



# MACKENZIE CENTER NEWS

Wisconsin's Center for Outdoor Skills and Environmental Education



*A huge thank you to Friends of MacKenzie for all of the hard work this summer. We are one step closer to fixing the pond!*

On August 17-18, school administrators and education officials from Wisconsin's sister-state of Chiba, Japan visited the MacKenzie Center and met with Secretary Stepp. The ten educators were exploring the possibility of sending Japanese students and teachers to MacKenzie to learn outdoor skills, conduct nature studies and meet Wisconsin students as a part of a cultural exchange.



## WILDLIFE AREA

Did you know the carnivores in the wildlife area eat a varied diet of whole prey animal carcasses? We try to mimic their natural diets as much as possible and have completely phased out commercial ground meat diets this year. All of the carcasses we feed are fresh and unspoiled, and then frozen for the animals to enjoy year round. Most are donated from government agencies and hunters/trappers, and some are purchased from

local farmers. Whole prey is best for nutrition and digestion because it includes the muscle meat, organs, bones, skin and fur/feathers that a carnivore needs to be healthy. It also provides great enrichment for the animals by making them work harder for their meals and bringing out natural behaviors such as prey drive, guarding, caching, scent rolling, competition, prize displays and more. If you visit the wildlife area, you may get the

lucky opportunity to see our wolves snarling over a beaver or deer carcass, our fox prancing around with a goose in his mouth, our eagle sinking his talons into a salmon, our badger burying a rat, or our lynx climbing a tree for a strategically-placed rabbit!

## EDUCATION

In May, MacKenzie hosted the first annual Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo. The expo included 26 stations hosted by DNR staff, conservation organizations, and volunteers covering outdoor skills including shooting sports, tree identification, wildlife, fishing, and more! Students from all over Wisconsin and northern Illinois attended and participated in hands on

environmental education and outdoor skills; over 1400 students, 200 adults, and 100 volunteers attended. Thank you to the Friends of MacKenzie for providing lunch for the volunteers! June brought Camp K.O.D.A. (Kids Of Deaf Adults) for its 7<sup>th</sup> year at the MacKenzie Center in June. This year's camp brought 135 youth over six weeks to the Center. In July, we hosted the first *Fishing*

*and Archery Clinic*, in partnership with Devils Lake State Park. Approximately 100 visitors, some of which traveled from Milwaukee, Dousman, and Sparta, joined us to learn archery and left with comments like, "This is great...when are you going to do this again?" and "Thank you, this is so nice that you have events like this!" Big thanks to Friends of MacKenzie Don Lucke for helping with



*In June, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, received an Invader Crusader award from the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council.*

the tents and Jon Langsdorf for helping with the tents and archery instruction. Now we are gearing up for the school year with new classes and revamped programs. Check them out on our website!

## FACILITIES & GROUNDS

Each day brings new opportunities and challenges and for the maintenance department. From light bulbs to hazard trees, there is never a dull day. This summer, volunteers were vital to keeping the day to day grounds upkeep in check. Three volunteers, Steve Saager, Don Buttery, and Rodger Cardoni have put in well over 100 volunteer hours mowing and trimming grass on the property. In June we started

the monthly MacKenzie Volunteer Opportunity with the Friends of MacKenzie. The volunteers liked the first one so much that we will now have two work days each month. In just a few short meetings, we've accomplished so much:

- Stained walking bridge in picnic area
- Cleared and trimmed all 5 miles of hiking trails
- Cleaned and rebuilt split-rail fence in Maple Finishing Area
- Moved lodge furniture to prepare for floor sealing

We are looking forward to many more projects in the months ahead. To join us at the next MacKenzie Volunteer Opportunity, contact Friend's Maintenance chair: Don Lucke at [heartshare@centurytel.net](mailto:heartshare@centurytel.net).

In other news, we've partnered with the Poynette High School to design and complete 10 new signs on the property. We've cut down and cleaned up 3 hazard trees, removed several tons of scrap metal from the property, and patched

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sidewalk steps. This fall should bring many more improvements.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

The **Friends of the MacKenzie Center** are making plans for the **Annual Haunted Hay Ride on October 23 and 24, 2014**.

This fall event welcomes over 1500 visitors each year to celebrate the holiday while supporting the Center. The Friends will assist in coordination of over 60 volunteers that make the event possible. Volunteers serve key roles as the "actors" and as support for traffic, parking,

campfires, snacks, and more. This community event involves individuals, organizations, and businesses that support the goals of environmental education and outdoor skills at the MacKenzie Center. They take great pride in showing their support, while having fun and celebrating the Halloween season. The Haunted Hayride runs from **6:30pm-9:30pm** both nights, cost: \$5.

Thinking spring? Mark your calendars for the 2015 maple syrup season. MacKenzie Center's Annual Maple Syrup Festival is Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Please let us know if you are available and interested in volunteering for events at the MacKenzie Center; support is always needed and appreciated.

## INTERNS AT MACKENZIE

This summer we welcomed two volunteer interns to the wildlife area, Bliss and Kate. Both are majoring in zoology and environmental studies at the UW-Madison and have previous experience with wildlife and conservation. Throughout the summer, they helped us with the care of our non-releasable native Wisconsin wild animals and made many improvements to the wildlife area, while gaining valuable professional experience in their fields. Both also completed individual projects to benefit the Center. Kate focused on restoring native prairie grasses to a portion of our bison pasture,

as well as procuring donated street sweeping bristles to build a bison scratching post for enrichment. Bliss focused on environmental/behavioral enrichment and habitat improvements for our North American river otter, including target training, adding natural substrates for the otter to roll in, trying new natural food and enrichment items, and adding a waterfall feature to the otter's pool to create moving water.

One of our interns from 2013, Alyssa, also returned this summer to volunteer in the wildlife area. Kate has also signed on to extend her volunteer time through



*Staff and interns send a huge thank you to Governor Dodge State Park for the donated golf carts.*

December and will be gaining college credit for her fall internship. She will be working with her ornithology professor as her advisor, and plans to complete a project that will benefit our raptors.

**Thank you Bliss, Kate, and Alyssa for all your help!**