. Take advantage of tax breaks in your retirement accounts and make catch-up contributions once you turn 50.
- Harvest losses. Consider balancing your realized capital gains by selling securities for a loss and mitigating your tax liability.
- Seek advice. Contact your financial advisor and tax professional to discuss tax planning.

Spring forward thoughtfully

The year's early months are a time of renewal, so use your tax refund wisely, or if you owe taxes, consider your long-term investment plan and borrowing options before uprooting your hardworking, invested assets.

Raymond James and its advisors do not offer tax advice. You should discuss any tax matters with the appropriate professional. \mathcal{V}

For full article, please see: https://www.raymondjames.com/commentary-and-insights/tax-planning/2023/03/14/opportunity-blooms-in-tax-season



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is groomed for both classic-style and skate skiing. Starting AND finishing in Ashland, following a route not on land, but over the frozen surface of Lake Superior – the world's largest lake. The event is held at night, and the course is lit by the stars above and up to 1,000 candles in ice luminaries that line the entire route.

Register at www.batb.org

ASHLAND

For more information Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce info@visitashland.com • 715-682-2500

FIDLIN, FROM PAGE 4

History lovers also have flocked to Hartman Creek State Park. The log cabin-style Hellestad House, built in 1864, is a centerpiece within the grounds and has been lovingly restored through a variety of grassroots-level efforts of groups including Friends of Hartman Creek State Park.

In addition to learning about the home's storied history over the past 159 years, visitors can enjoy the dwelling's current purpose as a nature center. Ole Hellestad originally constructed the dwelling in the nearby Wisconsin community of Scandinavia in 1864.

As a state-run park, the Department of Natural Resources also has carved out several areas within the grounds for picnicking. Notable sites include a three-acre area within the beach of Hartman Lake. Another popular picturesque park picnic spot is Whispering Pines, which is adorned by a stone staircase adjacent to Marl Lake.

Hikers and bikers can enjoy the beauty of the park through the trail system, which provides terrain for all skill levels and is accessible throughout all seasons.

As with all state-run parks, a vehicle admission sticker is required to gain entry. Throughout the year, Hartman Creek State Park is open from 6 am to 11 pm.



The 1,417-acre Hartman Creek State Park is situated within the Chain O' Lakes, a network of pristine bodies of water. Hartman Lake, pictured here, is one of them.





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Aging Hunters, Mast Crops, or Wolves? Considering factors in the decline of Wisconsin deer and bear harvests

s deer hunters who have hunted Vilas County for decades, OWO publishers believe the decline in quality deer hunting in Wisconsin directly correlates with the drastic increase in wolf numbers. The DNR reports 2023 harvest declines in deer but emphasizes a harsh winter and the loss of hunter participation due to an aging population. Little mention if any of the wolf factor and decline in opportunities to even see a deer in particular in the north country. DNR reports the 2023 decline in the bear harvest but points as a factor to an abundant acorn crop competing with hunters maintaining bait sites.

OWO, and our sources of expertise with extensive experience hunting deer in the north and guiding for bear with great success, question it.

Harvest figures from the DNR for the 2023 deer season showed hunters registered 173, 942 deer during the 2023 gun-deer season, including 85,390 antlered and 88,552 antlerless deer. Compared to 2022, the total firearm deer season harvest was down 17.6 percent statewide, with the antlered harvest down14.7 percent and the



Are wolves preying on bear cubs and beaver also impacting those population numbers in Wisconsin in addition to declining deer numbers?

antlerless harvest down 20.3 percent.

Comparing the harvest with the fiveyear average, each of the four Wisconsin Deer Management Zones in Wisconsin saw harvest declines. Focusing on the Northern Forest, the antlered harvest of 17,715 was down 14.7 percent from the five-year average with antlerless harvest of 10,305 down 27.2 percent.

According to the DNR, "Wisconsin bear hunters harvested 2,922 bears during the 2023 season, a marked decrease from the



11-23-23 Shawano County 1 Wolf



8-8-22 Barron County 5 Wolves



9-14-23 Bayfield County 4 Wolves



10-28-23 Price County 1 Wolf



9-29-23 Adams County 1 Wolf

4,009 taken by hunters in 2022. The decline was observed across the state, with the bear harvest falling short of respective targets in all management zones. The harvest is well below the recent annual average of approximately 4,000 bears harvested, and the lowest yearly bear harvest since 2008."

"I believe wolves are really targeting bears and that means bear cubs primarily from dens because it's the easy meal," said Mike Foss, who guided bear hunters in Wisconsin for 16 years with as many as 25 hunters in



11-19-23 Florence County 7 Wolves



9-12-23 Clark County 5 Wolves

camp and a consistent success rate of 95 percent. Foss also continues to hunt deer in Bayfield County, with dismal results. "If you run out of hamburger at the grocery store, you still have to eat so you look for something else to buy. I think the deer population has been depleted by wolves, and the wolves are looking elsewhere."

"In my years of guiding for bear in Wisconsin, we had huge acorn crops. Regardless of the natural food sources, we **CONTINUED ON PAGE 21**

Seeking Wisconsin Wolf Photos

If the DNR reported that Wisconsin had a population of 1000 deer, instead of 1000 wolves, and the first 7 photos that arrived from Wisconsin residents in an informal tracking survey attempting to estimate the population showed 25 deer from 7 different counties stretching from the far north to mid-state, would you believe the DNR estimate?

