



Missisquoi Matters

is the quarterly newsletter of the Friends of Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, Inc., a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, dedicated to promoting a better awareness, appreciation, conservation, and responsible utilization of the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge.

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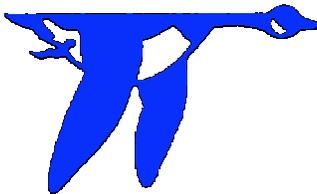
www.friendsofmissisquoi.org

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Newsletter edited by Ken Copenhaver

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MNWR HQ hours are

Monday thru Friday

8:00am – 4:30pm

Saturdays June 4 to mid-October

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Friends Welcome New Refuge Manager

The Friends of MNWR welcomes Ken Sturm as the new refuge manager! Ken comes to us from Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge (CVNWR) in West Virginia, though in many ways he says he feels as if he's coming home. Ken studied wildlife fisheries and biology at UVM, and he even did his senior project at the Missisquoi refuge. After college he worked for three seasons for the Green Mountain Club, which maintains Vermont's Long Trail, and for the Student Conservation Association. Through the SCA he worked as a volunteer at the Salton Sea NWR in southern California, where he was eventually hired as a biotech and stayed for 6 years.

In 1999 Ken transferred to Canaan Valley in West Virginia, where he says the wetlands and conifers reminded him of Vermont and he knew he would like it. CVNWR was only five years old at the time and 1400 acres. During his 12 years as supervisory wildlife biologist, the refuge grew to more than 16,000 acres. Ken was directly involved in evaluation of land for acquisition and its integration into the refuge, working to restore habitat and water resources. He worked closely with the Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative (a coalition of federal, state, private, and non-profit organizations) to restore historic red spruce ecosystems typical of Appalachia, including organizing many volunteer planting events at the refuge. He also was acting refuge manager at CVNWR from time to time, including the last 8 months.

Although moving is always difficult, applying for and accepting the manager's position at Missisquoi was pretty much of a no-brainer for Ken, considering his Vermont roots. He comes here with his wife Angie, whom he met when he worked in southern California, and his 10-month-old son, Finn. He is in the process of reacquainting himself with the refuge and learning about its needs and priorities. He says he wants to get UVM students involved in the refuge, as he was years ago. And he is looking forward to meeting and working with the Friends of MNWR.

So if you haven't met Ken yet, stop into the refuge headquarters to say hello and welcome him "back" to the refuge and Vermont!

The Friends of Missisquoi can now be found on Facebook.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofmissisquoi> to learn more about the refuge and coming events. You can also look at, comment on, and share your own photos.

You do not need to have a Facebook account to view the page. Please stop by and let us know what you think!



Manager's Musings August 2011

by Ken Sturm, Refuge Manager, Missisquoi NWR

Summer seems to be slipping away and I realize I have only been in place at Missisquoi as the new refuge manager for less than two months. As many of you probably know, I am taking up the reins from Mark Sweeny who retired in 2011 from this position at the refuge. Having been a career wildlife biologist up to this point, I find myself making a transition into the full-time role of refuge manager here at Missisquoi. This actually is nothing new to me as I've had the opportunity to serve as acting refuge manager over the course of many years at my previous field station at Canaan Valley NWR in West Virginia. For those of you whom I have met, I am sure I've expressed my enthusiasm for being in this role and at Missisquoi NWR. For those who I have yet to meet, please stop into the office any time to talk. I will be learning about this refuge and its people for many more months (and years!) and would be happy to get your impressions, ideas, and thoughts about the refuge and the area.

The refuge has had a tough year and I must admit it is strange to start under such unusual circumstances. Record high flooding affected everyone in the Champlain Basin this year, and the refuge was no exception. Over 90% of refuge land was under water during the peak water level. Most of our public use trails were either entirely flooded or at best flooded for significant portions of the trail. Boat landings were inaccessible and refuge buildings, roads, dikes and restrooms suffered damage. In all, the refuge has spent over \$32,000.00 out of this year's budget simply to get back to normal. This includes repairs to roads and dikes, cleaning buildings, and repairing boat launches. The work is not done and we expect many thousands more to be spent to complete the repair jobs.

