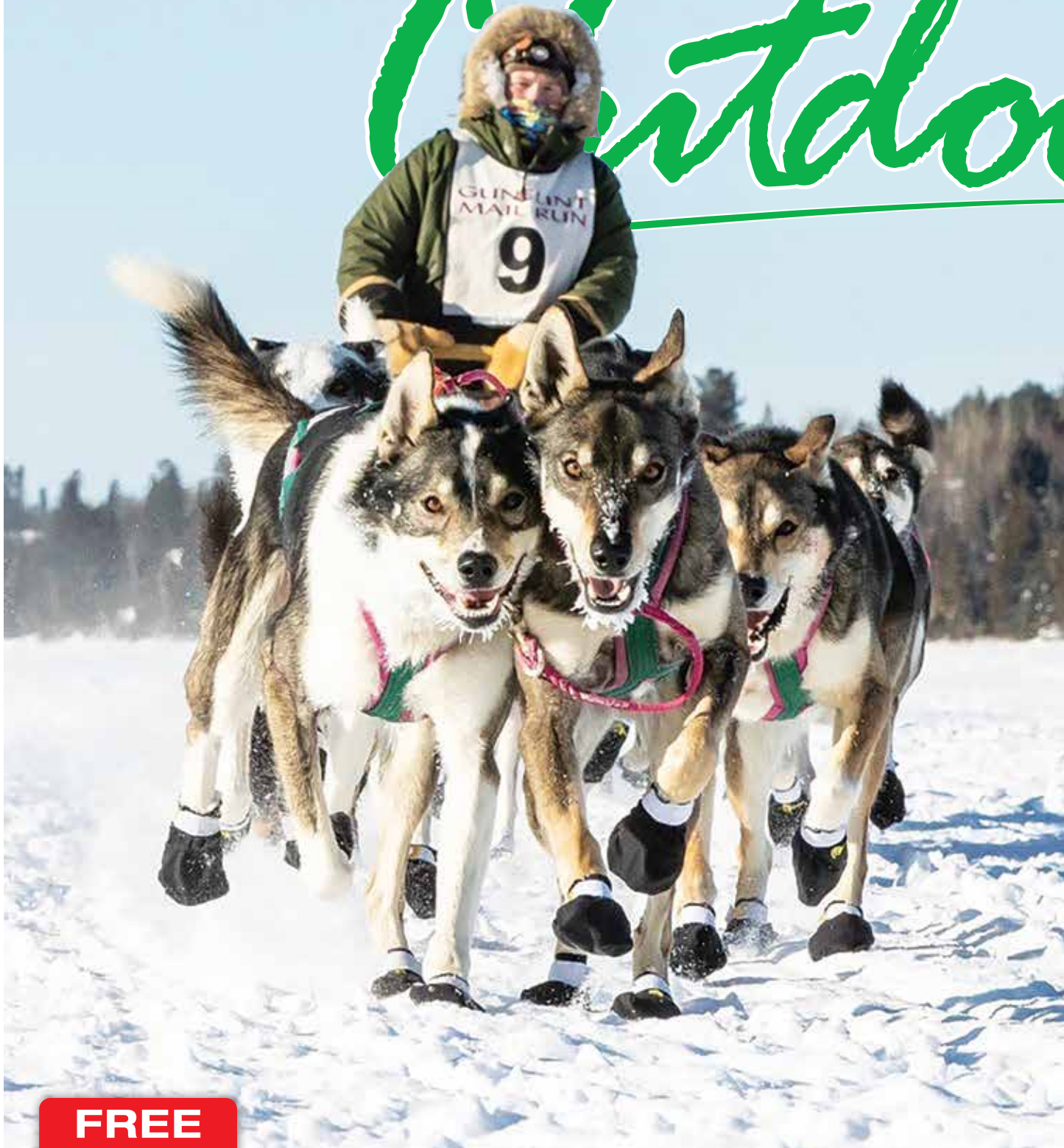


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Starwood Farm

Making life-long memories

There are moments in life that have lasting and unexpected consequences. Such is the case of Starwood Farm in Ringle. Starwood was a working farm for 30 years, but a unique one that separated it from the others: Owners Gail and Tom Bayer had a team of horses and a sleigh.

One winter day 30 years ago, some family members were enjoying a sleigh ride on a local road. On their return home, a car drove up their driveway. A man got out and asked Gail, "Do you give sleigh rides?" "No," she responded, "We're not a business." The interested party then asked, "Well, would you?" A flash of inspiration came into Gail's head. "Well, I suppose we could," she answered, and a business was born. "It's funny how things work out," Gail reflected.

Starting with one sleigh and a team of two Percheron horses, Starwood Farm grew into a family business that Gail and Tom now operate with help from their children and grandchildren. Currently, the farm



Starwood Farm's Cinderella Carriages are available for romantic events such as weddings and anniversaries.

has several teams of Percheron Draft and other horses that pull sleighs, wagons and coaches. Whatever the season or occasion, Starwood has enough wagons and sleighs to accommodate up to 40 people at a time.

Starwood carriage, wagon and sleigh rides are available for special events such as birthday parties, parades, proms, graduations, corporate parties, church activities, and quinceras. Starwood also has a Cinderella and Visa Coach for romantic



events like engagements, weddings and anniversaries. More than a few proposals have been made on the candle-lit, wooded trails of Starwood Farm.

You never know what might happen on a Starwood Farm ride. Some 20 years ago, Gail said, while taking a group on a carriage ride, they came upon one of the family cows. Gail told the passengers that the cow would soon be calving. They asked Gail if they could see the animal. "I told

them 'okay,' but you have to be quiet and not disturb it." It's never a good idea to aggravate a mother cow that is ready to give birth.

While seeing a cow calve isn't exactly a unique event for people who live on a farm, it is for most city dwellers. While watching the cow, it gave birth, to the astonishment of the wagon riders. "Twenty years later, we have people coming back and telling us they were there to see the calf being born and ask if the cow and calf are still around," Gail said. They aren't, but witnessing the birth of the calf has left life-long memories.



You can make you own lifetime memories at Starwood Farm. For additional information, including pricing, rates and services, contact them at 715-393-9951. To learn more about Starwood's carriage, wagon, sleigh rides and services, see their website at starwood-farm.net. All rides require prior reservations.



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Forgotten Wisconsin STUART WILKE



Al Capone's Wisconsin Hit Squad

Jack Zuta should have known better than to cross Al “Scarface” Capone in his home territory of Chicago’s Southside. Zuta was well aware of Capone’s violent tendencies and the extreme lengths he would go to enact revenge.

Capone’s crime tentacles ran throughout the Midwest during Prohibition, and included bootlegging and many speakeasies, gambling parlors and brothels. In between committing crimes and assorted atrocities, Capone liked to rest and relax in Wisconsin where he had many friends and business associates. Scarface enjoyed Wisconsin so much that he had a mansion built in Brookfield - which still stands - complete with escape tunnels, secret rooms and a watchtower. In all likelihood, Capone frequented the dog track on Bluemound Road not far from his Brookfield vacation home.

In addition to owning a chain of brothels in Chicago, Zuta was once an important associate of Capone’s and served as a “financial advisor” and bagman. Capone had bought off a good number of cops and politicians, and it was Zuta who made the payments. In fact, Capone valued Zuta so much that he presented him with a diamond belt buckle as a sign of his appreciation.

Money has poisoned many of a relationship, and that between Zuta and Capone was no different. Zuta’s thriving whorehouses did not escape Capone’s attention and before long he was muscling in on Zuta’s territory. Capone didn’t shut down Zuta’s primary source of income, but he did impose a tax on the brothels. This infuriated Zuta, who soon switched sides and allied himself with Capone’s archival, Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel, who headed Chicago’s Northside Gang. If anything, Siegel was even more unhinged than Capone, “buggy” in the head, hence the Buggy moniker.



Now a Siegel ally and his business manager, the Northside Gang’s gambling parlors attracted the attention of Chicago Tribune reporter and Capone associate Jake

Lingel. Lingel played both sides of the fence, providing Capone and his Chicago Outfit with information about forthcoming police raids and the Chicago police with information about Capone’s criminal activities. Lingel demanded that the Northside Gang pay him off for not informing the police of the grand opening of a new, opulent, gambling den. Rather than pay the ransom, Siegel, perhaps with Zuta’s assistance, had Lingel whacked in June 1930.

Capone soon caught wind of Zuta’s questioning by Chicago police regarding Lingel’s hit and ordered his assassination. Upon learning of Capone’s order, Zuta fled to the Lakeview Resort in Delafield. While holed up, he spent time playing cards, swimming and fishing with a Milwaukee friend in the illegal booze business. Later, in Delafield, Zuta was overheard on a pharmacy telephone pleading for bodyguards and means back to Chicago. His saviors never arrived.

Armed with handguns, shotguns and at least one Thompson submachine gun, Capone’s hit team found Zuta in August 1930 at the Lakeview Resort feeding coins into a player piano while approximately 20 customers danced to the music. Without saying a word, the killers approached Zuta. One fired, hitting Zuta across his mouth. Zuta spun around, and as he did so, his assailants fired approximately 30 bullets into him. The coup de grace was a shot to the head.

Zuta’s killers were never found but his meticulous records were. In them were the names of politicians and police officers Capone had bribed over the years.

After serving time at Alcatraz for income tax evasion, Capone died in Florida in 1947 from the ravages of syphilis, his mind reduced to that of a child. 🍷

On The Cover

Talia Martens rides a sled and mashes a team of huskies during a recent race. Martens Mushing is a family-owned kennel and sled-dog business in Brule, Wisconsin with 36 huskies competing in the longest races in the Continental U.S.

You can watch them work and play right in Wisconsin, February 8,

when mushing returns to the Northwoods after a year of little snow. The Iron River Area Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce the 6th Annual Northern Pines Sled Dog Race. This free, family-friendly event hosts 70 professional and recreational mushers from across the Midwest. Best of all, jump on board and try a doggone sled ride yourself!



**On Wisconsin
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TOM LUBA

There's No Place Like It

Make the best bass bait right at home

I discovered the lead head jig years back through fellow anglers. As I fished it, I became a convert, especially for largemouth bass. Since, just about all of the big bass I've caught were on jigs. Largemouth bass will bite a jig all season, but Spring is when you really want to have one tied on.