The first photos of wolves that came to *On Wisconsin Outdoors (OWO)* from readers recently reflect trail camera shots taken in seven Wisconsin counties. With your help, we hope *On Wisconsin Outdoors'* ongoing project helps determine a more accurate estimate of the number of wolves in Wisconsin.

Please send your trail cam photos of wolves to: wolves@onwisconsinoutdoors.com. List the county where the photos were taken, the date, and verify the number of wolves visible in each photo. Your name will not be published or used.

Among three main objectives, the DNR Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan approved in 2023 states "Providing multiple benefits associated with the wolf population, including hunting, trapping, and sightseeing".

Sightseeing? Does the DNR even believe their own estimate of 1000 wolves? Don't get on that bus.

Editorials are the opinions of the OWO Publishers and do not reflect the opinions of our advertisers or contributing professionals.

Election Integrity in Wisconsin-Part Four *Vos, LeMahieu, and Schimming are doing nothing about millions of ineligible voters*

In the last issue of On Wisconsin Outdoors (OWO), we reported that the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) has more than **2.8 million ineligible voters** on its statewide registration list. This has made elections in Wisconsin *unverifiable* because as long as ineligible voters remain on the list, they provide a vast reservoir from which illegal ballots can be cast. *

In November, OWO emailed a copy of the report to every member of the Wisconsin State Assembly and Senate to ensure they were all aware of the problem well in advance of the 2024 elections. Included were Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu.

In December, we followed up with the email below.

It has been a month since On Wisconsin Outdoors brought to your attention the more than 2.9 million ineligible voters on the WEC's registration list. These ineligible voters have made elections in Wisconsin unverifiable. To date, your silence on this issue has been deafening. What are you doing to ensure that all ineligible names are removed from the WEC's list before the 2024 elections? As of this writing, neither Vos or LeMahieu has responded.

On December 11th, we sent the email below to Brian Schimming, Chairman of the Republican Party of Wisconsin.

As you are aware, the Wisconsin Elections Commission has more than 2.9 million ineligible voters on its statewide registration list. This has made elections in Wisconsin unverifiable, and is the most important problem that must be corrected before the 2024 elections. Without verifiable elections, the will of Wisconsin voters cannot be known. Why are you, as Chairman of the Republican Party of Wisconsin, remaining silent on this issue?

On December 15th, Schimming replied.

Thanks for your email. I have spoken repeatedly about election integrity and the need for clean voter rolls throughout my time as Chairman. The issue of inactive voters on our voter rolls is an important one and the solution is not as easy to solve as some have been led to believe.

OWO responded the same day.

The 2.9 million voters in question are not "inactive", they are "ineligible". They are ineligible because they exceed the number of adults living in Wisconsin. Because they are ineligible, there is no legitimate reason for them to be on the WEC's voter registration list. As long as they remain, they will provide an enormous reservoir from which illegal ballots can be cast and Wisconsin will have unverifiable elections. By removing all ineligible voters from the WEC's list, the ability to cast illegal ballots will be virtually eliminated and Wisconsin will have verifiable *elections that accurately reflect the will* of the people. It is your responsibility as the Chairman of the Republican Party of Wisconsin, to start using the correct word, "ineligible", when talking about these voters, and to help get them removed from the WEC's list before the 2024 elections.

OWO believes the overwhelming majority of Wisconsin voters want verifiable elections, and understand why they're not possible with millions of ineligible voters on the WEC's list. But the Republican Party leaders in a position to correct the problem, are doing nothing to correct it.

Those leaders include Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (608-237-9163), Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (608-266-2056),

and Chairman of the Republican Party of Wisconsin, Brian Schimming (608-257-4765).

It's critical that you contact them, as well as your state assemblyman and senator, to tell them they must make removing all ineligible voters from the WEC's list their first priority. To find out how to contact your state legislators go to *legis.wisconsin. gov.*

Please make your calls, stay involved, and share this article with everyone you can.

*The article the report was in is titled "Election Integrity in Wisconsin-Part Three", and it can be viewed in an archived issue at onwisconsinoutdoors.com. Since it was published, the number of ineligible voters on the WEC's registration list has increased from 2.8 to 2.9 million. Here is the math. The WEC has 7.5 million total voters on its registration list. There are only 4.6 million adults living in Wisconsin. 7.5 - 4.6 = 2.9 million ineligible voters on the WEC's list. They are all ineligible because they exceed the number of adults living in Wisconsin.

JOHN ELLIS Why Robin Vos wants unverifiable elections in 2024

n December 29th, 2022, in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Robin Vos said "During my entire life, I have always voted Republican. So, I am going to try as hard as I can to make sure Donald Trump is not the nominee."

A May 3rd, 2023 interview of Vos on the podcast "Wedge Issues", was titled "*Robin Vos to*

Republicans: Donald Trump can't win Wisconsin." Vos is trying to make unbelievable election

results seem believable, before the 2024 elections.

He knows that Donald Trump has an excellent chance of winning Wisconsin if our state has verifiable elections. But by planting seeds of doubt about Trump's electability now, while leaving millions of ineligible voters on the WEC's voter registration list, Vos will be able to pretend it's all legitimate as thousands of unverifiable illegal ballots are cast to defeat Trump.