Flood levels not only affected infrastructure but also wildlife habitat. Our black tern colony was displaced this year as their nesting habitat (isolated stands of emergent vegetation) was completely under water. Terns did successfully nest in alternate habitat on the refuge. Final pair numbers are being determined as I write this. Waterfowl nests were likely flooded, causing many to fail. Those that fledged had very little emergent vegetation to serve as protective brood cover. Wild rice, an important waterfowl food in the fall, was adversely affected. The full extent has yet to be seen as we move into the migration period when thousands of ducks will descend on Missisquoi to rest and feed before continuing their migration to the south. Without adequate rice production these birds may not find what they are looking for at the refuge this year to help them bulk up for the rest of migration. Time will tell as to the impact the flooding will have to our migratory waterfowl population.

On the positive side the refuge was honored to have a visit from the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar and Senator Patrick Leahy in August. Their trip to the refuge was inspired by other programs occurring within the Champlain Basin, particularly the sea lamprey control program. Having the opportunity to host these two special guests at Missisquoi NWR after having only been on staff for such a short time was a great surprise and a great opportunity to communicate to them important information about the refuge and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

I look forward to a long and productive stay at Missisquoi. My son Finn had his 10 month birthday last week and I am happy to know he will qualify for in-state tuition at UVM (you can tell my bias)! I also look forward to meeting all of the Friends of Missisquoi and discussing ways that we can work together to support the purposes of the refuge and communicate the mission of the refuge system to all of our visitors.

Ken Salazar and Patrick Leahy Visit Refuge



On August 15, 2011 Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy visited Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge. Salazar was on a tour of the northeast that also took him to Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Maine. The tour highlighted the importance of conservation and outdoor recreation in creating jobs and building strong local economies across America. In Vermont he put the spotlight on the successful Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey control program.

Senator Leahy and Secretary Salazar are greeted by USFWS Chris Smith (right) at Missisquoi NWR. Credit: Ann Froschauer/USFWS

Kids Fishing Derby 2011

by Dave Frisque, Assistant Refuge Manager, Missisquoi NWR

The 2011 Kids Fishing Derby was finally held on July 30, 2011. After a two-month delay due to elevated water levels throughout the Missisquoi River watershed, conditions finally improved enough to allow this popular annual event to take place. Thanks to the efforts of the refuge staff, the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), and a few volunteers, we were able to remove inches of sediment from roads, buildings, parking areas, and riverside access areas necessary to allow young people and their families to enjoy a morning of fishing.

Registration for the Derby numbered 120 young people between the ages of 2 and 15, and total attendance for the day reached 300 people. The fishing was quite good throughout the morning and participants caught a variety of fish species, including large and smallmouth bass, yellow and white perch, rock bass, catfish, and bullhead. A few of each species caught were placed in a large aquarium tank for all participants to observe and

learn to identify.

A number of volunteers provided engaging educational activities for the youngsters to attempt, including fly tying, fly casting, spin casting, fish identification, river ecology, and a back yard bass contest. These activities help young people develop interests and skills related to the outdoors and help them understand fisheries habitat needs and challenges to improve water quality in the communities where they live.

The refuge is thankful for the support provided by a variety of sponsors and contributors including the Friends of Missisquoi NWR, Ben and Jerry's, Mike and Donna Jutras (grilling), Bob's Meat Market, McKenzie Meats, and the long-time and consistent local support from North Country Bait and Tackle, Scampers, Cargill/Nutrena of Swanton, Hog Island Bait, Swanton House of Pizza, Hannaford's, R. L. Valle, and a number of other local businesses and individuals.



Fall Activities Schedule at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge

29 Tabor Rd.

Swanton, VT 05488

All programs and tours are free, but registration is required where noted.

Open House

(tentative) early October

Plans for a Fall Open House are currently in progress. A definite date has not yet been set, though the first or second Sunday afternoon of October is the current goal. A definite date and a list of activities should be available in a few weeks. More information will be posted as it becomes available on the Friends website events calendar and on the Friends Facebook page. Or call **802-868-4781** for more information. **Registration may be required for some of the activities.**

Monthly Nature Walks

Join Friends of Missisquoi NWR board member Joe Belanger for nature walks on various refuge trails, held the first Saturday of each month. All walks will be from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Registration is not required. The schedule for the next three months is:

September 3: Jeep Trail. Meet at the Louie's Landing fishing access parking lot.

October 1: Stephen Young Marsh Trail. Meet at the parking lot on Tabor Rd, about a half mile past the refuge headquarters and across from Stephen Young Marsh.

November 5: Maquam/Black Creek Trail. Meet at the parking lot on the south side of Rte 78.

