



Waterloo News

Historic Nesting in Jackson County



The nest pictured above is home to the first successful nesting pair of bald eagles ever recorded in Jackson county. The pair raised two young birds, for a promising beginning.

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Building Hours

The visitor building hours for the fall season:

Open Daily

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

In past years the visitor building has been closed from Thanksgiving to New Years.

The holiday schedule for 2011 will be announced at a later date.

Trails and grounds will be available from dawn to dusk daily.

In 2009 there was a great deal of excitement among area birders when a pair of bald eagles began building a nest in a large cottonwood in a remote area in Northeastern Jackson County.

As is often the case with first time nesters, no eggs were ever laid. The following spring, hopes were raised again as the pair added more material to the nest. However, early in this nesting cycle one of the pair mysteriously disappeared and nesting ceased once again.

This spring, two adult eagles returned to the nest and once again began adding material in preparation for nesting. They laid two eggs, and after 35 days of incubation, hatched two young eaglets. Biologists from the DNR non-game wildlife program examined and banded the young while still in the nest and found them in good health.

Young eagles leave the nest at about 10 to 12 weeks. Once they leave, they may not return to the nest again, but remain in the territory for the rest of the summer.

They spend most of their time perched in nearby trees waiting for their parents to feed them. The parents are very obliging, keeping them well supplied throughout the summer months. When the young birds are four or five months old, this gravy train ends and they are left to fend for themselves.

Life is hazardous for young eagles. Fifty percent die during their first year of life. Some are victims of accidents while learning to fly, while others die of starvation before they fully acquire their hunting skills. Those that survive will not gain their adult plumage (white head and tail feathers) until they are five or six years old.

(continued on page two)

Eagle's Nest (cont'd)

If they survive their first year, they may live another 15 to 20 years in the wild. Until they reach maturity these young birds will lead nomadic lives, often in association with other immature eagles.

When they reach breeding age, they may return to the general area from which they were fledged to establish territories of their own. Not too close, however, as their parent's territory (if still occupied) may extend up to two square miles. More likely the nest site they choose will be five to ten miles from their birth nest.

The bald eagle has made a remarkable come back. In the 1960's the population was reduced to just 400 nesting pairs in the lower forty eight states by the wide spread use of the insecticide DDT. The pesticide caused a thinning of the eagle's egg shells, making them unable to withstand the weight of the adult birds during incubation. The banning of DDT in 1972 and the passing of the Endangered Species Act in 1973 are largely credited for the bald eagle's recovery.

The immature eagle above, right (lacking the white head and tail of the adult) patiently waits for a parent to deliver dinner. The adult eagle (below) hunts for that dinner over Mud Lake Marsh at the Haehnle Audubon Sanctuary.



Where Can Eagles be viewed in Waterloo Rec. Area?

The current nest is located in an inaccessible area on private land within two miles of Big Portage Lake Unit near the western part of the park. The eagles may range for several miles while hunting for food, so visitors may see them anywhere in the western half of the park.

Perhaps the best viewing is at the Haehnle Audubon Sanctuary located on Seymour Rd. approximately 1.5 miles west of the Race Road intersection. The observation hill adjacent to the main parking lot provides a commanding view of Mud Lake Marsh where the eagles often hunt. Binoculars are recommended.



Want to learn more about eagles? The book **Majestic Eagles** by naturalist, author and wildlife photographer Stan Tekiela is filled with beautiful images and interesting information about our national symbol.

The book is published by Adventure Publications, Inc., Cambridge, MN. ISBN-13:978-1-59193-200-0

Waterloo Natural History Association Programs

September - November 2011 (Advance Registration Required at 734-475-3170)

INCREDIBLE EDIBLES WALK
1:30 p.m. Sunday, September 11



Come walk with wild edibles expert Tom Jameson and get acquainted with samples from Mother Nature's kitchen. Tom will share some of his recipes and his gourmet cooking after the hike. **Limited to 35 people. Program length 90 Minutes**

REPTILES ALIVE!!!
2:00 p.m. Sunday, September 18



Naturalist Paul McCormack will introduce you to the wonderful world of reptiles complete with live specimens of snakes, turtles, etc.. Learn about the special survival features of each animal in this entertaining, hands-on program.

LOCAL MEDICINAL PLANTS
2:00-3:30 p.m. Sunday, September 25.