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ELLIS, FROM PAGE 19

DICK ELLIS The Whole Truth *Thinking for yourself imperative prior to 2024 election*

By the end of 2023, illegal migrants flooding the United States through our wide-open southern border numbered more than 10,000 people per day from 150 countries. 7.6 million illegal migrants have entered America since Joe Biden took an oath of office to protect the country, excluding 1.7 million illegal migrants estimated to have eluded border authorities, with 79,000 entrants since October alone.

Vast numbers of illegals have avoided detection completely. 294 illegals known to have entered are on the federal terrorist watch list (11 from the list were known to have entered during the entire Trump administration). Fentanyl smuggled over the border is now the biggest killer of young Americans, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) seized enough fentanyl in 2022 to kill every American citizen, or more than 333 million people.

Secretary of Homeland Security Secretary Alegandro Mayorkas repeatedly called the American border throughout 2023 "closed and secure". An extensive four-part report issued by the House Committee on Homeland Security though, calls Mayorkas "the chief architect of the illegal immigration crisis that Americans have suffered through since January, of 2021". The committee labels Mayorkas's actions, "dereliction of duty."

President Trump in December defined the illegal tsunami pouring into our country as "poisoning the blood of America". Under expected assault from media likening his rhetoric to Adolph Hitler antisemitic speech in World War II, Trump followed up in Iowa by again stating that illegal immigration is "destroying the blood of our country, they're destroying the fabric of our country."

The Associated Press (AP) in a December 19 column carried by "news" outlets nationwide reflects the orchestrated media tactic of diluting the clear and obvious intent of Trump's message to lead the reader, and 2024 voter, elsewhere. After stating that Trump's assertions that illegal immigrants bring with them crime and potential disease



The daily lies and omissions coming down the media propaganda pipeline moves faster than the next caravan of illegal migrants heading north for the American border.

were brought "without offering evidence", the AP turns to "Extremism Expert" Jon Lewis, a research fellow at George Washington University.

"Call it what it is," Lewis says of Trump's words. "This is fascism. This is white supremacy. This is dehumanizing language that would not be out of place in a white supremacist Signal or Telegram chat."

In reality, this is yet another great lesson for the American citizen and Wisconsin resident willing to seek the truth wherever it leads rather than believe the daily propaganda of corrupt media and government poisoning both parties. Believing that Trump is a racist is equivalent to believing that the president incited an insurrection January 6, or that he will anoint himself dictator on day one of a second term.

We have nothing without truth. Seek it, and start by reading Trump's speech referenced above, and the words of all candidates before determining for yourself who you will cast

your vote for.

We hear from many readers expressing gratitude that we provide a voice that reflects their own opinions. We hear too from readers who carry the polar opposite views and let us know. Your First amendment is a beautiful thing.

The daily lies and omission coming down the media propaganda pipeline move faster than the next caravan of illegal migrants heading north for the American border. And you, the undecided voter more than any other, are the real target.

In conclusion, we suggest that media and the uniparty overall adopt as a slogan the line used by Jack Nicholson's character in "Somethings Gotta Give".

"I have always told you," he said, "some version of the truth."

Something does have to give. But, thank God, if it's our Constitutional Republic left standing in the dawn's early light of November 6th, 2024. always had bear. Our success rate was 95 percent and we had six, seven, eight, nine different bears coming into every bait site. Those days of multiple bears coming to bait are done. I talked to three different groups of hound hunters this fall and they all said 2023 was the worst year for bear numbers ever."

"Trappers are complaining that there are no beavers. Wolves target beavers big time. Again, when there is no venison, the wolves will target other sources, and that means beaver too."

Hunters are feeling the impact of wolf expansion in more and more regions of Wisconsin. In the Ashland Press, I read syndicated outdoor columnist Mark Walters' comments on his group's 52nd year hunting the vast and beautiful Necedah National Wildlife Area in Wisconsin's Central Forest Zone.

In the past, Walters writes, "it was a given" to see 25 to 45 deer on opening weekend. In 2023, he became concerned when two hours after daybreak he had not heard a shot or encountered any other hunters or deer. Texts coming in from his hunting partners and local friends carried the same message when the ice was broken with another text. A 49-year veteran of the deer camp had seen his first deer, and right behind it a wolf.

Text after text, Walters states, carried the "real theme" of the 2023 hunt "Wolf stories, and very few deer being spotted. Tonight, at camp, not one of us out of 17 had a deer on the pole."

Walters speaks for OWO and countless Wisconsin hunters when he concludes his column. "I respect the wolf. I also respect common sense management of all forms of wildlife."

Mike Foss said this about the north country, but take it as a warning for a tidal wave that may be looming statewide and only resolved with proper management to bring Wisconsin wolf numbers back to were they were intended to be.

"The southern counties might be okay...for now," Foss said. "But in the north, do you think kids are going to sit all day in the woods, not see a deer, and then go out again the next day? If the whole intent of the DNR really is to recruit more and more hunters, they need to ensure there are more deer on the landscape, and that means less wolves."



Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | KENOSHA

Winter Fun in Kenosha

W isconsin winters are a great time to get outdoors and embrace the fresh, crisp air. From solo activities to family fun, there is an adventure beyond the expected in Southeastern Wisconsin. Hit the slopes at Wilmot Mountain. Enjoy skiing, snowboarding, and snow tubing. Families will appreciate the people mover conveyor that brings everyone back to the top of the tubing hill with ease. The ski hills range in skill level, and lessons are available on site for novice snow enthusiasts.