What's nice about the jig is that you can make them at home while waiting for next season to roll in. You don't need a ton of them. Just enough to try it and realize it should be in your playbook.

Start with lure maker catalogs like Barlow's Tackle (barlowstackle.com). There you can find pre-molded jigs, usually called Bass or Grass jigs, in one-quarter, three-eighths and one-half ounce unpainted heads, or three-eighths or one-half ounce painted Boss jigs. If you paint any, go with black. These have the jig eye slanted out the front (more inline) rather than top of the head and go easier through weeds. Match your jig with an Uncle Josh #11 pork frog or

a Berkley MaxScent Power Chunk or Meaty Chunk that releases scent into the water to attract bass.

Here's how to put it together. The jigs should come with a fiber weed guard. A one-quarter ounce is good in shallow spawning areas. Consider a one-half ounce jig if you need to go deeper before the fish come shallow or when they go back deep after the spawn.

A black and blue mix skirt works pretty much everywhere. Green Pumpkin is a good number two color. They can be found premade in the catalogs, too. Slip the skirt over the hook point and slide it up the jig collar behind the head. The skirt should fall evenly around the head.

Here are a few pointers on your bass jigs. First, run your finger over the fiber weed guard to see how it lies. You may need to trim it a bit so it doesn't impede the hook set. Secondly, see how long the skirt is. If you want the trailer to be seen, you can trim the skirt back a bit.



Here it is! A home-made bass jig and a Max Scent Meaty Chunk.

I suggest a medium heavy rod/reel set up with 12 to 14-pound fluorocarbon line, which is less visible underwater. Regular monofilament will work. Lastly, keep the hook sharp.

Shallow, small waters warm quicker and

produce earliest, usually starting in April. Bass fishing is catch-and-release until the normal May opener. May will still produce a lot of jig action. So, keep one tied on. Check the state fishing regulations for waters you may want to fish. 🐟

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annmariegigowski@yahoo.com



Prairie du Chien’s 75th Annual Ice Fisheree

The 75th Annual Ice Fisheree in Prairie du Chien is just around the corner, set to take place from Thursday, January 30 to Sunday, February 2, 2025. Hosted at the Crooked Oar, located at 32319 County K, this beloved event promises a weekend packed with family-friendly activities, competitive tournaments, exciting raffles, and a chance to experience a cherished tradition in the heart of winter. The 75th Annual Ice Fisheree is proudly sponsored by the Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce and the Crooked Oar.

The celebration kicks off on Thursday, January 30 at the Crooked Oar with a Dart Tournament welcoming everyone from the seasoned player to the beginner. This friendly competition is the perfect way to get the weekend started, but it’s only a warm-up.

On Friday, January 31, the fun continues with a Euchre Tournament for card game enthusiasts. Don’t miss the Meat and Gun Raffles, which offer fantastic prizes, as well as the Silent Auction, featuring a variety of unique items. The evening wraps up with live music from 7 to 10 pm, creating a lively atmosphere for everyone to enjoy.

Saturday: The Main Event – Ice Fisheree, Curling, and More

Saturday, February 1, is the Ice Fisheree main event.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26





75TH
ICE FISHEREE
1950 - 2025

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32319 County K Prairie du Chien, WI

Prairie du Chien

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EVENT SCHEDULE

Jan. 30	Dart Tournament Registration 5pm
Jan. 31	Euchre Tournament, Meat Raffle, Gun Raffle, Silent Auction & Live Music
Feb. 1	Ice Fishing Registration 7am, Curling Contest Registration 10am, Kid Ice Fishing Expo 10am, Gun Raffle, Silent Auction, Live Music 8pm-Midnight
Feb. 2	Ice Fishing Registration & Weigh-ins, Gun Raffle, Fishing Tournament Awards, Door Prizes & Grand Raffle Prize Drawing





To register or for more information, visit www.prairieduchien.org or call 800-732-1673

CAPTAIN DAVID DUWE

Tips And Tricks to Catch More Fish

Gain the most out of your flasher

Ice fishermen have been using portable depth finders (flashers) for decades. Most now know they are an absolute necessity to have success catching fish.

The most critical feature for all flashers to have is the “gain knob.” The stronger the signal, the lower the gain needs to be. You want to have the gain set where you are just marking the jig on the screen. If you increase the gain too high, it will add clutter and noise signals to the flasher’s screen. I will start the gain at zero and go up from there. As a rule, the deeper you’re fishing the higher the gain needs to be. The units I have offer a low power feature which, when turned on, reduces the power for shallow water and, in turn, decreases screen clutter. The low power feature is great for water less than 10 feet deep.

The next most important component of your portable flasher unit is the transducer. They come in a variety of angles, which is a complicated discussion for another day. For now, we want to make sure the transducer is functioning well, so make sure it isn’t scratched or ice covered. If this happens, you’ll know because you will need to set the gain too high to pick up your jig. I protect my transducer by putting it in an old sock when traveling out on the ice. To get the best signal to the flasher, the

transducer is perpendicular to the bottom. If the signal is poor, and you are having a hard time picking up your jig, there are several possible causes:

1. Your hole is on an angle.
2. The hole is slushy or contains ice chunks.
3. Your transducer isn’t floating properly.

Increasing the gain will help, but will add a ton of clutter and interference to the screen. The fixes are as simple as re-adjusting the float or drilling a new hole.

In my favorite ice fishing holes, the panfish and walleye are seldom right under the ice. With that in mind, I keep the transducer cord short. The people who keep it long get less surface clutter, however, it gives the fish a better opportunity to get wrapped around the cord. Though it can create interference, the ability to keep mobile and not lose fish is much more important to me.

As most anglers know, the shape and size of the lures you use effect the signal on the flasher. Horizontally positioning lures will be much easier to mark on the screen than vertically fished lures or spoons. To increase the visibility of vertically fished lures, I will place a small transparent piece of plastic above the lure. Gill shields fit the bill for this



application. In some cases, it could be as simple as adding a small split shot a foot above a small jig.

Batteries can create problems with signal identification, so make sure yours are fully charged and in good repair.

One more thought on keeping the gain low: by keeping it as low as possible, you will create less interference for other anglers’ fishing spots that are crowded. This helps everyone and hopefully everyone benefits.

In summary, the flasher is an integral part of ice fishing. Make sure you get the most of it and you’ll stand out in a crowd by having more success. 🎣

Dave Duwe is the owner of Dave Duwe’s Guide Service featuring the lakes of Walworth County. Call 262-728-8063 for more information.

TOM CARPENTER

Go Fish...When You’re Good And Ready

Winter projects for the summer angler

Perhaps I am not a true native son of Wisconsin after all. Why? Because ice fishing never made its way deep into my blood.

It’s hard to figure out why. My dad ice-fished some and took me. There is no shortage of places to do it, or friends with whom to do it. I like catching, and eating, fish. There’s not much else going on in the depths of winter after a sportsperson finishes up their fall and winter hunting (priorities for me anyway).

I think that last excuse is probably the core of why I mostly avoid the hard water. By the latter part of January, and certainly in February, I am ready for a break for both mind and body.

It all started with spring turkeys and never stopped in a most glorious way. I could run through the full litany, but it centers on spring turkey hunting, foraging for morels and other spring delights, trout fishing, gardening, summer fishing of all descriptions, more gardening, dog work, summer berries and other foraging, whitetails, and upland bird hunting.

So the depths of winter are for getting a little rest, a lot re-organized, and ready for the sporting year ahead. One important category on the to-do list is reviewing, tuning up and prepping all of spring and summer’s fishing gear.

Why wait until you are ready to go fishing to re-discover all the detail-oriented tasks that make for pleasurable and successful fishing? Here is my starter check-off list. Perhaps you’ll want to take a cue and tackle some of these items, too, then be ready-to-go come open water.

New Line Refresh line on all your reels. It’s a chore. It costs money. But it will make fishing life smoother, and catch you more fish. This is an easy one to ignore. I am guilty of skating by sometimes; I have paid the price in lost fish and fishing time.

Rod-Reel Review I am not a packrat, but I do collect fishing rods. Toss what you don’t use, won’t use, or is broken. Perhaps you can donate serviceable gear. If I have a good rod or reel that needs a tune-up, I’ll take it to a shop



CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



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There's a Catch to It

The case for ice fishing rivers

With the start of ice fishing season, almost everyone heads to their favorite lake. We begin drilling holes in search of crappie, bluegill, northern pike and walleye. At least this is what many ice anglers do. What about ice fishing on the river? Probably the majority of folks believe that a river's current provides few, if any, ice fishing opportunities. In reality, there are some great opportunities for ice fishing.

I have spent over 50 years ice fishing in central Wisconsin and one thing I do know is that some of the best ice fishing in the area is related to the Wisconsin River. We don't target the main channel in the strong and potentially dangerous current. We hit back water areas and specific locations with winter freeze that enable ice fishing, with careful scrutiny and caution.

When it comes to ice fishing rivers, I look for areas that are out of the main current. The areas I look for can be back water locations, incoming feeder streams, pockets and indentations along the shoreline or inside turns where the current pushes the opposite side of the river. These locations don't necessarily need to be deep and they will hold primarily walleye and northern pike, but they can

contain panfish.

To target the fish in these locations, I run mainly tip-ups for the walleye and pike and a simple ice jig tipped with a spike, waxy or some sort of plastic for the panfish. The key to fishing these areas is to target early and late ice and low light periods for walleye, especially after dark, which is the best time for them.

If there is any current at all, I run my tip-up presentation a little differently than I would in a lake. Instead of running the treble hook through the back of the minnow by the dorsal fin, I like to hook the minnow through the mouth by the lips. With current, hooking the minnow through the mouth allows it to swim correctly in the water. When hooked in the back, the current will push them until they bend. They can fight the current only a short time prior to becoming exhausted and expiring. Dead bait may work, but I like to have the liveliest most active bait I can get for ice fishing.

Give this a shot if you have any similar locations. I don't think you will be disappointed. 🎣

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Aaron and Cassie Messier with some nice river crappies caught ice fishing.

DAVE FIDLIN

Mirror Lake State Park

A reflection of pristine beauty, unending fun

As its name suggests, Mirror Lake has long been noted for its pristine beauty. People far and wide visit this majestic body of water and the state-run park that surrounds it, throughout the seasons. The depths of winter are certainly no exception.