Monthly Bird Monitoring Walks

Friends board members Bridget Butler and Ken Copenhaver will lead bird monitoring walks on various refuge trails on the third Saturday of each month. The purpose of the walks is to gather long-term data on the presence of birds, their abundance, and changes in populations. Observations will be entered into the Vermont eBird database where data is stored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. These walks are appropriate for all levels of birders and provide a wonderful opportunity to learn about birds throughout the seasons. All walks will be from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM. Registration is not required. Locations are subject to change depending on trail conditions.

September 17: Stephen Young Marsh Trail. Meet at the parking lot on Tabor Rd, about a half mile past the refuge headquarters and across from Stephen Young Marsh.

October 15: Old Railroad Passage Trail. Same as for Stephen Young Marsh Trail.

November 19: Maquam/Black Creek Trail. Meet at the parking lot on the south side of Rte 78.

To check for any schedule changes, visit the activities calendar on the Friends website at www.friendsofmissisquoi.org and click on the "Events" link.

Debt Ceiling Bill & Unfinished Interior Funding Bill Leaves Refuges in Financial Peril

Reprinted from the August 2011 edition of The Flyer, published by the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA)

Budgetary threats to our already under-funded National Wildlife Refuge System have never been greater than they are now. In early August, the President signed into law a bill that raises our nation's debt ceiling and mandates more than \$2 trillion in funding cuts over the next 10 years; and the U.S. House of Representatives considered the funding bill for the Interior Department for the next fiscal year (FY12, beginning Oct 1), which contained severe cuts to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Refuge System and most conservation programs:

Debt Ceiling & Reduction Bill: The first \$917 billion in spending cuts triggered in the debt-ceiling bill will be to discretionary programs, where all conservation programs fall, including the National Wildlife Refuge System. The second stage of reductions, more than \$1.2 trillion, will be to both discretionary programs (which must be appropriated every year and are at the discretion of Congress) and mandatory spending (which is not subject to annual appropriations, such as entitlement programs – Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security), and will be determined by a “super committee” of 12 lawmakers, six from the House and six from the Senate, with equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats. The Refuge System will need the help of NWRA, Friends, conservation partners, hunters, anglers, birdwatchers, wildlife photographers and other concerned individuals to ensure that members of the super committee understand the vital role refuges and all our public lands play in our nation's economy and our health.

FY 2012 Interior Spending Bill: When the House returns, they will likely not have enough time to complete work on the Interior bill and will instead look to bundle it together with several other spending bills and pass them as an omnibus; alternatively, they could pass a short, one or two month, continuing resolution or “CR” awaiting the outcome of the Super Committee. That means that the current House-proposed funding level for the Refuge System, \$455 million, will be the starting point when budget negotiations resume. Based on the House bill that was being debated before the August recess, we believe that the Refuge System is in great peril unless refuge supporters take action. The House proposal would:

- **CLOSE** entirely or significantly reduce programs at 128 National Wildlife Refuges
- **ELIMINATE** 275 Refuge Staff Positions
- **ELIMINATE** virtually any new land acquisitions or conservation easements under the Land and Water Conservation Fund
- **ELIMINATE** 40 law enforcement officers (at a time when the Refuge System has only 213 of the 845 officers needed to patrol its 150 million acres)

We will continue to closely follow the budget negotiations, and will keep you informed of opportunities to make your voice heard. Right now, you can help by attending “town meetings” in your state during August to advocate for refuge funding, and by using our Refuge Action Network can contact your U.S. Representative and your U.S. Senators to urge their support of the Refuge System. (go to www.refugeassociation.org)

Fall Hunting Seasons on the Refuge

On August 18th, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife announced the 2011 migratory bird hunting regulations. The complete syllabus and other details can be found at the Fish and Wildlife website, www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

A notable change this year is that Vermont Route 78 now separates the “Interior” zone from the “Lake Champlain” zone. Since Route 78 divides the Missisquoi Refuge, some regulations are now different between the “north” and “south” portions of the refuge.

A statewide Canada goose season runs from September 6th to 25th. Youth waterfowl hunting weekend is September 24th & 25th. The migratory waterfowl seasons begin on October 12th.

For specific hunting regulations and permits for waterfowl hunting on the refuge, please contact the Refuge office at 868-4781.

Friends Bimonthly Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be held at MNWR refuge Headquarters. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Come and find out what the board is planning and give us your thoughts and ideas for how the Friends can be a more effective organization.