Enjoy FREE ice skating at Veterans Memorial Park. The City of Kenosha sponsors a no-cost rink, with free skates available to borrow. You can hop aboard an authentic electric streetcar for a ride along the lakefront or stroll through the nearby Sculpture Walk and charming downtown before or after your spin.

Visit one of the many parks in Kenosha County with your favorite sled, toboggan,

or saucer to cruise down a local hill. Several parks also have cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trails. Pringle Nature Center even has snowshoe rentals available. Select parks offer trails for snowmobiles and bike trails for fat tire cycles for those with their own equipment.

There are many indoor activities to explore as well. Make friends with a T-Rex at the Dinosaur Discovery Museum – a very manageable sized gallery for families with smaller children. "Seeing the Elephant" is a 360-degree movie experience which puts viewers in the center of a battlefield at the Civil War Museum. Mammoths excavated in Kenosha County can be seen at the Kenosha Public Museum. The Kenosha History Center houses the industrial narrative of Kenosha's formative years, including the heavy presence of automanufacturing.

All the activities are sure to work up



an appetite, so save room for something delicious. From an iconic Wisconsin Supper Club such as HobNob Restaurant & Cocktail Lounge to the famous homemade Italian venues such as Villa D'Carlo and Casa Capri, Kenosha sets the table for something special. Breweries, sweet shops,

and venues with items to bring home are abundant. You'll leave pleasantly surprised by the culinary landscape.

So put on your favorite winter warm-wear and head out for a winter day in Kenosha! Plan your getaway at VisitKenosha.com.



RAISE A FORK TO Some local flavor

Have a taste for something different? Come in from the cold this winter and warm up with hot eats and deals. From diners, bistros and supper clubs to food festivals, live music and nightlife, Kenosha sets the table with food and entertainment just waiting to be savored.



VISITKENOSHA.C

Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | MAUSTON

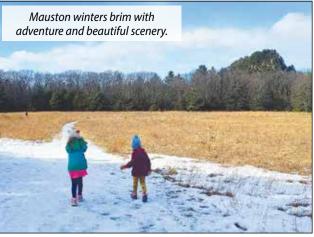
Welcome to the Charming Side of Wisconsin Winters

W inter in the Mauston Area is a blend of natural tranquility and community warmth. It transforms the coldest months into a season brimming with adventure, comfort, and lasting memories, showcasing the serene and charming side of Wisconsin's winters.

Nestled halfway between Minneapolis and Chicago on I-90/94 at Exit 69, Mauston warmly invites visitors to be "Naturally Connected." You will be pleasantly surprised by the many ways to enjoy the crisp winter air and the fabulous places to warm up. You will find a wide array of overnight accommodations, shops, and ample outdoor recreation. Don't miss the locally-roasted coffee, great microbrewery, winery, and art cooperative/gallery.

Mauston sits at the heart and County Seat of Juneau County. The area boasts 240 miles of groomed snowmobile trails winding through pine forests, past stunning bluffs, and across picturesque farmland. Additionally, nearly all of Juneau County's lettered highways and Mauston city streets welcome ATV and UTV enthusiasts.

For those seeking more serene winter activities, the area



is rich with state and county parks and trails perfect for hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. An insider tip: the Necedah Wildlife Refuge and Buckhorn State Park offer free snowshoe rentals, allowing visitors to explore miles of scenic trails.

Ice fishing in the Mauston Area is an angler's dream. The region is dotted with numerous lakes and rivers, including the expansive Castle Rock Lake. Here, enthusiasts can easily find the perfect spot to drill through the ice in search of their next big catch, surrounded by frosty tree-lined shores and rock outcroppings.

A seasonal highlight is the Guardians of Lake Decorah (GOLD) annual ice fishing tournament, taking place over the January 20th weekend, coinciding with the Department of Natural Resources Free Fishing Weekend. This event celebrates more than just ice fishing; it's a festive gathering featuring raffles, hot chili, a warming fire, and local beer, all in the spirit of community and the preservation of Lake Decorah.

Juneau County is also a haven for those traveling with pets. The spacious, fenced dog park offers a delightful space for pets to stretch and play in the snow, providing a refreshing break for both owners and their furry companions.





SPOTLIGHT | CITY OF MARINETTE

Winter Experiences that Linger for a Lifetime

Reel the adrenaline rush as you embark on a snowmobiling escapade in Marinette, where your spirit animal is none other than the sleek and powerful snowmobile! Picture yourself gliding through the pristine trails, surrounded by the winter wonderland of Marinette County. It's not just a ride; it's a communion with the snowy landscapes, an experience that will etch itself into your memory. With a newly added Holiday Inn Express located on the snowmobile trail system, you can drop your trailer in the parking lot and ride the trails.

Start early and witness a sensational sunrise cresting over the hills, setting the perfect backdrop to your adventure. Boasting 750 miles of thrill-seeking trails, Marinette County has what you're looking for. As you and your tribe ride across the field, darting in and out of picturesque woods and climbing over the rolling hills of Marinette, you realize this is a memory your group won't soon forget. After a fun-filled day of adventures and memories, you retreat back to your 5-star hotel room. Imagine being wrung out from an adrenaline adventure that has your brain popping with endorphins and your body feeling like it went 12 rounds with Mike Tyson. A hot, relaxing shower rejuvenates you and prepares you for the evening ahead.