When the thermometer dips to its lowest levels of the year in Wisconsin and snowfall becomes abundant, winter sports enthusiasts flock to the park's 2,179 acres to enjoy two of the most popular outdoor winter activities in this state: snowshoeing and skiing.

As the leaves fall from the trees and winter sets in, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' employees ready portions of the park site for winter recreation. A grand total of 18 miles worth of trails are specifically set up for cross-country skiing.

Other ungroomed areas of the park not designated precisely for skiing - most notably, the nearly two-mile Sandstone Trail - are ideal for snowshoers looking to clomp through the snow and take in the majestic beauty of a fresh winter's snowfall.

When temperatures plunge below freezing for sustained periods of time, Mirror Lake itself is a popular snowshoeing site within the park. But there is an important caveat to this possible spot: As noted on the state DNR's website, park staff do not monitor ice conditions on the lake, so a heavy dose of caution is strongly recommended, even if the ice looks solid as a rock.

In addition to recreation, Mirror Lake State Park is a popular spot in the coldest months of the year for ice



Mirror Lake State Park in Baraboo is an ideal spot for outdoor winter activities with trails ideal for skiing and snowshoeing.

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DICK ELLIS

The Muskies of November

Row troller targets spawning cisco to find feeding predators

First impressions can last a lifetime. In 1983, 12-year-old John Kubiak stepped into a small cabin on Island Lake near Boulder Junction and into the extraordinary world of a Wisconsin fishing legend. Around the quiet banter of homemade lures, row trolling tactics in the black of night, monster fish taken and lost, Bob Ellis captured my brother-in-law's attention like he did any new visitor. But it was the cabin itself that did the real talking and sent another young angler to the water to emulate the methods of a master.

A platoon of rods and hand-crafted muskie lures hung on narrow strips of wood nailed high on pine walls. A fisherman's work table lay cluttered with the material of a bait maker. And as in each of the other three cabins staggered on the shore along the 1500 feet of lakefront purchased in 1951, a special musky taken on the lakes of northern Wisconsin would take center stage in Kubiak's memory bank.

"We went over to check out your uncle's old resort and look in the cabins," Kubiak recalled as he stayed just ahead of first ice to row troll Presque Isle for November muskies decades after the introduction. "Every cabin we went into had a huge muskie hanging on the wall. I could not believe the size of these fish. The baits had aluminum foil glued or epoxied to the sides for flash and the lures were hand-painted. Bob said he had made each of these lures by hand. I thought that was really cool. I had not caught a muskie yet, but to catch a musky on a bait that I made would be my next big goal."

That goal would not come for almost a decade. But Kubiak would eventually put his personally designed Lip Ripper bait to work to put 15 muskies in the boat, including a large fish of 45 inches. He and lifelong friend Rod Grimme would also sell 100 of the lures to Smokey's Bait Shop on Pewaukee Lake. But the real ticket for catching big fish and more of them was punched the more Kubiak followed the leader.

Bob Ellis had earned a reputation as a row troller from the first days of open water season to ice up, using a pioneer's approach that targeted deep water for big fish and looked at swarms of baitfish as "structure" rather than rocks, weeds and timber. Find



John Kubiak's row troller ready for another round of searching for the swarms of spawning November cisco that draw the muskies feeding in preparation of another winter.



A 48-inch musky estimated at more than 30 pounds waits for release after losing a November 19th duel on the Manitowish Chain with John Kubiak of New Berlin. The "real beast", John Kubiak said, was taken in the dark at 5:38 a.m.

the schools of cisco or perch, his theory proved again and again on big muskies, and find too the feeding predators. His tactics, and success, would see him inducted into the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame. At 71, Bob would also lose his life in a collision with the only other boat on Vilas County's Papoose Lake where he had also taken his largest fish; a 41-pound musky on a cold, gray November morning row trolling a few years before.

"Bob fished late into the Fall and he would actually push his skiff across the ice to get to open water," Kubiak said. "That inspired me to keep fishing late into the Fall when the Cisco spawn, even while the lakes are freezing."

After paying his learning dues, Kubiak today feels "dialed-in" when it comes to the correlation of the Cisco spawn with muskies. A meticulous record keeper, he has taken and released 30 November muskies, including 21 row trolling. Ten of those fish measured between 40-44 inches and four muskies between 45-48 inches. Almost without exception, his "selfie" shots prior to release are taken in the black of predawn, or the dark of post sunset. It's all in the timing, he said, but even when the angler hits the timing of the baitfish spawn precisely, there is no guarantee that the muskie strike will follow.

"There is lots of competition below the surface," he said. "When we started fishing this November the water temp was 44 degrees. Bait fish were scattered. Rarely did we see any big schools of cisco. They were most likely staging out in the deeper water. And on a 1000-plus acre lake, there's a lot of area to cover. Eric Rose and I got a 33-inch fish on a Depth Raider off a break in 17 feet of water but that's not what we were after."

Over the week of the Wisconsin 2024 deer hunting season, Kubiak said the water temperature steadily dropped a degree per day to 38 degrees. On Friday, November 24 Kubiak and his son Andrew rowed a classic gravel shoreline with steep breaks. It was after sunset and as they rowed into the 12 to 17-foot range the locator screen began to light up with schools of Cisco. "Go time!" Kubiak said. "This is what we wait all year for. Thirty-six to 38 degrees is the magic number. You can't get much

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BILL THORNLEY

A Wisconsin Deer Debate

Has the fun gone out of deer hunting?

It seems to be a common feeling among many deer hunters in the area – deer hunting simply isn't as much fun as it used to be.

Some blame the Department of Natural Resources, others blame Father Time. Many hunters believe that things like stricter regulations, political interference, and the elimination of back tags and registration stations that make it easier to cheat is hurting hunting in the state.

There is no doubt that a lot of the "tradition" has been lost. The DNR requires all hunters that harvest deer to register electronically by 5 pm the day after the deer is recovered. But gone are the little country registration stations where hunters would gather at the end of the day to see who got what and tell stories of their hunts. Part of the fun used to be the question, "What did you see out there?" Now we seldom even see other hunters.

Following the deer hunt last season, a meeting was held in Solon Springs. It was attended by more than 150 hunters, and they were not happy with the way things had gone in the Northern Forest Zone. Most were angered by low deer numbers, too many predators, what they felt were too many antlerless tags being issued, and other issues.

The issue of back tags being eliminated by the DNR was a huge complaint. "I'm hearing about hunters who aren't buying licenses anymore. Back tags made a difference; we all knew who had a license back then," commented one man, who said back tags and carcass tags need to be brought back.

Many fondly recall climbing out of their tree stand at dark, walking back to their truck and heading to the old country store deer registration station for a hot cup of coffee and conversation with other hunters about how they did and what they saw. That has been lost



Deer hunting season is a tradition and lifestyle in Wisconsin, dating back to the pioneer days of the historic Spooner Hunting Club. Even before hunting camps and deer shacks, they camped out in the Northwoods, ate meals prepared by the camp cook, and filled their meat poles with deer. Spooner Advocate File Photo.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



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—Gregg Borneman



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THORNLEY, FROM PAGE 12

with the elimination of such stations.

Wisconsin's deer hunting population continues to decline. Wisconsin lost 65,000 deer hunters between 2005 and 2022. Hunter numbers fell from approximately 672,000 to around 607,000.

One study shows that in 2005 about 27 percent of the boys in Wisconsin hunted deer. By 2022 that number had declined to 17 percent. Around 8.5 percent of Wisconsin girls hunted in 2015, but by 2022 that number was down to six percent.

Statewide the 2023-24 deer kill was 299,970, the second lowest in 30 years, according to the DNR. Last season was also the fewest number of deer hunting licenses sold since the 1990s, according to the DNR.

There has been a decline in the number of gun deer season licenses each of the past 23 years. Overall, the drop has been about two percent a year.

Despite the changes, deer hunting remains incredibly popular. DNR Deer Program Specialist Jeff Pritzl said there are about 600,000 deer hunters in Wisconsin, and about 50,000 of them come from outside the state for the gun deer hunt. Hunters come to Wisconsin from all 50 states and more than a dozen foreign countries.

Don't lock up the old deer rifle just yet. In many ways, deer hunting season remains almost sacred. Schools close and businesses alter their hours as people head out to the woods. It's family time. Old friends get back together to laugh, reminisce about hunts past and look forward to the new season.

There are a lot of good reasons for many people still believing that Wisconsin's deer hunting season is one of the greatest times of the year. 🍂



Deer hunting in Wisconsin has some problems, from low numbers of deer in the North, to declining participation, to unhappiness with politics and DNR rules, and more. But most still consider the traditional nine-day Wisconsin deer season the best time of the year and look forward to it with excitement. Photo by Bill Thornley

FIDLIN, FROM PAGE 10

fishing and winter camping. Accommodations for both activities are available on the park grounds. The lake is stocked with numerous fish species, including bass, northern pike, panfish and walleye.

When the temperatures heat up outside of winter, Mirror Lake State Park offers nature enthusiasts a whole range of other activities, all against the backdrop of some of Wisconsin's most breathtaking beauty.

In the spring, summer and fall, the park is a hot spot for such recreational activities as fishing, swimming, canoeing, hiking, kayaking and birdwatching. The park also offers multiple spots for picnicking and camping. Outside the parameters of winter, the park is host to nearly 30 miles worth of hiking trails.

Mirror Lake State Park's origins stretch back to 1962, when the land was declared for the purpose. Four years later, the site was officially up and running and open to visitors. But the area's known history runs far deeper. The region surrounding Mirror Lake and the park was formed from Cambrian sandstone deposits, and the terrain was formed during Wisconsin's glaciation period. 🌨️

The park is located at E10320 Fern Dell Road, on the outskirts of Baraboo. It is open year-round from 6 am to 11 pm daily.





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DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report

Hunting in the deer desert – hope and expectations

Heading into the 2024 deer gun season, my expectations were low. Having hunted the Northwoods gun deer season for 30-plus years, reality eventually sets in. There just are not that many deer. It is a deer desert. Predators abound. With the late opener, the rut was pretty much over. In spite of the baiting ban, pallets full of corn at area gas stations had all but disappeared; to somewhere. And yet, into the forest I went with expectations set on 'empty' but my hope tank still hovering near "full."