Join Dr. Mary Ann Nirdlinger as she discusses historical and appropriate modern uses of plants for your health. Learn to identify medicinal plants and to make simple preparations at home. After the program, will be a walk to look for medicinal plants. Limited to 30 people.

SPIDERS AND THEIR KIN
2:00 p.m. Sunday, October 2



Dr. Cara Shillington will introduce you to live spiders, tarantulas, scorpions and other intriguing invertebrates. Learn about poisonous spiders in Michigan, where they hang out, and how to avoid them

FALL MUSHROOM SEARCH
2:00-3:30 p.m. Sunday, October 9



Come search the woods to find and collect fall mushrooms! Mushroom expert Phil Tedeschi will discuss what people collected and identify those that are edible. Bring a basket or paper bag and waxed paper for collecting. **Limited to 30 people.**

SELF-GUIDED COLOR AND CRANE TOUR MAPS



Available beginning October 9. Large numbers of Sandhill Cranes can be seen in the area in the fall. Visitors may pick up free maps to the best color routes and crane viewing areas. A film "The Sandhill Crane Story" will be shown on request.

CIRCLE OF LIFE
2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Sunday, October 16



The Binder Park Zoomobile will bring a variety of live animals from Africa to demonstrate how all living things are connected in one big "Circle of Life." In this family program you will learn why some animals depend on plants for their survival while others need animals.

SANDHILL CRANE TOUR
2:00 p.m. Saturday, October 23



Local expert Bill Wells will lead a driving tour through Waterloo Recreation Area to see large flocks of these magnificent birds at close range. Bring binoculars and cameras.

CRANES OF WATERLOO FESTIVAL
11:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. Sun. Oct 23



The Discovery Center is hosting this annual festival. Many activities are planned for the day ending with a driving tour to see the cranes. Call the Discovery Center for more information. Admission is free with a State Recreation Passport

For More Programs, Turn the Page

EGRETS AND ALLIGATORS, *OH MY!*
2:00 p.m. Sunday, October 30



Join naturalist Tom Hodgson for a vicarious trip through Florida rivers, swamps and estuaries in search of creatures of feather, scale, fur and claw. If you've been to Florida, come to remember, if not, come to discover.

FROZEN FROGS AND TROPICAL RAINFORESTS
2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Sunday, November 13.



Randy Baker of Naturalist Endeavors will give us a close-up look at several live animals from the Americas for this informative and entertaining program. Learn why healthy habitats in Michigan are important for rainforest survival and why rainforest survival is important to Michigan.

DON'T FORGET!!! Advance Registration is required for all WNHA programs. To Register call 734-475-3170. Admission for WNHA sponsored programs is \$2.00 per person or \$5.00 per family. WNHA members admitted free.

View this newsletter in Color at www.wnha.org

Message From The Chair

Hello everyone. This long hot summer is finally drawing to a close and I hope everyone has successfully dealt with the heat and still enjoyed their summer. As a friend told me, this summer can be summed up in four words, "Hot, Dry, Wet & Mosquitoes". I really think those four words are an apt description of our summer so far.

As everyone knows by now, and if you don't, I'm pleased to report that our Interpreter position at the Center has been filled by Katie McGlashen. She comes to us from the For-Mar Nature Preserve in Genesee County. Katie comes back to the DNR, having once worked as an Adventure Ranger earlier in her career. We are very pleased to have Katie at the Center and she has already assembled a top-notch staff to assist her in the Center. So if you haven't stopped by the Center to meet Katie – please do.

On August 15th I attended a meeting at the Discovery Center for the DNR Stakeholder Workshop for the Pinckney and Waterloo Recreation Area's. The meeting was hosted by Birchler Arroyo Associates, Inc and they presented the Draft General Management Plan for both recreation areas. Was a very informative meeting and quite a diverse group of stakeholders were represented from both recreation areas. If anyone would like to see the Management Plan and to make any comments on it you can visit: www.birchlearroyo.com/Clients/DNR-RD.htm

I mentioned this in the last newsletter, but I just wanted to remind everyone that we are still looking to fill the position of Gift Shop Coordinator when Sue Phare leaves at the end of this year. If anyone is interested in this position or knows of someone who might be interested in this position please contact a member of the Board. The Gift Shop is our main source of income for the Association and we feel it is very critical to fill the position.