Down in the lobby, you rendezvous with your friends and family. The great debate; food and entertainment. The Classic burgers, Mexican cuisine, Chicago-style pizza, smoked brisket, or maybe craft beer, wineries, and distilleries. The culinary offerings in the City of Marinette cater to every palate and promise to satisfy your postadventure appetite.

But the adventure doesn't end with the trails or the delicious food. Marinette has something special for those seeking libations and laughter. Whether it's an award-

winning craft beer pub, a charming winery, or a tempting distillery, the evening promises to be as memorable as the day's ride.

When you're ready for a getaway trip that will take you to the edge of God's Country and back, contact the Marinette Welcome Center at 715-732-4333 and share your desires with our Adventure Creating Composer and we will craft an experience that lingers for a lifetime. For a more personal touch, e-mail me, Shawn Katzbeck, your Director of Marketing and Tourism for the City of Marinette, at skatzbeck@marinettee.wi.us. Check out our website at www.fishonmarinette.com, and join us on Facebook / marinettewelcomecenter.

Call today and get ready for one tribe...one adventure... one life-time memory – Fish City Marinette is calling YOU!





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Hurley, WI

of Exciting Activities in Activities in Contact Hurley Chamber of Commerce at 715.561.4334 or visit hurleywi.com.





Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | FERRYVILLE



Home to Soaring Eagles, and Soaring Hearts of Those Who Come to Watch

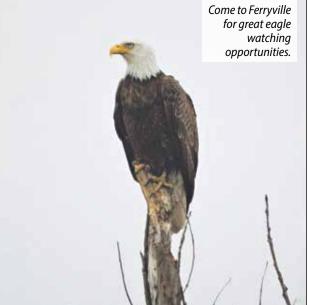
ird watching season has arrived along the Mississippi River in Ferryville and with it an amazing number of eagle sightings and nest discoveries. There are days when you can find at least 10 eagles having a "confab" in the trees at the corner of State Highway 35 and County B, just north of Ferryville. In this grove of trees and right off the road is a new eagle nest that came to light in 2023 after the fall foliage fell. South of Ferryville you will find two new eagle nests that were also built in 2023. Bring your binoculars and watch as these magnificent birds scan the waters below for their next meal.

Enjoy winter hikes, ice fishing, crosscountry skiing and snowmobiling in Ferryville. If you have youngsters in your travel group, note that February 3, 2024 is Kids Ice Fishing Day at the Wisconsin Great River Road Interpretive Center and US Fish & Wildlife Hatchery in Genoa located at Great River Road, Highway 35. As an added bonus, a tour of the magnificent National Interpretive Center is free.

Lots of charming small town vacation rentals and events can be found in and around Ferryville. For instance, local community groups on January 11 and February 8 will be hosting Soup and Salad Nights from 5 pm – 7 pm at the Ferryville Village Hall. You'll find a great selection of homemade soups, salads and desserts for a free-will offering as payment. Proceeds will be used to fund village hall improvements. February 24 is the Sweetheart Pancake Breakfast from 8 am – 11 am.

March 2 is the big Eagle Day event from 9:30 am – 2 pm at village hall, co-sponsored by Friends of Pool 9 and the Ferryville Tourism Council. This family-friendly event features the University of Minnesota Raptor Center Eagles and Owls plus a program by John Howe of the Raptor Resource Center Eagle Cam Program, Decorah, Iowa.

You're always welcome in Ferryville, where we'll treat you like a "local."





A Place for All Seasons

Join us year round in the heart of Wisconsin Driftless Region and experience our breath-taking bluffs on the majestic Mississippi River



WINTER 2024 March 2 Bald Eagle Day

Two programs with live birds, nest building, crafts, hooting contest. Ferryville Village Hall, 9:30 AM-3 PM.

CONTACT: PO Box 236, Ferryville, WI 54628 • 920-210-4560

VISITFERRYVILLE.COM

Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | HAYWARD LAKES

An Alliance Like No Other

HAYWARD, WI · HOME OF 5 WORLD RECORD MUSKIES

OVER 200 LAKES

A nyone who has visited the Hayward Lakes area in the winter months, on any given weekend, will see cars and trucks traveling here from all directions. Some carry cross country skis, winter fat bikes, snowshoes, and various other outdoor recreational gear, while the remainder are hauling snowmobiles. With over 600 miles of groomed trails in Sawyer County, the Hayward area has become a premier destination for snowmobile enthusiasts. What many of these visitors don't realize is the behind-the-scenes operation that is responsible for our amazing trail system.

The Sawyer County Snowmobile and ATV Alliance is made up of 10 snowmobile and ATV clubs throughout Sawyer County. This all-volunteer organization builds, maintains, and grooms the entirety of the 600-mile snowmobile trail system within Sawyer County. As winter approaches, groups of volunteers begin by brushing

Check out our

weekly fishing

report

the trails, repairing signs, and placing barricades around private property. After brushing operations are complete, all the equipment is serviced and grooming drags are hooked up, the anticipation for snow is on.

Volunteers monitor the thickness of area lakes as freeze-up begins, and once it is safe, crews mark the lake trails with reflective stakes to indicate the safest passage. Signage for businesses and general directional trail markers are inspected and installed. Much of the Sawyer County trail system is connected by lakes, so it is vital for safety that these are carefully monitored and marked.