I was thinking about that difference between expectations and hope as I sat in my makeshift blind on the edge of a clear-cut opening morning. As daylight slowly appeared, I looked out over a landscape

where I hoped a deer would materialize. A week prior, a friend had seen a nice buck cross the road just down the hill from where I was sitting. Hope lived. In the next four hours, as expected, I saw three squirrels.

Joining 22 other hunters at the Pat Zingler deer camp on Monday night for the annual pre-Thanksgiving feast, the reality of hunting the Northwoods was made clear. After three full days of hunting, 22 hunters hunting out of several different camps had put one six-point buck on the meat pole. On the plus side of things, most had actually seen a deer. Personally, I was lucky to see a doe and fawn on Sunday morning. In spite of that, the hunters I talked to were happy to be there. It didn't hurt that the food was great and the libations were plentiful.

I am encouraged by the significant amount of logging going on in the Nicolet National Forest east of Eagle River these days. I am hopeful that the new growth that will be forthcoming will provide for an increase in the deer herd up here. My expectations are that it will take a few years.

But it's the hope of seeing the all too rare big Northwoods buck that keeps me coming back year after year. I guess I'm like Jim Carrey's character in the movie Dumb and Dumber after being told that his odds of getting together with a woman were more like one in a million:

"So, you're telling me there's a chance."

Just sayin.' 🍷



It's this type of logging that the author hopes will provide better habitat for more deer.

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Welcome back Bear Hunters! First, thanks to all of our customers for trusting Bob's Bear Bait for their baiting supplies and knowledge. We appreciate all the kind words and success stories.

One of our 2024 success stories involves a long-time customer, her husband and one of our custom mixes. Here's their story:

"I requested a custom bait as I believe in baiting with higher quality proteins," said Megan. "Where I get this theory from is more from personal experience than anything. While bears are in general sweet junkies, I believe once it gets closer to the opener their bodies are driving them to the proteins and fats to prepare for winter. I don't have the proof, so it's just a superstition. Between my husband Ben and myself, we've had six tags, four harvests, three being 350 pound-plus bears, all using bait from Bob. I've had phenomenal success with granola and nuts. So this year Bob mixed up a superb dry bait with cashews, granola, peanut butter and a very tiny amount of white chocolate chips. This mix was the ticket for Ben this year. We had this big bear hit only 26 hours prior to opener, at night of course, but he couldn't help himself from coming back only five minutes into the season to check for more bait."

Everyone loves a good hunting story and Ben's is nothing short of intense!

"Shortly after getting into his stand the morning of the opener, Ben could hear bears on the site," Megan said. "As it was just getting light enough, he could make out two 150-pounders on the site. Suddenly they scattered, climbing the trees next to him, less than 10 yards away. They proceeded in snarling, popping their jaws and scraping the bark of the trees beneath them."

Suddenly, she said, Ben could see the very large bear coming down the logging road at



Ben's 2024 bear weighing in at 560 pounds, dressed.

40 yards. The bear followed the route as intentionally set up by the hunters, turning down the bait trail, into the bait site, and giving Ben a perfect 20-yard broadside shot. Ben's first bear with a bow was a once in a lifetime trophy Wisconsin bear weighing in dressed at 560 pounds. The score will exceed Pope and Young and make Boone and Crockett all-time.

Every year Bob's Bear Bait stocks products that people want. We also believe in products that are more natural to nature. We look for items with a lot of protein that are not only a healthier option, but are also something bears crave come fall. We make a variety of excellent dry bait mixes, but our number one seller is our peanut butter/bear mix. This mix usually contains granola, cookies, nuts, cereals and candies.

If you're looking for a high-quality protein or custom mix, we're happy to blend special orders to your liking. Some of our popular custom mixes include varieties of nuts, granola, dehydrated marshmallows, strawberry icing, trail mix and peanut butter. While these are the

most common, we also have a variety of options not listed. These are available by the pail, bag, tote or even semi-load. 🚚

Bob's Bear Bait has locations in Wisconsin and Michigan, as well as stocking bait at Superior Sport & Feed in Crystal Falls, Michigan. Bob can be contacted directly by email at sales@bobsbearbait.com or phone at 920-419-1238.

ELLIS, FROM PAGE 11

below 36 obviously because any time after that when you have a calm night and cold temperatures the lakes freeze."

The final 2024 score would include a 43-inch musky caught and released in the dark of the waning days of the season. Catching more smaller muskies during the November cisco spawn also has Kubiak contemplating two theories as to why. When taking kids out trolling in November, he will often motor troll in a large boat instead of rowing for safety reasons. Is the turbulence and noise of the wake and motor in relatively shallow water keeping larger fish at bay? And, similar to the vulnerability of spawning walleyes, is heavy tribal spearing over many years on spawning muskies taking a noticeable toll on the biggest fish?

Ultimately, seven-degree temperatures, wind gusts to 15 mph, and first ice knocked out the 2024 season. "I should have been on that shoreline at 5:00 am," said an angler



Kubiak with a 43-inch musky taken and released during the 2024 gun deer season.

who caught a fever with no known cure four decades before in a tiny cabin on the Manitowish Chain. "But I didn't think either my body or my gear could handle it. The next morning the lake perimeter started to freeze. And it was over. Just like that." 🐻

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SPOTLIGHT | IRON RIVER



Mushing Returns to The Northwoods After a Year of Little Snow

The Iron River Area Chamber of Commerce and the race planning committee are excited to announce the Sixth Annual Northern Pines Sled Dog Race slated for February 8, 2025.

This free, family-friendly event hosts 70 professional and recreational mushers from across the Midwest.

For the sixth year the event will be held at the Northern Pines Golf Course and Event Center. The first race will begin at 8 am. Multiple races will take place throughout the day and an awards ceremony is scheduled for 3 pm.

The one-of-a-kind, premier event is filled with outdoor winter action, including a four-dog/4.4-mile race, a six-dog/8.2-mile race, and an open-class, 17-mile race that weaves through the pines and hardwoods of northwest Wisconsin. The 32-mile, mid-distance race tests the physical endurance of the mushers and is reserved for more experienced drivers.

The day also features the kids' Mutt Run, a sanctioned weight pull, snowshoeing, and the exhilarating opportunity to try the sport out for yourself with public sled dog rides made available by Martens Mushing.

Spectators can catch all the action from the warmth of the clubhouse or along several great vantage points on the trail route.

The clubhouse will be offering food and drinks, local artisans and vendors, raffles, and sled dog merch!

Dog sledding tradition, steeped in rich history, dates back several thousand years and the planning committee, made up of Chamber staff and local volunteers, strives to uphold the spirit and heritage of sled dogs and their human partners.

Race Marshall and Norvado COO, Rob Lombard, noted this year's race is focused on spotlighting junior mushers. "We're proud to promote family, community and environmental values by offering half-price registration and special perks and awards for mushers under the age of 18," he said.

Come witness the action for yourself, where the up-north spirit of adventure, teamwork, family, community, and admiration for our four-legged athletes take center stage. 🐾

More information can be found at <https://northernpinessdr.com>



Photo by Luke Dahlberg



February 8th, 2025
Northern Pines Golf & Event Center
Iron River, WI



SPOTLIGHT | PLATTEVILLE



Winter Outdoor Recreation That Calls You Back For More

Platteville offers many outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the winter. Get on our roadways and explore the countryside in your ATV or UTV. The views are 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 interesting attractions and destinations to explore.

As the snow begins to fall, check out our trail system with your fat tire bikes. 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. Follow us on Facebook at Discover Platteville Wisconsin.



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DICK ELLIS

Seeking Wolf Photos

OWO's informal population census continues

On Wisconsin Outdoors' informal wolf population census will continue in detail with the March-April issue. Please send your trail cam photos, videos, or hand-held camera shots of wolves in Wisconsin 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 without your permission. As examples, among approximately 20 Wisconsin photos received by OWO since our November-December issue were the two trail camera shots each from Adams County received December 17 and published here.

In the Wisconsin map below, red signifies counties from which we have received wolf photos, or have DNR-verified evidence of wolf depredation of livestock, pets, or

sporting dogs.

OWO publishers strongly disagree with DNR population estimate that place wolf numbers in Wisconsin at approximately 1000 animals during the winter of 2022/23.

We believe that an unmanaged wolf population in the state directly correlates with a severely declining deer hunting experience. We believe that the decline in our Wisconsin tradition will magnify further as individual wolves and wolf packs continue to expand to create an increasingly out-of-balance predator/prey ratio.

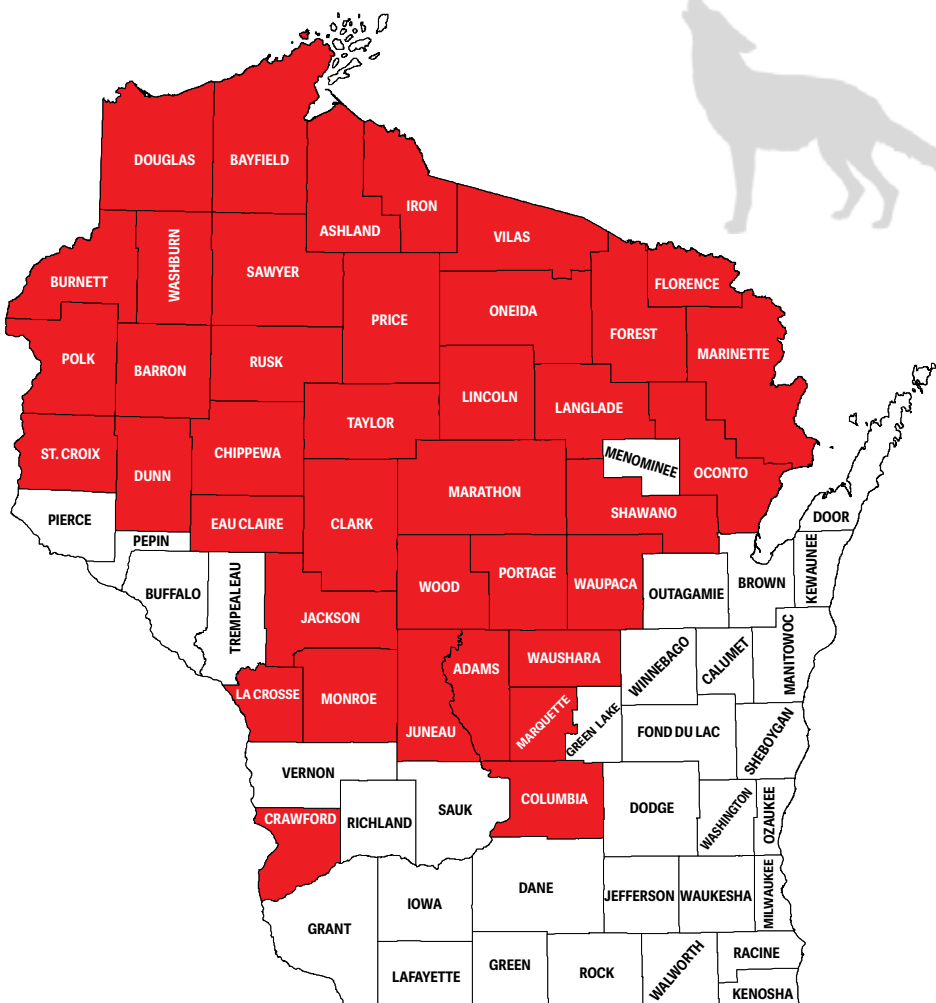
Unsolicited by these publishers, perspectives of northern Wisconsin deer hunters following the 2024 November deer hunt can be read in this issue by OWO writers Dan Moericke and Bill Thornley. Moericke hunts in Eagle River in Vilas

County. Thornley hunts near Spooner in Washburn County.