I also want to remind everyone to mark their calendars for the Member's Potluck that is scheduled for Saturday, 5 November at 6:00 pm. There will be more to come on location and entertainment for this year's potluck. Enjoy the approaching fall season with all its wonderful changes and get out and experience nature. Hope to see everyone at the Member's Potluck.

Gregg V. Burg,
Chairperson



Tales From the Past Part III

Construction of Mill and Cedar Lake Outdoor Centers

The construction of Mill Lake Camp (later called Mill Lake Outdoor Center) by W.P.A. workers began on February 7, 1936. In addition to the sleeping quarters numbering 18 cabins, ten other buildings were built including the dining hall and kitchen, administration building, pump house and boathouse. Native trees, shrubs and grasses were also planted.

Cedar Lake Camp construction began in 1939, providing facilities similar to Mill Lake Camp. Mill Lake Outdoor Center had a capacity of 140. Cedar Lake was slightly smaller with a capacity of 124.

For over 50 years the Outdoor Centers provided opportunities for thousands of school, youth and church groups to experience the great outdoors. The outdoor centers were often filled to capacity year around. Tom Hodgson, the parks first park interpreter recalls spending a day each week at each outdoor center leading field trips for the many groups using the facilities.

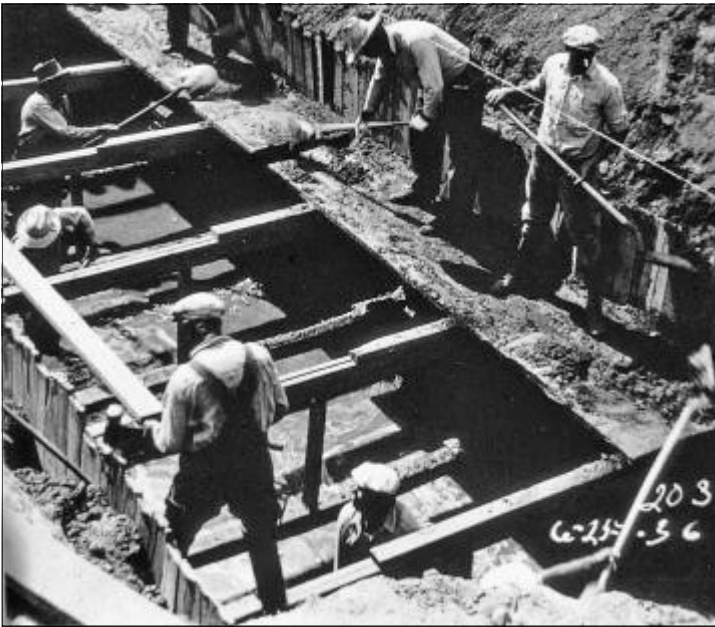


Mill Lake dining hall under construction in 1936

The outdoor centers were closed in 1981 due to budgetary cut-backs made necessary when the legislature reduced general fund support for the state parks from 50% to 15%. They opened briefly two years later, but by then most of groups using the facilities had made other arrangements.

Mill Lake Outdoor Center has been closed for many years. Cedar Lake Outdoor Center is currently being leased by The Michigan United Conservation Clubs (M.U.C.C.).

Ryan Newman of NASCAR fame created "**Racing for Wildlife,**" a foundation whose intent is provide to opportunities for people to enjoy wildlife and the great outdoors. Restoring Mill Lake Outdoor Center was to be the foundation's first project. The restoration has not moved beyond the concept stage as yet. In the mean time the buildings continue to deteriorate.



Workers construct septic system at Mill Lake in 1936. (left) Mill Lake Outdoor Center dining hall (below) mothballed for many years, still waits for the restoration project.



Denizen of the Marsh



Big Portage Marsh (above) in the northern section of the Waterloo Recreation Area includes over 2,300 of the nearly 5,000 acres of wetlands within the park boundaries. It is home to a variety of plants and animals, including the secretive least bittern (below). Wetlands produce more biomass (quantities of plants and animals) per acre than any other ecosystem, including tropical rain forests.

The Least Bittern is the smallest member of the heron family. It measures only about 12 inches from head to tail. It is also one of the most secretive, spending much of its time in dense stands of cattails, sedges and bulrushes that make up its preferred habitat.