When the snow starts falling and temperatures drop, the trail grooming process begins. The volunteer groomers often work late at night into the early morning hours to take advantage of fewer riders on the trail, but also to allow the

Outstanding fishing for trophy musky,

northern, walleye, bass, crappie and

Woods. Waters, World Class Erea

715-634-4801 800-724-2992 www.haywardlakes.com

panfish in Wisconsin's

beautiful northwoods.

freshly groomed snow to set up with the colder overnight temperatures. There really is a science when it comes to getting beautifully groomed trails. The volunteer grooming staff then reports their activity as well as general snow and trail conditions to another Alliance volunteer, who then collects that and publishes a trail report. This gets published on the Alliance Facebook page, as well as on the Hayward Lakes Visitors and Convention Bureau website to give riders the most current

information.

The common and most important link here is the volunteers. When you are out on the trails this winter, remember the work of these men and women. Thank a volunteer and be courteous if you encounter grooming operations on the trail - or better yet, join a club and get involved!

By Mindy Simons, Assistant Director, Hayward Lakes Visitors and Convention Bureau.





OnWisconsinOutdoors.com



OCONTO COUNTY

When the snow starts to fall in Oconto County, Wisconsin, the outdoors just get more fun! Stretching from the bay of Green Bay up to the Chequamegon- Nicolet National Forest, Wisconsin's Oconto County has a lot to offer. And every winter, Oconto County transforms into a winter wonderland.

The drive into Northern Oconto County is like arriving in Narnia. You'll cross into the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest — tall pines line the road and sparkling snow covers the ground. Whether you're coming with your family or your close friends, the drive will get your crew excited for winter adventures and hot cocoa moments!

WWW.OCONTOCOUNTY.ORG







74th Annual Ice Fisheree, Bald Eagle Appreciation Days Looming

et your lines a jiggin' at the 74th Annual Ice Fisheree in Prairie du Chien, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, February 2 - 4. The event unofficially kicks off on Friday, February 2, at the Crooked Oar Bar and Restaurant, three miles north of Prairie du Chien. Friday night events include a true Wisconsin fish fry, meat, and basket raffle, and 50/50 drawing.

It's rise and shine on Saturday as the Fisheree officially kicks off with registration at 7 am. Activities run both days, including an Ice Fishing Expo at 11 am for children 12 and under, teaching the fundamentals of ice fishing. Adult and kids fishing money prizes will be awarded, along with the grand raffle prize of a Polaris Sportsman Touring 570, 2-Up ATV, to be given away at the end of the Fisheree on Sunday at 2 pm.

Bald Eagle Appreciation Day-Then set your sights on the 18th Annual Bald Eagle Appreciation Day on Saturday, February 24. Featuring new programs and presentations by state and local birding experts, this event will consist of educational and fun hands-on activities for the whole family, as well as birding and nature exhibits throughout the day.

Saturday programs are from 9 am to 3 pm at Hoffman Hall, 1600 S. Wacouta Ave. The highlight of the day is the exciting live birding program featuring a bald eagle and other interesting raptors, presented by the Schlitz Audubon Society.

Bald Eagle viewing is at its best in the Prairie du Chien area, with multiple open water locations along the Mississippi River. While in the area, be sure to stop by Lawler Park on St. Feriole Island, Blackhawk Avenue and the Washington Street bridges, as well as a viewing station at the Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center – Prairie du Chien.

This special Bald Eagle program is free and open to the public and is sponsored by the Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Council. For a complete listing of both events, as well as times and location of all activities, contact the Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce on 800-732-1673, or visit prairieduchien.org.



SPOTLIGHT | OCONTO COUNTY



The Perfect Destination for Your Winter Getaway

ne of the most popular winter activities in Oconto County is snowmobiling. The county boasts over 480 miles of well-groomed snowmobile trails, making it a top destination for snowmobile enthusiasts. These trails wind through scenic forests and offer breathtaking views of the county's winter wonderland. In addition, Oconto County is home to several snowmobile clubs that host events and maintain the trails, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all riders. Whether you're a seasoned snowmobiler or a

ne of the most popular winter activities in Oconto County is snowmobiling. The county boasts over 480 miles of oomed snowmobile trails, making it a tination for snowmobile enthusiasts. beginner, Oconto County has something for everyone to enjoy on its extensive snowmobile trail system. So, bundle up and hit the trails for an unforgettable winter adventure in Oconto County.

> But we offer much more. Oconto County offers a variety of winter activities for all ages. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are popular options for those looking to explore the county's natural beauty and

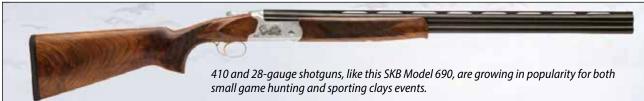


Presents Firearms Info from Ron Stresing

New Year - New Gear Perfect bangs for the shotgunners' bucks

Post-Holiday January sales are a great way to gear up for the shotgun sports. Whether you are a clay target enthusiast, wing shooter, or both, beat the rush and stock up for spring turkey or summer trap or sporties leagues now. Need a new firearm or work done on one? Odds are the local sporting goods store and gunsmith are nowhere near as busy as they were before deer season. This is the time of year I look over my shooting related supplies and plan ahead for the coming clay shooting and hunting seasons.