In correlation with increasing and expanding wolf numbers, we also believe that attacks on domestic pets and livestock will continue to increase. Of greatest concern, dangerous confrontations between wolves and humans will increase as a predator not being hunted itself due to irrational and radical federal

judicial decisions placing the wolf on the endangered species list loses fear of man.

OWO is currently investigating a verified, recent wolf-man encounter resulting in significant injuries to a Wisconsin trapper. In our November-December issue, we reported that a Wisconsin duck hunter was not charged in the killing of an aggressive approaching wolf on September 21 in Oneida County. 🐾



10-8-2024 Adams County 5 Wolves



5-31-2024 Adams County 6 Wolves

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OWO hunts, fishes and travels Wisconsin. See you in the field. See you on the water. See you on the road.



SPOTLIGHT | ASHLAND COUNTY



A Superior Four-Season Experience

Ashland, Wisconsin's Historic Main Street, is the backdrop to our self-guided Mural Walk. You'll see approximately 20 murals painted on the outside of buildings. It's our outdoor history book!

Every day, every season, Ashland offers unsurpassed outdoor recreation. The Chequamegon Bay is our front yard. From sport fishing the hardwater, to the breakup of ice and the annual running of the smelt, to world class smallmouth bass fishing on the open water, and too many more finned targets to list, be ready to catch a limit of fun in Ashland.

Our backyard is home to Copper Falls State Park, open year-round with fabulous walking and hiking trails and groomed cross-country ski trails.

Ashland is affordable! Starting with January and February, anytime is the best time to come and spend a long weekend away from the busy life of the city! We have every kind of lodging available from a mom and pop to full service and even a waterpark. Aside from fast-food, our restaurants are ALL locally owned and operated. Each one has a unique flavor and fare! 🍷



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SPOTLIGHT | NORTHERN OCONTO COUNTY



Your Winter Wonderland

Northern Oconto County, about an hour's drive from the Green Bay area, offers a winter wonderland for outdoor enthusiasts. With its pristine snow-covered landscapes, the region is a haven for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, ice fishing and more.

Snowmobiling Thrills Explore a vast network, over 480 miles, of groomed snowmobile trails, winding through picturesque forests and across frozen lakes. Whether you're a seasoned rider or a beginner, you'll find trails to suit your skill level. Feel the adrenaline rush as you speed through the winter wilderness, taking in the breathtaking scenery.

Winter Sports Galore In addition to snowmobiling, Northern Oconto County offers a variety of other winter sports:

- **Cross-Country Skiing** Glide through serene forests and across frozen lakes, taking in the peaceful winter scenery.
- **Snowshoeing** Trek through the snow-covered wilderness, exploring hidden trails and breathtaking vistas.
- **Ice Fishing** Spend a quiet day on the ice, patiently waiting for your perfect catch.

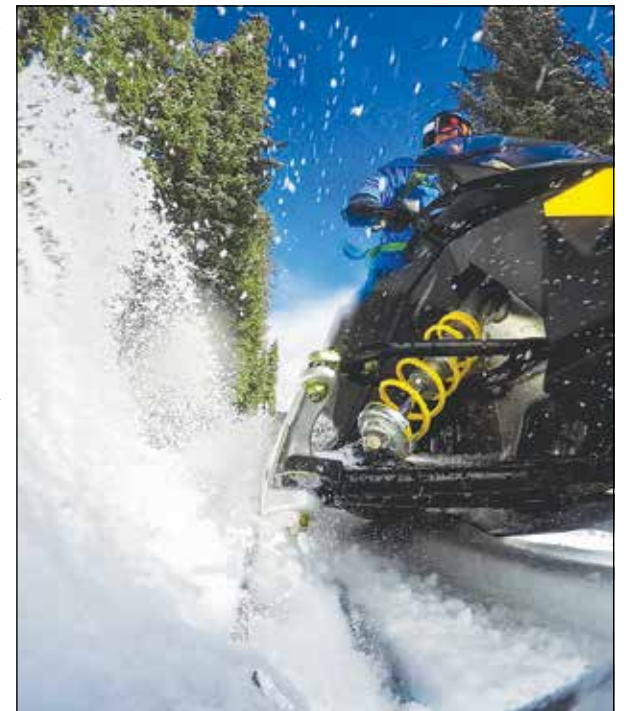
Warm Hospitality and Cozy Accommodations

After a day of outdoor adventure, warm up by a cozy fireplace and indulge in delicious local flavor. Northern Oconto County offers a variety of dining options, from family-friendly restaurants to quintessential Wisconsin supper clubs.

When it comes to lodging, you'll find a wide range of accommodations to suit your needs and budget. Cozy cabins and luxurious vacation home rentals, resorts and more offer a variety of amenities to warm up after your adventures.

Family Fun Northern Oconto County is a fantastic destination for families seeking a winter getaway. With its abundance of outdoor activities, kids of all ages will be thrilled to explore the winter wonderland. From building snow forts and sledding to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, there's something for everyone. And when the day is done, cozy up by the fireplace, sip hot cocoa, and create lasting family memories. 🍷

So, this winter, escape the hustle and bustle to experience the magic of Northern Oconto County. With its stunning winter landscapes, thrilling outdoor activities, and warm hospitality, Northern Oconto County is the perfect destination for a family winter getaway.





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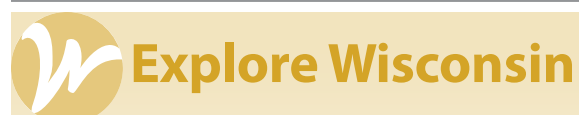


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SPOTLIGHT | **ALGOMA****CAPTAIN LEE HAASCH**

A Special Kind of Beauty

Winter comes alive in Algoma

Mother Nature has a funny way of rearing her head on the lakeshore, and wintertime is no exception. Snow drifts, iced-over lakes and barren, leafless trees leave the countryside with a special kind of clean-looking beauty. To the outdoors enthusiast, this is what we wait for: snow covered trails for cross country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling and frozen lakes and ponds for ice fishing.

There is something special about the quiet time spent ice fishing, sitting over an eight-inch hole, precision-cut through two-feet of solid ice, waiting patiently for a hungry fish to take your bait on the end of a three-foot ice rod and reel. It is a magical moment when that trout or northern pike pokes its head into the hole

and comes to the surface to present itself to the angler tugging at the other end of the line. Whether bucket sitting outside in the elements or in a wood fire-stoked ice shack, ice fishing in the Algoma area is more than a past-time; it is a kind of obsession for many avid anglers.

The Algoma area has all of that and then some. The Ahnapee Trail connects Algoma to Casco, Kewaunee and Sturgeon Bay and offers over 50 miles of perfectly groomed snowmobile trails and connects to hundreds of additional miles of trails that wind through Kewaunee and Southern Door Counties. Cross country skiers and hikers also enjoy the groomed snowmobile trails as well as the many local county and city parks available to them.

For the avid bird watchers, the winter months offer a great time to visit Algoma and document the many different variety of birds that call our area home. Large eagles frequent the lakeshore where open water allows them abundant feeding opportunities. From finches and warblers to hawks and owls, many bird sightings occur in this Bird City area. Wintertime is a special time to hike the Ahnapee Trail, part of the Ice Age Trail system, and experience some of the best bird sighting opportunities in Wisconsin.

Experience for yourself the great fishery Lake Michigan has to offer. And if you want BIG fish, check out Algoma! 🐟

For charter information or fishing reports, visit our



The Ahnapee River winds through Algoma and has its origin in Door County. Winter time is prime for steelhead and brown trout action through the ice.

Facebook page at: Algoma, Wisc.
A calendar of events and activities is available at VisitAlgomaWi.org.

The winter outdoors is yours in Algoma!

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SPOTLIGHT | WAUPUN



The Cold, Hard, Fun, Facts!

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- Historical Society Exhibit and Presentation
- Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides
- Children's Entertainer/Puppet Show/Face Painting
- Snowshoeing and Luminary Walk at Marsh Haven Nature Center
- Open Ice Skating at the Waupun Recreation Center
- Art Gala with Dueling Pianos on Saturday Evening
- Children's Character Breakfast on Sunday
- Food Trucks, Warming Shelters, a variety of places to Shop and Eat



For a full list of activities, times, locations and map: waupunicefest.com

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Feb 15 & 16, 2025

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by scanning here!**



SPOTLIGHT | KENOSHA



Winter Adventures Beyond the Expected

Wisconsin 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.

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 free 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 auto-manufacturing.

You can even enjoy indoor recreation and dining at the same time with virtual golf at Tavern on Sixth, axe throwing at Hold My Beer, and more. All the activities are sure to work up an appetite, so stay for dinner. From the iconic HobNob Restaurant & Cocktail Lounge to traditional Italian venues like 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. If you're a real foodie, mark your calendar for Kenosha Restaurant Week, February 22 - March 2, 2025! Schedule your getaway to Kenosha during this nine-day culinary adventure. 🍷

So put on your favorite winter warm-wear and head out for a winter break in Kenosha! Start planning 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.

