

# North Star News

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE NEWPORT WILDERNESS SOCIETY



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### EARTH DAY WORK DAY AT NEWPORT

Saturday, April 27th, was a very busy day for volunteers of the Newport Wilderness Society. This year Newport State Park had its spring work day to prepare the park for the start of the summer camping season. Volunteers helped clean campsites, trails and the area around the nature center. Planning started to redo the gardens near the nature center this summer. The weather cooperated and following their work lunch was ordered from JoeJo's Pizza (NWS Business Member).

## What's Happening?

In addition to working at the Earth Day clean up, NWS volunteers headed to Egg Harbor and the Every Day Is Earth Day (EDIED) festival to participate in the environmental conference.

Door County celebrated Every Day Is Earth Day on April 26-28 with its 1st annual environmental conference celebrating Earth Day. The conference included talks, discussion groups, movies and entertainment covering a broad spectrum of environmental issues. Presentations on climate change, solar energy, wind power and the Escarpment were well attended. Master gardeners and a Naturalist from the Ridges as well as the Agricultural Educator from the UW Extension also spoke on very practical topics that we can all do.

Newport Wilderness Society volunteers participated in the Saturday events providing information about Newport State Park and its Dark Sky designation. They provided information about "light pollution" and its effects on the environment as well as its interference with migratory patterns of animals.

In other news, in an effort to upgrade the bat houses at Newport State Park, six high school students from Gibraltar HS volunteered to join several NWS members to build these houses. Bat populations continue to decline nation-wide due to White Nose Syndrome (WNS). There are some hopeful signs that some populations of bats may be either immune or may have avoided exposure to the disease. Bat populations in NSP have also seen a significant decline. Our goal was to prepare for this year's migration with new houses. For more information on Wisconsin's Bat Program. This year's Echolocator was published March 2019. <http://www.wiatri.net/Inventory/Bats/Volunteer/Roosts/>

Students participating included: Ben Orsted, Jack Rebhan, Brady Ash, Trevor Ash, Ben Fitzgerald and Will Andersen. Several students had previous shop experience and all were excited about doing the volunteer work for Newport State Park. It was time well spent and hopefully we'll see a return in our bat population

Thanks to Mike Schneider (Executive Director) and Curt Wessel (Shop Steward) of The Clearing for allowing us to use the wood working shop for this project.

Also, thanks to Terry Heidenreiter, Greg Wilde, Chris Ash and Gene Kenny who helped with monitoring and safety. (See photos on Page 5.)

**See Page 4 for complete program schedule.**

## DID YOU KNOW?



We monitor our bat houses at Newport and report findings to the DNR. Bat numbers continue to decline. White-nose syndrome (WNS) and the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd) that causes the disease have continued to spread in Wisconsin and across North America. Altogether, bats with WNS have been confirmed in 33 states, seven Canadian provinces, and three more states - Mississippi, Texas and Wyoming - have detected Pd in bats. Wisconsin Bat Program staff visited more than 60 hibernation sites between November 2017 and April 2018 and observed WNS and/or Pd at every site. One more county, Pepin, was added to the national map as infected. Analyzing pre- and post-WNS infection data from 30 sites that have been consistently monitored since whitenose syndrome was first detected in Wisconsin in 2014, we've seen bat populations drop precipitously. Little brown bat numbers have dropped about 73 percent, eastern pipistrelles 90 percent, northern long-eared bats 97 percent and big brown bats 23 percent.



## A Walk in the Woods

As the canopy continues to fill in, the carpet of trillium will soon give way to understory growth. Many of the spring ephemerals have come and gone, as soon we'll be seeing columbine, bane berry, blue bead lily and yellow lady slippers. Birds are returning and/or migrating through. Some of the birds we have seen at our new feeder stations are Baltimore orioles, red headed woodpecker, indigo bunting, rose breasted grosbeak, goldfinch, pileated woodpecker and chipping sparrow, just to name a few.

Our dedicated crew has been out clearing trails of trees downed by winter and spring storms. Campers are quickly filling up our sites, with many of them booked until fall. With all the rain we have experienced, Fern Trail is currently under water. The other trails are looking good. Remember, the Newport Challenge Hikes started on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and go on throughout the summer!

## JUNE SCHEDULE

- June 1<sup>st</sup> Hike With the Naturalist, 1:00 PM, Lot 3
- June 1<sup>st</sup> Star Gazing at the Dark Sky Park, 9:30 PM, viewing area by Lot 3
- June 2<sup>nd</sup> BYOB (Bring Your Own Boat) with Bay Shore Outfitters, 4:00 PM Europe Lake
- June 2<sup>nd</sup> WI Bat Monitoring Statewide Bat Count, 8:00-9:30 PM, meet at the Nature Center
- June 5<sup>th</sup> Bluebird Trail monitoring, 10:00 AM, starts at Nature Center
- June 6<sup>th</sup> OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge Hike #3 - Monarch Trail, 9:00 AM, Lot 1.
- June 8<sup>th</sup> Forest Hike with the Naturalist, 10:00 AM, Sugarbush Trail, Lot 4.
- June 12<sup>th</sup> Bluebird Trail monitoring, 10:00 AM, starts at Nature Center
- June 13<sup>th</sup> OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge Hike #3 - UplandTrail, 9:00 AM, Lot 1.
- June 19<sup>th</sup> Bluebird Trail monitoring, 10:00 AM, starts at Nature Center
- June 20<sup>th</sup> OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge Hike #4 - Sand Cove/Duck Bay Trail, 9:00, Lot 3.
- June 21<sup>st</sup> Geology Hike With Jack Travis: Ancient Beach Ridges, 9:00 AM, Lot 2
- June 26<sup>th</sup> Bluebird Trail, 10:00 AM, starts at Nature Center
- June 27<sup>th</sup> OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge Hike #3 - Lynd Point Trail, 9:00 AM, Lot 3.
- June 29<sup>th</sup> Star Gazing at the Dark Sky Park, 9:30 PM, viewing area by Lot 3.

**Find more information about programs at [newportwildernesssociety.org](http://newportwildernesssociety.org), Activities and Events**

**Or on the NWS Facebook page**

## CONTACT US

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The Newport Wilderness Society, Inc. is the Official Friends Group for Newport State Park and is a 501[c] [3] non-profit, tax exempt, dynamic organization - dues and donations are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

Photos of our volunteer instructors and students making new bat boxes for Newport. Thank you to The Clearing for the use of the workshop.





**Job Well Done!!!!**