Shotguns and Shotgun Accessories Truth is, firearms need to be cleaned and maintained. Cleaning products are broken down into solvents and lubricants. Solvents, like the classic Hoppes #9, remove powder residue, soot, copper and plastic fouling. Solvents also remove any oil, so you need to protect and lubricate the firearm's barrel and action after cleaning. When I was taught at age 12 to clean and lubricate my bolt action .410, I used 3-in-1 oil in the red and white can. Today there is a huge selection of spray on petroleum and synthetic lubricants. I recently discovered the bore snake for cleaning shotgun barrels. If you don't own one, I highly suggest getting one. My son gave me a



hunting trip.

bore snake for my 12 gauges for Christmas a year ago. I liked it so much I bought one for my 20-gauge shotguns too.

Smaller gauge shotguns, like .410 bore and 28-gauge, seem to be all the rage. They are light and easy to carry, and are ideal for game like doves, quail, woodcock, rabbits, and grouse. SKB Shotguns makes them in both calibers as the model 720 and 690 in over/under configurations. Many sporting clays' events now feature classes for the smaller bore shotguns. The only drawback is ammunition for both 28-gauge and .410 bore guns tends to be harder to find. You can get around this by buying shells by the case or reloading. One of the best rabbit hunters I know insists the 28-gauge is the perfect rabbit gun.

Choke Tubes and More Look over your inventory

of choke tubes. This is a great time to pick up that light modified tube you want for sporting clays or longrange steel shot tube. Over the years I've upgraded to all extended choke tubes. Also remember to get a good choke tube lubricant / anti-seize compound for the threads on the tubes. No one likes a stuck choke tube and resulting trip to the gunsmith. A spare choke tube wrench to keep in your truck or range bag is also a good investment. Need a shotgun sling for walk-in waterfowl or turkey hunting? Electronic hearing protection and

prescription shooting glasses are also nice upgrades. Thinking about a trip to South Dakota for pheasants or North Dakota for waterfowl? This is also the time to research or plan an out of state

Forgotten Wisconsin Axis POWs in Wisconsin earned wages and free room and board

ogan Heroes, the old television situation comedy, resembled life in a Wisconsin Prisoner of War camp more than the Nazi camp it portrayed. Allied POWs (Prisoners of War) taken captive by the Germans during World War II were subject to beatings, little food, severe discipline, and worse.

Still, western Allied prisoners were treated far better by the Germans than their Russian army captives. The Germans worked and starved Soviet prisoners to death by the millions. The Soviet Union would wreak a terrible vengeance when the tables were turned. German POWs were held in Russia for years after the war's end. More than a million died in captivity. Survivors had little interest in ever returning to the Soviet Union.

Conversely, many German POWs held in Wisconsin and throughout the United States petitioned to stay. Few were granted their request, but that would change in later years as former POWs were allowed back to America, often sponsored by their former employers.

Yes, that's right. Former employers. Wisconsin hosted 13,000 Axis soldiers in 39 camps throughout the state and they were put to good use on farms and in factories. They were paid 80 percent of their civilian counterparts in occupations not directly related to the war effort. The POWs were paid in script or had their money put into savings accounts.

The war resulted in huge labor shortages, some of which were filled by Axis POWs. Except for Japanese prisoners, who generally refused to work because they deemed it traitorous. The fact that they were taken prisoner was already a cause of great shame to them. More than a few committed suicide, consumed by guilt for surrendering and fearful of retribution at home upon release.

German POWs usually welcomed the opportunity to

work. On many occasions, while waiting for his ride to school as a child, my father watched as columns of trucks filled with POWs rolled by on their way to a large New Berlin farm. Some even waved. Others were more morose. Picking, washing and packing vegetables was hard, dirty work, but preferable to being shot at in the Afrika Korp, which is where most of the early prisoners originated. Those my dad watched were housed at General Billy Mitchell Field where many of their comrades were gainfully employed assembling batteries.

When not working or exchanging dirty looks with Japanese POWs, whom they despised, German prisoners could spend time painting, listening to the radio, taking correspondence courses, reading, and even drinking beer, of which they got one bottle a day. Government agencies would even locate and connect POWs with relatives living

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WILKE, FROM PAGE 28

in the US. Items like cigarettes, snacks and candy could be purchased with camp script. Security was rather lax. There were instances in the camps of POWs wandering away at night to spend time at local taverns. Many Wisconsinites spoke German, and no doubt conversations with the locals were fascinating.

Camp life was not completely idyllic. There were bloody conflicts between conscripts and diehard Nazis. German and Japanese POWs, although allies, hated each other. Each was convinced of their own racial superiority and viewed the other with contempt. As they learned of their homelands' devastation, prisoners were often consumed with grief.

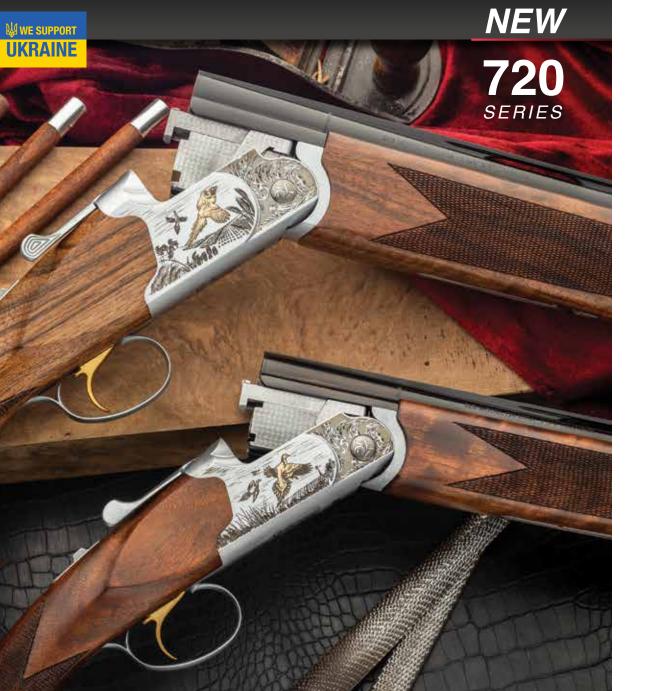
Some Americans questioned the exemplary treatment Axis prisoners received, but the Allies had good reasons, the primary being hope that Axis countries would treat American prisoners similarly. They didn't. Americans also wanted to see the authoritarian leaders of their enemies replaced by democratically elected governments once victory was achieved. Treating hundreds of thousands of Axis prisoners well could assist in that goal.