KENOSHA
restaurant week

February 22 - March 2, 2025

Scan to explore the culinary scene in Kenosha



VISITKENOSHA.COM



An Extraordinary Family Experience

2025 Petrie Hruska Artifact Show, Kettle Moraine Geologic Rock & Gem Show

America's longest-running modern American Indian Artifact Show will be held Saturday, March 8, 2025 at the Washington County Fairgrounds and Conference Center in West Bend.

There is something for all levels of interest, including educational displays, artifact collections, vendor displays, and site-conservation information. Kids are welcome!

Wisconsin's rich indigenous heritage goes back to the retreat of the Wisconsin Glaciation. The show honors all time periods by showcasing the state's cultural signatures, including fluted axes, old copper culture, Hixton silicified sandstone and petroforms (shapes and patterns made by arranging large rocks and boulders on the ground to create outlines of figures or shapes and effigy mounds). Educational and vendor displays allow visitors to see a wide array of items at close hand, exchange ideas and learn from seasoned collectors.

An American Indian dance performance will occur after 11 am. Lunch is available on site. This show can provide a perfect family outing or date venue.

Come to the artifact show in the morning and then walk right across the sidewalk to the Kettle Moraine Geological Society's annual Rock and Gem Show. These companion shows are a perfect pair. Bring your artifacts or family



Wisconsin Audubon Society is the educational outreach program of the Milwaukee Audubon Society, hosting the Tribal Honor Hall as a first year trial at no cost to visitors. Ron Peterson (pictured) will be performing mid-day at the shows and that has become quite a draw, particularly for parents and children.

collections for identification and evaluation. New things turn up at every show. Come see, learn and experience agates, minerals, gem stones, fossils, jewelry, lapidary, wire wrapping, cabochons (Cabochons are gems with a

flat bottom and a curved or domed top), and "cabbing" (the process of making a cabochon); fluorescent minerals, Native American artifacts, flint knapping (the process of shaping flint or other stones into tools, strikers, or decorative pieces); geological and earth history displays; educational speakers and demonstrations; club sales; mineral, jewelry and gem dealers and more.

Both shows are wheelchair accessible. Adult admission is \$4 per show and kids are free.

Fun and education for the entire family! 🎉

We give back to local community groups - help support our programs.

For more information, see the Kettle Moraine Geological Society website at kmgrocks.com.

Badger State Archaeology Society's Petrie-Hruska Artifact Show began at the Petrie Log Cabin Museum in 1931 and has long been considered the origin of all modern collecting shows.

Preview the Rock and Gem Show video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3egDDd9WNo>

Table displays for the Petrie-Hruska American Indian Artifact Show are by invitation only. The show host is Jim Uhrinak: j.uhrinak@gmail.com.

Badger State Archaeological Society's

American Indian Artifact Show

ADULTS \$4, Kids Free

Saturday, March 8, 2024

9 AM to 2 PM

Washington County Fair Park & Center

3000 West Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend

Wisconsin Audubon Tribal Honor Hall next door and Kettle Moraine Rock & gem show across the sidewalk. Featuring authentic artifacts and educational displays honoring Wisconsin's American Indian heritage signatures: fluted axes, old copper, Hixton, and effigy mounds.

95th Annual Petrie-Hruska
American Indian Artifact Show
Jim Uhrinak, Show Host: j.uhrinak@gmail.com

Authentic American Indian artifacts



Knife made by Buffalo Bird Woman 1839-1932.



*Two heavy Wisconsin copper-culture bracelets
One later-stage native copper bracelet*



Kettle Moraine Geological Society

63rd Annual Rock, Mineral, Gem and Earth Science Show

MARCH 8TH - 9TH, 2025

Sat 10am to 5pm • Sun 10am to 4pm

Washington County Fair Park & Convention Center
3000 Hwy. PV, West Bend, WI

\$4.00 Adults
Kids under 12
FREE
KMGS Jr.
Rockhounds,
Scouts &
4-H participants
in Uniform FREE



- View geological and earth science displays, demonstrations, fossils and Native American artifacts.
- Visit the fantastic fluorescent rock and mineral displays!
- Listen and learn about a variety of specimens from our club member displays.
- Browse rock, fossil and jewelry artisans.
- Fun & activities for the entire family in our KID'S ZONE!

See our website at kmgrocks.com for more information or to make a donation.



SPOTLIGHT | CITY OF MARINETTE



Adventure and Thrill Seekers Wanted

Get ready for a winter escape like no other! The City of Marinette invites you to dive into the backwoods and create memories that will last a lifetime. Whether you're craving adrenaline-fueled action or serene winter tranquility, Marinette has it all.

Ride the Trails With over 750 miles of snowmobile trails and an additional 300 miles for ATVs and UTVs, Marinette is a winter trailblazer's paradise. Stay at the newly added Holiday Inn Express, where you can unhitch your sled and hit the trails right from your doorstep. Glide through breathtaking views, marvel at nature's wonders, and let the rush of adventure fill your day.

Find Peace in Quiet Adventure If you prefer a slower pace, grab your snowshoes or cross-country skis and explore Marinette's stunning winter trails.

Whether trekking around the city, the Bay of Green Bay, or the surrounding county, you'll find some of Wisconsin's most awe-inspiring routes. Wander through frozen waterfalls, spot elusive wildlife like endangered birds or timid deer, and let the serenity of nature inspire you.

World-Class Ice Fishing For anglers, Marinette is a must-visit destination. The Menominee River and the Bay of Green Bay offer unparalleled fishing experiences. Set your tip-up, hunker down in your ice shanty, and reel in the catch of a lifetime! From trophy walleye to northern pike and even musky, Marinette's waters are stocked with adventure.

A Taste of Marinette No trip to Marinette is complete without a stop at the legendary Joe's Cheese House. With over 100 years of history and cheese aged up to 25 years, this is the place to

indulge in true Wisconsin tradition. Don't miss the chance to experience one of the state's most iconic stops!

End Your Day in Style After an adventure-filled day, unwind at one of Marinette's inviting restaurants, bars, craft brew pubs, or wineries. Raise a toast to a day well spent and savor the warmth of Marinette's hospitality. From award-winning craft beer at the Rail House Brew Pub to Mickey-Lu-Bar-B-Q - named "The Best Burger Joint" by USA Today

- to famous fish fries at East Side Bar and Grill or Applejack's Marinette, you can fill your appetite with adventure, fun, food, drink, and memories!

Plan Your Winter Adventure Today From adrenaline-filled trail rides to tranquil snowshoe excursions, Marinette offers an unforgettable winter experience for everyone. Make this season the one where adventure meets memories in the City of Marinette! 🎉

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, FROM PAGE 7

The day begins at 7 am with a delicious breakfast at the Crooked Oar, followed by registration for the ice fishing competition, which opens at 7 am. The official weigh-in starts at 8 am.

At 11 am, the action heats up with the Curling Contest, where participants can display their skills on the ice. The Kids Ice Fishing Expo, also at 11 am, provides a fun, interactive learning experience for young anglers. Throughout the day, the Gun Raffles and Silent Auction will continue, giving attendees plenty of opportunities to win great prizes.

The grand raffle this year features an incredible *Ranger Crew XP1000 NorthStar Edition Premium*, a top-of-the-line off-road vehicle that will be awarded to one lucky winner! Additionally, the second raffle will offer a \$1,000 first-place prize, along with other great ice fishing equipment and more, adding even more excitement to the day's festivities.

The Ice Fisheree's Saturday competition will wrap up at 5 pm, but the fun and excitement of this 75th Anniversary celebration continues as Mitch Laue and the Bar Flyz & Girlz will perform from 8 pm until midnight.

Sunday, February 2, third day activities run from 7 am to 2 pm including final fishing hours. At 2:30 pm, the awards ceremony will recognize the best catches and winners of the weekend's competitions, and all raffle prizes will be awarded.

Don't miss your chance to be part of Prairie du Chien's historic 75th Annual Ice Fisheree. Whether you're an avid fisherman or just looking for a fun weekend in a beautiful winter setting, this event offers something for everyone. Join us at the Crooked Oar for a weekend filled with fishing, camaraderie, raffles, and unforgettable memories! 🎉

For more information and to register, visit prairieduchien.org or call 800-732-1673.
By Robert Moses, President/CEO Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce





SPOTLIGHT | HURLEY



Outdoors And in, Your Perfect Vacation is Waiting

Let's bring in the New Year with a road trip to Hurley! While we do our snow dance, you take care of planning your trip! We have miles and miles of snowmobile trails for you to cruise around. There are plenty of establishments for you to enjoy food, beverages and good conversation. We also offer cross country skiing and snowshoeing!

No worries if the weather isn't quite cooperating, there is still much to explore in the Northwoods! Imagine a roaring fire and warm drinks as you are tucked away in your cozy accommodations. You can also enjoy a trip to our Historical Museum, which offers three full floors of display. Many seasonal events, live music and fishing jamborees also take place near Hurley. If you love the outdoors or the indoors, we have it! 🍷

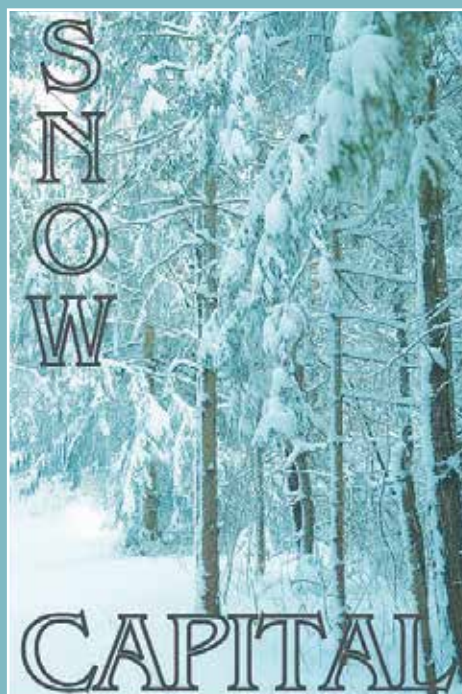
For travel planning, including lodging, brochures and maps, please email us at hurley@hurleywi.com or visit us at hurleywi.com. We can be reached at 715-561-4334, Monday- Friday, 9 am - 3 pm. We would love to help you plan your trip!



