

MACKENZIE CENTER

Outdoor Skills and Environmental Education

SPRING 2014



Photo from the hollow log taken by a student during an April MacKenzie nature photography class.

A NEW DAY AT MACKENZIE

The Department of Natural Resources resumed management of the MacKenzie Center on January 1, 2014. We've had a full first four months, and center operations are in high gear. The department has continued to offer the high-quality educational programs that Wisconsin schools have come to expect from the MacKenzie Center, and we are looking forward to offering a larger selection of classes in the near future. We are working on much needed maintenance issues across the property, improvements to our Wildlife Area, and working closely with the State Game Farm. We are grateful for the continued support of our many dedicated volunteers, especially for the Friends of the MacKenzie Center. With their help, this new chapter in the Center's rich history is proving to be one of growth and rejuvenation.

EDUCATION

We are putting the finishing touches on our program plan for the next two years, keeping our educational base strong and providing even more class offerings for schools. So far in 2014, we have hosted 18 overnight programs for school and youth groups and 24 day field trips. This means we have already served over 1,790 students in 2014! MacKenzie educators are excited to strengthen partnerships locally and are working

with the Poynette School District to extend programming at MacKenzie as an outdoor classroom for Poynette's kindergarten through twelfth grade classes. Education staff are also working with the Poynette library to provide hands-on science activities for the summer reading program.

Outdoor skills are front and center with MacKenzie hosting the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Expo on May

15-16 for school groups to experience a variety of outdoor skills. On July 19th, we are partnering with Devils Lake State Park for a passport event to allow youth to learn archery and fishing in the same day. With support from Law Enforcement and Pheasants Forever, we also have a new air gun shooting tent for shooting sport lessons!



Students checking out an underwater video during a January ice fishing class



Wish List

*Interested in donating?
Here are some items the center needs:*

- UTV
- 5 iPads (for education)
- Vacuums
- Door mats
- New signage
- Carpet cleaning
- New lounge couches
- Cross country ski repair
- Snow shoe repair
- Modern snow shoes

WILDLIFE AREA

This winter, the water pipes to bison waterers froze (for the first time ever) requiring some serious trouble shooting by wildlife and facilities staff. An electrical outlet and stock tank with heating element were set up for watering and water hauled in daily.

With spring here, all of the animals that had been inside

for the winter are back in their outside enclosures enjoying the spring air and sunshine. Staff are working on plans for rotational grazing and extending the bison pasture into existing prairie.

In March, we sadly lost a long-time resident, our 19 year-old mountain lion. She had brought years of joy and

education to the center and will be deeply missed. Her pelt was donated for educational purposes, so her heritage will live on.

Three new interns will be starting at the end of May. Each summer these additional staff enable the wildlife team to accomplish valuable enrichments for the animals.

MACKENZIE CENTER

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MEET THE STAFF

JD Smith is beginning his 30th year of state service as the MacKenzie Center Director. He is known for his innovative leadership and successful approach to tackling tough projects. JD has assembled an excellent team of new and returning staff who are working hard to move the MacKenzie Center forward.

Facilities & Grounds is now led by **Joshua Bruecken**. Josh recently moved to Wisconsin bringing considerable experience from the Conservation Corps and has held facility and campground manager positions in Illinois and Iowa. He has a Master's Degree in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Administration. **Dave Foelker** has worked at the MacKenzie Center for several years and continues in his role in maintenance and grounds manage-

FACILITIES & GROUNDS

As the MacKenzie Center warms from a harsh winter, the staff has recognized some small blessings. Pipes that were frozen in the wildlife area began to provide water to the animals; septic tanks at the workshop, administration building, and residence house that were pumped throughout the win-

ter are working properly. Most importantly, the unrelenting winter has consumed most of the maintenance staffs' time clearing snow. Now, they are shifting all their energy to spring! They are working furiously by performing equipment maintenance, lawn raking and clearing trails. The small

blessings of winter's reprieve will bloom into large blessings of spring's warmth for the facilities and grounds.

Big thanks to Daryl Steinhorst of Steinhorst Tree Services in Poynette who donated services to bind a hazardous tree this past winter!

FRIENDS OF MACKENZIE & VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are at the heart of the MacKenzie Center! In March the Center held its annual maple education program which concluded with the Maple Syrup Festival on Saturday April 5th. A huge Thank you to the Friends of the MacKenzie Center and other volunteers who helped make the 2014 maple program a success! Some stats include...

- 70+ maple volunteers
- Over 2,500 volunteer hours served
- 24 schools participated in 13 days of programming for a total of 1,609 participants in the maple education program
- Around 1,500 visitors attended the Festival with over 800 served a pancake breakfast!
- 124 Sugar Maple Trees were tapped; 1135 gallons of sap were collected, producing 35.6 gallons of syrup!



ment. His familiarity with the facilities and grounds is a valuable part of moving forward at MacKenzie.

The Education Program is now led by **Chrystal Seeley-Schreck** and **Ruth Ann Lee**. **Roxanne Burgard** continues serving as Office Associate and Group Coordinator. She has worked at the MacKenzie Center for eleven years and brings invaluable experience to the programs and property. Chrystal brings a wealth of experience in education and outreach from multiple states, including three previous years with DNR's invasive program. She has a Master's Degree in Culture, Ecology and Sustainable Community. Ruth Ann has worked for eight years at MacKenzie, as both director and lead educator. She has a Bachelor's Degree in

Natural Resources Management, with an emphasis in environmental education and interpretation and has done an outstanding job developing the education program at MacKenzie over the past several years.

The MacKenzie Wildlife Team continues under the proven leadership of **Annalynn Hammond**. Wildlife Technician **Kyle Coker** continues animal care, development, and enhancement of the wildlife area. Both have worked with the live animals at MacKenzie for several years notably enhancing the wildlife area and providing healthy enrichments for the animals. Annalynn's background is in Biological Aspects of Conservation from the University of Wisconsin and Madison Area Technical College. Kyle also recently joined the Facilities & Grounds team.