Those who saw the value of treating POWs humanely were correct. Today, Germany is one of America's best allies.

Contact Stuart at stuart@onwisconsinoutdoors. com.



These German prisoners of war may have found them themselves later incarcerated in Wisconsin and throughout the United States.





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SPOTLIGHT | PLATTEVILLE

Winter Trail Systems Waiting for Everyone

Platteville offers many outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the winter season. Get on our roadways and explore the countryside in your ATV or UTV. The views can be phenomenal and breathtaking as you venture from one destination to another. For detailed information on local and county routes and maps, stop at the Wisconsin Welcome Center located in Platteville.

Along the routes, there will be opportunities to see many varieties of wildlife, as well as some interesting attractions and destinations to explore. As the snow begins to fall, check out our trail system with your fat tire bike. No longer is bicycling just a summer activity! We have many miles of trails in and around Platteville that will be challenging and provide you with great scenic views. For those that wish to cross country ski, snowshoe, or just go for a walk, our trail system can accommodate you as well!

Discover the opportunities in Platteville. To learn more, visit www.platteville.com or call the Platteville Regional Chamber and Wisconsin Welcome Center at 608-348-8888.



Explore Wisconsin SPOTLIGHT | WASHBURN COUNTY

Lake and Land Adventures Certain to Pull you Back for More

A sthe temperatures drop and snow begins to fall in the northwoods of Wisconsin, Washburn County turns into a winter wonderland for outdoor adventurers. Whether you wish to hit the trails, cuddle up with a good book in front of the fireplace, grab a beer at the local brewpub, or catch a trophy fish on one of the area lakes, Washburn County will not disappoint.

Along with great cross-country ski and snowshoe trails, Washburn County boasts some of the most scenic snowmobiling in the state. Over 240 miles of groomed trails wind through public forests and across private land covering hundreds of thousands of acres. Washburn County is unmatched for wilderness sledding that is close to lodging and amenities. Our local trails link to the largest network of snowmobile trails in the Midwest. Hard-working local snowmobile clubs have developed a top-notch trail system that crosses public and private lands, lakes, streams and bridges. Nearly 1,000 lakes in the area offer more than 30,000 acres of lake riding. Most trails are maintained from early December through March, depending on conditions.

With nearly 1,000 lakes in Washburn County, it's a great place to break out your tip-ups and go fishing! You'll see ice shanties pop up all over on the Washburn County lakes during the winter months. If you're new to ice fishing, there are plenty of outdoor stores with experts who can set you up with equipment to hit the ice. Whether you're looking to catch a trophy fish or just some tasty panfish to fry up for your evening meal, expect success when you fish our area lakes.

For more information on planning your winter adventure in WashCo and to check trail conditions, head to WashburnCounty.org.



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WISCONSIN FISHING Expo, FROM PAGE 6

have something every day for whatever a person wants to fish for," Durbin said.

The 2024 WFE Fishing Expo will take place Friday, 1 pm - 8 pm; Saturday, 9 am -7 pm; and Sunday, 9 am - 4 pm. Tickets are \$10 at the door with \$2.50 off for veterans presenting a form of military ID. Kids 12 and under are free.

Sponsors include Wisconsin Outdoor News, Don's Marine, Lucas Oil, The Big 1070, National Professional Anglers Association, Future Anglers Foundation, Blackfish and Daiwa.

For additional information, visit wifishing expo.com.

OCONTO COUNTY, FROM PAGE 27

get some exercise. Ice fishing is also a favorite pastime, with numerous lakes and rivers to choose from. For those seeking a thrill, Oconto County has a downhill skiing and snowboarding hill, as well as tubing and sledding hills. And after a day of outdoor fun, visitors can warm up by the fire at one of the county's cozy lodges or cabins. With its picturesque landscapes and abundance of winter activities, Oconto County is the perfect destination for a winter getaway.

Looking for MORE OUTDOOR STORIES Check out ONWISCONSINOUTOORS.COM!

Badger State Archaeological Society

American Indian Artifact Show

ADULTS \$3

Saturday, March 9, 2024 9 AM to 3 PM Washington County Fair Park & Center 3000 Highway PV, West Bend, Wisconsin

Featuring authentic artifacts and educational displays honoring Wisconsin's American Indian heritage signatures: fluted axes, old copper, Hixton, and effigy mounds.

Show host Jim Uhrinak at: j.uhrinak@gmail.com

SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH THE KETTLE MORAINE ROCK, MINERAL & GEM SHOW (SAT & SUN) - ADULTS \$4

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