Hurley, WI



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JOHN ELLIS

Election Integrity in Wisconsin-Part Nine

Eric Hovde's election was stolen, and Wisconsin's state lawmakers are responsible

If Wisconsin's lawmakers required the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) to maintain a voter registration list that included **only** eligible voters, Wisconsin's elections could not be stolen. But Wisconsin's elections are easily stolen, because the lawmakers allow the WEC to maintain a voter registration list that includes more than **4 million ineligible voters**. The ineligible voters are the source of unverifiable fraudulent ballots created, and counted, in Wisconsin's elections. They're the reason **Eric Hovde** is not Wisconsin's next senator.

On Wisconsin Outdoors (OWO) warned every member of Wisconsin's legislature about the problem of ineligible voters in emails sent on November 6th, and December 1st, of 2023. We also published a continuing series of articles on the problem throughout 2024. But the legislators ignored the warnings and left the WEC's millions of ineligible voters in place for the November 5th election. While the election proved too big to steal from **Donald Trump**, it was not too big to steal from Hovde. In the early morning hours of November 6th, as has become routine in Milwaukee, a late-night ballot dump stole the senate seat from him.

After the election, to avoid light from being shined on

their role in the theft, state lawmakers quickly joined the narrative that Hovde's loss was due to the siphoning of his votes by third party candidates. While some of that did occur, in an election in which very few people split their votes, it's far more likely that Hovde had the election stolen from him by unverifiable fraudulent ballots.

In a further attempt to divert attention from their negligence, the lawmakers said that Hovde was entitled to a recount. But the lawmakers knew that Hovde's loss was not the result of miscounted ballots, and that a recount would never find unverifiable fraudulent ballots.

In a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel op-ed on December 8th, **Republican Assemblyman Scott Krug (608-237-9172), the Chairman of the Committee on Campaigns and Elections** wrote:


"The 2024 elections have come and gone, and as certified results pour in from across the state, one thing has become abundantly clear: The protections in place to secure our elections did the intended job."

Krug's attempt to take a victory lap after presiding over an election that was just stolen is incredible, but

typical of Wisconsin's state legislators. Krug was included in the emails OWO sent to the legislators in November and December of 2023. He has known about the WEC's 4 million ineligible voters for more than a year, but did nothing to have them removed.

It's not the responsibility of citizens to prove an election was stolen after it's over. It's the responsibility of state lawmakers to put in place elections that can't be stolen.

Wisconsin's elections will continue to be easily stolen until state lawmakers require the WEC to maintain a voter registration list of **only** eligible voters. The lawmakers who can do this immediately are Democrat Governor Tony Evers (608-266-1212), Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (608-237-9163), Republican Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (608-266-2056), and all of the rank-and-file legislative members. To find out how to contact your state legislator go to legis.wi.gov.

The state lawmaker's failure to act is already responsible for the theft of Eric Hovde's election. If they fail to act moving forward, in April they might be responsible for the theft of Brad Schimel's election to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. 

DICK ELLIS

Brad Schimel for Supreme Court

Your April ballot is your opportunity to defend Wisconsin

Too similar to the United States Supreme Court makeup in 2016 that would soon determine the literal fate of America, the Wisconsin Supreme Court election April 1st will determine whether the rule of law prevails, or whether our state is governed by a justice majority with complete disregard for their oath to uphold the Constitution. The Wisconsin high court hangs in the balance. Your vote for Brad Schimel and Wisconsin now is as critical as your vote for Donald Trump was to the survival of America nine years ago.

Prior to the 2016 election, it was apparent that the next president would nominate as many as three candidates to the United States Supreme Court. Candidate Trump released a list of 24 candidates from which he would nominate if elected, with each selected based on their established commitment to the Constitution and the law.

"We have a very clear choice in this election," Trump said then. "The freedoms we cherish and the Constitutional values and principles our country was founded on are in jeopardy. The responsibility is greater than ever to protect and uphold these freedoms. I will appoint justices who will protect our liberty with the highest regard for the Constitution."

Keeping his promise during his first term, Trump's Supreme Court confirmations of Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and

Amy Coney Barrett all were on his list. Had Hillary Clinton won, America's already staggered Constitutional Republic would have fallen under the burden of Justices who render decisions on how they personally believe the law should read.


A reflection of what the Supreme Court would have looked like under Clinton's three nominees, Ketanji Brown Jackson, a Biden nominee affirmed to the Supreme Court in 2022 could not provide a definition of the word "woman" when transgender issues arose during her confirmation hearings. "Can I provide a definition?" she said. "No, I can't. I'm not a biologist."

This week, on December 19, 2024 NCAA President Charlie Baker told a senate panel that of 510,000 NCAA athletes, "Less than 10" were competing as transgender. Rather than minimizing a problem, it magnifies the cost of ignoring truth. Radical judges will render decisions that consent to juvenile surgeries without parental consent, mandate co-ed bathrooms in the face of protest from the overwhelming masses, and allow biological men to compete against women. The very few take preference over the vast majority.

If you're an angler in Wisconsin, it was a judicial ruling that initiated the decimation of walleye fishing in the ceded territory

JOHN ELLIS

Why the silence from some conservative radio hosts?

Some conservative radio hosts won't talk about the WEC's 4 million ineligible voters with their listeners, or challenge the state lawmakers that come on their programs about them. The silence coming from their microphones for more than a year has been deafening, and it's making the hosts and the stations they work for part of a growing story. You can ask them why they've remained silent by calling the WISN Studio Line at 877-727-1130, or the WSAU Studio Line at 715-845-2155. 



CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

PAID EDITORIAL

BRAD SCHIMEL FOR WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT

On April 1, 2025 - Vote For a Conservative Who Decides Cases Based on Law

Not Another Liberal Who Renders Decisions Based on Personal Opinion or Financial Paybacks

On April 1, 2025 Wisconsin voters will have the opportunity to choose our state's legal and economic direction for the next decade. You will have the choice of voting for Brad Schimel, an experienced constitutional conservative who believes a judge's responsibility is to enforce the laws of Wisconsin. Or, Susan Crawford, an elitist insider judge who believes a Supreme Court seat comes with the right to create laws based on personal and politically motivated opinions.

The Wisconsin's Supreme Court today is the most dangerous political entity in state government. Four liberal justices hold the majority. Many believe these justices work together to issue decisions based on a political agenda. You can change this by electing Brad Schimel.

Your vote to elect Brad Schimel will reject a Supreme Court that rejects the law. His election will shift the majority back to conservative.

Far and away the number one issue in this election is the attempted repeal of Act 10, which has saved Wisconsinites \$31,000,000,000 dollars per the Maciver Institute (www.Maciverinstitute.com). That's \$31 billion dollars in savings as of December 2024 and it is growing annually.

Act 10 was passed in 2011 to bring state government benefits more in line with what Wisconsin taxpayers were receiving. The law simply asked government employees to pay a minor portion of their health care and employee pension benefits. Prior to Act 10, public sector employees paid nothing.

The Democratic Party and State Employee Unions staged demonstrations, organized an unsuccessful recall of the governor and filed numerous unsuccessful law suits. Susan Crawford was an attorney advancing these actions.

Now, after 13 years and, with no new reason to challenge the law - the Democrats filed a suit in the Dane County Circuit Court. They found a sympathetic ear in Judge Frost. How sympathetic? 11 years earlier Frost signed the recall petition against Gov. Walker, who enacted Act 10.

On December 2, 2024 Judge Frost repealed Act 10 legislation.

Unrelentingly, the Democratic Party and Public Unions won a lower court repeal by a liberal Madison judge. Why now, 13 years later? Because, after endorsing Crawford and contributing to her campaign, they believe they will have Susan Crawford as their Supreme Court Justice. It will be

her vote that ends Wisconsin's \$31 billion dollars in savings. And now, Crawford has given no indication that she has changed her position from 13 years ago when she was an attorney fighting against Act10.

Be assured, if Crawford is elected, you, the taxpayer, will be paying **billions** to government employees who feel it is "unfair" that they should have to pay anything toward their retirement or health care. We should all be so lucky.

Voting for Brad Schimel is essential to stop public union elites and Susan Crawford from leaving the Wisconsin taxpayer responsible for billions of dollars of debt that are of absolutely no benefit to us. We cannot let the Democratic Party have control over our court system. The difference is clear. See the dramatic difference between these two candidates in the adjacent chart.

We Cannot Afford Susan Crawford on The Wisconsin Supreme Court
Vote Brad Schimel on April 1, 2025

Brad Schimel has served as Waukesha County District Attorney, State Attorney General, and Circuit Court Justice.

Prepared by "Vote Conservative MKE"

Where The Supreme Court Candidates Stand on Major Issues

THE ISSUE	SCHIMEL	CRAWFORD
Retain Act 10 saving of \$31 billion	YES	NO
Allow Transgender men into Womens' Bathrooms	NO	YES
Allow children's sex changes without parent approval	NO	YES
Allow illegals to vote	NO	YES
Keep real time tracking of sex offenders	YES	NO
Pay for illegal immigrants' education	NO	YES
Release 3,000 felons from prison	NO	YES
End probation for 7,000 convicted felons	NO	YES
Supports no cash bail	NO	YES

Brad Schimel is an Independent Judge who will apply unbiased judgement
Susan Crawford is a Candidate of the Democratic Party and Public Employee Unions

On April 1, 2025
Stop Judges from making their own laws
Vote for Brad Schimel



Presents Firearms Info from Ron Stresing

RON STRESING

The Ever Popular 20-Gauge

A shotgun heard round the world

I read a survey that said Snoopy was the “most beloved cartoon character in the world.” Twenty-gauge shotguns are sort of the same thing. Everybody loves them! The light weight, low recoil and wide ammunition availability makes them user friendly for beginners. Twenty-gauge ammunition is also more available and lower priced than comparable 28-gauge or .410 bore shells.

The wide variety of lead and non-toxic hunting ammunition loaded in 20-gauge allows a beginning shooter to use the same firearm he learned to shoot with to harvest game. My son used a wide range of lead, steel, and Hevi-shot loads, but the same 20-gauge shotgun he learned the basics with. He shot sporting clays with the same 20-gauge he used to take waterfowl, pheasants, doves, a variety of small game,

and seven deer. With a slug barrel and Foster-style slugs, it was deadly on deer out to 100 yards.