FRIENDS OF MISSISQUOI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

29 Tabor Road

Swanton, Vermont 05488

802-868-4781 www.friendsofmissisquoi.org



Bimonthly Board Meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011 at 6:30 pm

AGENDA

1. Minutes of Board Meeting of July 12, 2011
2. Treasurer's Report- Anne
3. Refuge Manager's Report
4. Committee Reports
 - Newsletter: Ken
 - Membership: Joe
 - Store Sales: Anne
5. Ad hoc Committee Reports:
 - Website: Bridget
 - Monthly Bird Walks: Ken and Bridget
 - Monthly Nature Walks: Joe
 - Artists in the Missisquoi Refuge: Anne
 - Wildlife Camera: Russ
 - Facebook update: Rich
6. Ditch Pickle Classic- follow-up report
7. Opportunities in the Friends/Refuge relationship
8. Open House for Fall? To replace the cancelled Open House of May 21, 2011
9. Keeping track of volunteer hours
10. Friends Calendar:
 - Refuge events coming up
11. Next meeting: November 8, 2011
12. Adjournment

Store Order Form

To order by phone, call 802-868-4781. To order by mail, fill out this order form and send to:
The Friends' Store MNWR, 29 Tabor Rd, Swanton, VT 05488
Please add \$5.00 shipping and handling.

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Please send me: **Understanding Bats (\$3.99)**
 Stokes Beginner's Guide to Bats (\$9.99)
 Owls Aren't Wise and Bats Aren't Blind (\$16.00)

Payment: Enclose check or money order, or fill in Credit Card information.

Type of card: MasterCard Visa
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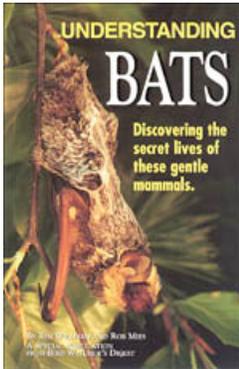
The Friends' Store

at the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge

BOOKS GAMES GIFTS TEE SHIRTS HATS

for people of all ages who love the outdoors

Go "Batty" at the Friends' Store!



Understanding Bats

Discovering the Secret Lives of These Gentle Mammals

Kim Williams & Rob Mies

\$ 3.99 paper, 32 pages, 5 1/4 x 8 full-color photographs, b&w illustrations, maps

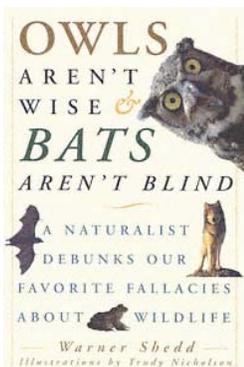
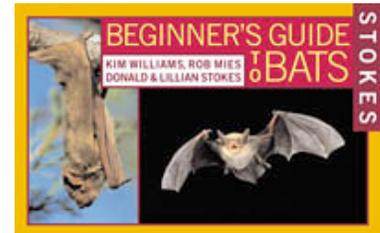
Learn about the secret lives of these gentle mammals and how they benefit us. Researchers Kim Williams and Rob Mies dispel common myths, answer frequently asked questions, profile North America's six most regularly seen bat species, and provide information about bat conservation.

Stokes Beginner's Guide to Bats

Donald & Lillian Stokes

\$ 9.99 paper, 144 pages, 7 x 4 1/2, full-color photographs, maps; ages 8 and up

Whether you're intrigued by the amazing ability of bats to eat over 1,000 insects per hour or want to identify bats—either roosting or in flight—you'll find everything you need in this easy-to-use guide. The *Stokes Beginner's Guide to Bats* is factually, visually, and organizationally superior to any other beginner's guide.



Owls Aren't Wise and Bats Aren't Blind

A Naturalist Debunks Our Favorite Fallacies About Wildlife

Warner Shedd, Illustrated by Trudy Nicholson

\$ 16.00 paper, 336 pages, 6 1/8 x 9 1/4, b&w illustrations

Ever pick up a toad only to have it soak your hand? Don't worry, it was the animal's emergency water storage (not urine!), dumped in a fight-or-flight panic. Think that new beaver clan will dent the trout population in your favorite fishing hole? They don't touch the stuff: beavers are strictly vegetarian. And go ahead, get close to that porcupine, because they can't fire quills like an AK-47.

Want more? Warner Shedd, a native Vermonter, lifelong naturalist, former Forest Service honcho, and a retired executive for the National Wildlife Federation, dispels wildlife fallacies that have passed through generations of well-intended grandfathers and poorly informed folk tales. Shedd covers everything about most backyard critters—from gray squirrels to newts—and expands on some wilder species that we only think we understand.

(See order form on reverse side of page.)