Its laterally flattened body allows it to easily slip between densely packed stems of emergent vegetation. It often hunts over deeper areas of marsh by clinging to plant stems. Prey consists primarily of small fish, large insects, tadpoles, other amphibians, crayfish, and occasionally small mammals and birds. Least bitterns often construct feeding platforms of bent vegetation at productive feeding sites.

Least bitterns arrive in Michigan in late April or early May. They build nesting platforms a foot or two above the water by bending down live and dead stalks and adding short stems and sticks. They usually lay clutches of four to five eggs.

Because of their secretive nature, seeing these birds can be a challenge. They are often heard before they are seen. During the breeding season in May and June, the males emit a rapid series of dove or cuckoo like calls consisting of three to five "coo" notes. Since neither doves nor cuckoos are found in marshes, such sounds indicate the presence of a least bittern.

The rest involves patience. Those who remain quiet and observant will be rewarded when the bird comes to the edge of open water to feed. Thanks to the many acres of wetlands protected in the Waterloo Recreation Area and other natural areas throughout the state, least bittern populations remain fairly stable.



A least Bittern in its natural habitat

Needed

Enthusiastic Volunteer

To

Act as Discovery Center Gift Shop Coordinator

Duties include ordering and stocking merchandise, keeping track of inventory, overseeing gift shop and serving on the WNHA board. *No prior experience necessary.* Current coordinator will provide training and advice. If interested call Kathy at 517-522-3949, or email at ksclaflin@gmail.com

Thank You Sue Phare!!!

Sue Phare, our long time gift shop coordinator will be relinquishing her duties this fall after many years of dedicated service. She has done a masterful job

Sue is an Operations Supervisor and Production Scheduler at Enzo Life Sciences in Ann Arbor. She is also a martial arts practitioner and an avid outdoor person, hiking often in the Waterloo Recreation Area.

She joined the WNHA board 13 years ago because she thought the Waterloo Recreation Area was a great park and wanted to give something back to it. She took the Gift Shop Coordinator job about ten years ago. She particularly enjoyed getting to know some of the local vendors while doing the job. She is relinquishing her responsibilities because of additional commitments of work and schooling.

With Sue's departure, we would like to find someone to fill the Gift Shop Coordinator position this fall. Sue will be willing to train and advise this person, and the DNR staff and the WNHA Board can also provide support.

In the event that we do not find a replacement, we will form a committee to run the shop. Each member of the committee would have a specific job, such as buying and stocking merchandise from a particular vender one to three times per year, or being in charge of miscellaneous supplies.

Please Remember

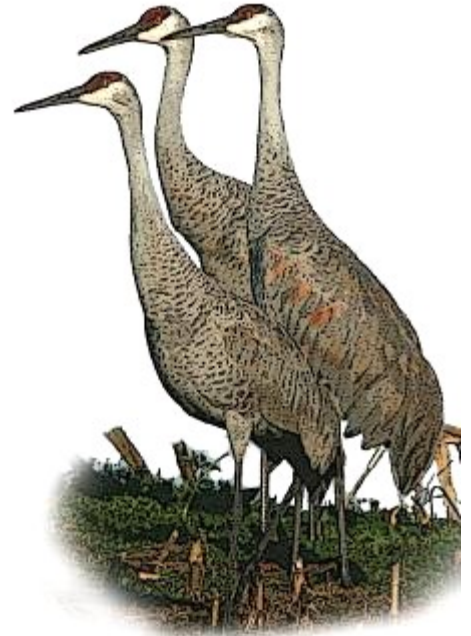
When renewing your motor vehicle registration, be sure to opt in to the Recreation Passport.

Now more than ever the future of our state parks depends on your support.

Waterloo Natural History Association
17030 Bush Rd.
Chelsea, MI 48118



Official Newsletter of the Waterloo
Natural History Association



MEMBER'S CORNER

The Waterloo Natural History Association gratefully acknowledges the support of the following new members and those who have recently renewed their memberships:

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Joseph & Lorin Kummer
Jere & Nancy Hinkle
Larry, Cathy & Jasper Bean
Wayne & Judith Petty
Gary & Nancy Siegrist
Theresa Arlotto
Nicole Henry
William Kronberg
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Barbara & Don Webb

Benefactor

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Art & Lee Tremper

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