The yellow hull color of 20-gauge ammunition was introduced in 1966 by the Federal Cartridge Company of Minnesota. It quickly caught on with all the other US ammunition makers. Even internationally, with few exceptions, the yellow hull color is pretty much reserved for 20-gauge shells. If you find any 20-gauge shells in a different color, odds are it’s foreign made or they predate the 1970s.

Clay Target Shooting: All clay target games can be effectively shot with a 20-gauge. Many 12-gauge shooters already use one ounce or even seven-eighths ounce target loads. These are the same as standard 20-gauge shot charges. The reputation

20-gauges have for being fast handling is an advantage when shooting sporting clays. If my shooting was on, scores were about the same as with my 12-gauge. As the old adage says, “If you are on, you are on.” I’ve started using only my 20-gauge O/U for shooting sporting clays or hunting where a lot of walking is involved. The lighter weight of the gun and shells, plus low recoil, helps you shoot better over a long day of sporties. Unlike smaller gauges, including 28-gauge or .410 bore, 20-gauge shells are available in economical 100 round value packs.

Hunting: A beginning hunter can shoot 20-gauge lead seven-eighths ounce light loads or heavy one ounce hunting loads for upland game. Then opt for 20-gauge steel, bismuth, or other non-toxic waterfowl loads for doves, ducks or geese. The wide variety of heavy hunting loads for the



20-gauge is one of the big reasons the 16-gauge has fallen out of favor. Come November, you can load up with slugs for deer hunting. Twenty-gauge is the smallest legal shotgun caliber allowed for deer hunting in many states.

The 20-gauge is also a great gun for the ladies. Youth model stocks are often a perfect fit for female shooters. I turned 70 this year, and love the lighter weight, low recoil, and fast handling of my 20-gauge guns. Like me, I believe, the more you use your 20-gauge shotguns, the more you’ll like them! 🐾

STEVEN BETTS

The Misunderstood Element

Shotgun choke selection simplified

Shotgun chokes are often one of the most misunderstood elements of shotgun sports and hunting. Perhaps the most confusing part of chokes is “the pattern.” Many people have a tendency to over-choke, in other words, put a choke that’s too tight for what they want to accomplish. As a shooting coach, I carefully analyze how the target breaks to determine if the chokes are too tight and powdering clays to dust or too loose and making big chips.

I like to explain chokes in the same way I teach students to shoot clays. Imagine when you were a child with a spray nozzle on a water hose when trying to spray someone. The tighter the constriction on the hose nozzle, the thinner the pattern and farther out the water will go out. This would be a

full choke. I also teach that if a person is running sideways, you don’t point the hose directly at them, you give them a slight lead. This mimics clay shooting and bird hunting very closely.

When the clays are close - less than 150 feet - something less than a modified choke will do. Since most people never pattern their shotguns, if the distance is unknown, a modified choke will do the trick. If you are able to acquire clay targets very quickly, a light modified or skeet works well. Waterfowl hunting requires steel shot. Choke choosing becomes a little more complicated with less options and the choke tubes must be read to be certain of the maximum constriction allowable for safety.

Steel shot does not compress like lead shot does and has less density, so the

amount of powder is often increased to speed up the shot so it can travel farther. Often, a modified choke is the tightest that can be safely used depending on the gun and choke material. Be sure to read the side of the choke tube to be sure it is able to shoot steel. Today’s shotguns usually note if they are safe for steel shot.

There are other factors to take into account. Most importantly, the type of choke threads for your shotgun. Often, it’s stamped on the barrel, but not always. Using an incorrect choke in your barrel can be very dangerous and catastrophic to your gun. Choke manufacturers like Briley or Carlson are a great source to get a correct choke for your model of shotgun.

In summary, choke constriction can be a very confusing decision, even for an

Here is a quick reference chart:		
SHOTGUN CHOKE	YARDAGE	SHOTGUN CHOKE RESTRICTION <small>Diameter difference between bore and shotgun choke</small>
CYLINDER	< 20	0
SKEET	22.5	.005 OF AN INCH
IMPROVED CYLINDER	25	.010
LIGHT MODIFIED	30	.015
MODIFIED	32.5	.020
IMPROVED MODIFIED	35	.025
LIGHT FULL	37.5	.030
FULL	40 OR MORE	.035
EXTRA FULL	40 OR MORE	.040

experienced sporting clays shooter. Most targets can be broken with either a skeet, improved cylinder, modified or full choke. If you don’t know how far away the target is, start with modified and work your way more open or tighter depending on how the targets are broken. It takes many years of experience to determine which chokes to use for different targets and determining how far away the target is. I often use the softball throwing comparison to determine choke size. If I can easily throw a softball to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

CARPENTER, FROM PAGE 8

and get it done or send it out for repair.

Terminal Tackle Audit Go through all your tackle boxes and bags and fishing vests, and list out what you need, and then get it. Hooks, sinkers, leaders, lures, baits, flies, tippet, accessories, the list never ends. Then stock up now on what you use a lot.

Big Equipment Check Here's an example. I need to adjust and tune up my boat's trolling motor. That needs to get done some cold winter night, and not be re-discovered on the first outing. What might be on your list? Check your fishing nets, too.

It's a lot of work. But good work, during which I dream of fishing. After it's all done, I might even go ice fishing once in March. Just to say I did. 🐟

ELLIS, FROM PAGE 28

by enabling the spearing of spawning fish by the few. If you're a deer hunter in Wisconsin, you're living a potential lethal blow to your heritage in the wake of a federal judicial decision that placed the gray wolf on the endangered species list. Today, December 19, 2024, OWO received a DNR news release inviting residents to purchase an endangered species license plates for \$25, with the graphic of a gray wolf as an option. We know better. The wolf in Wisconsin is today a grossly out of balance predator. Simply, because a judge in California wants it that way.

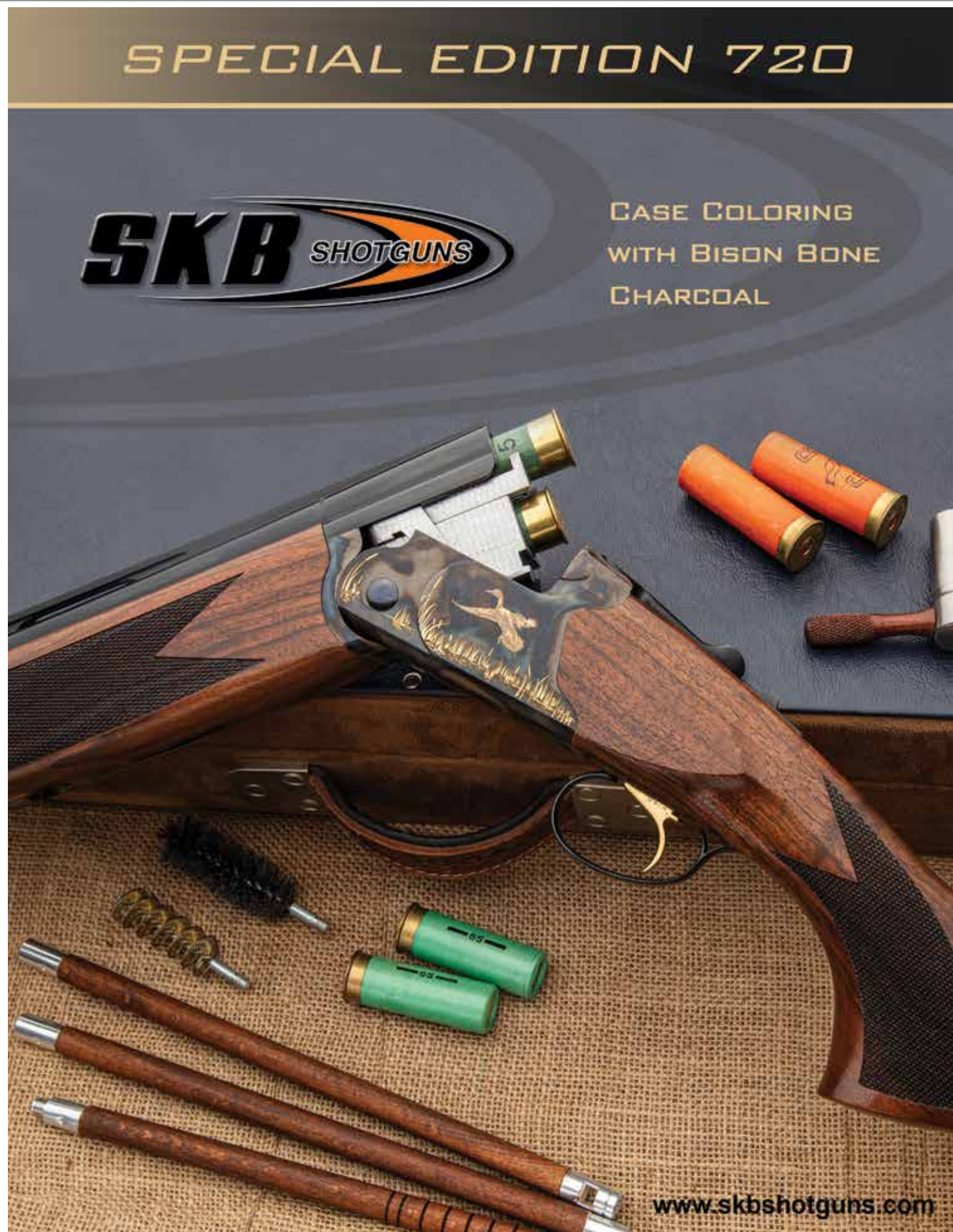
The trail we face in Wisconsin is precarious, and the list of freedoms in jeopardy with the looming Supreme Court election long. Beginning with our First and Second Amendments.

April 1st, defend Wisconsin and protect the Constitution. Vote Brad Schimel. 🗳️

BETTS, FROM PAGE 30

where a target breaks, I use a skeet choke. If it's starting to get difficult to throw that far, I go up to an improved cylinder or light modified. At a distance beyond my normal throw is a modified-full choke. Hopefully, this simplifies choke selection if you are unable to see how large your pattern is at certain distances at a patterning board. 🎯

Steven Betts is a shooting coach for Ozaukee Scholastic Shooting Sports and Ozaukee County middle and high schools.



LiUNA!

WISCONSIN LABORERS' DISTRICT COUNCIL

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