



ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE REPORT 2016

Newport State Park, Ellison Bay , WI

NARRATIVE: A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A
NATURALIST

By Beth Bartoli

Annual Interpretive Report – Narrative

Property: Newport State Park Year: 2016

Prepared by: Beth Bartoli, Naturalist

Personal Services

A. Programs for non-school audiences

January– First Day hike, IDA/The Winter Sky and Reading a Star Chart

February – Candlelight ski/snowshoe evening event

April-Monarch Facts & Milkweed Workshop, Dark Sky Week Night Sky Viewing

May – Wildflower identification hikes, themed nature journaling hikes (ongoing), Birding hikes, Trees and shrubs of Door County, Dealing with invasive plants

June –Wildflower hikes, State Park Open House Hike with the Naturalists, Open Door Bird Sanctuary, Birds and Blooms presentation, Fossils, Invasive plant identification, Smokey Bear/Fire safety, Wings of the Night bat program

July – Bat surveys and program, Nature journaling (themed), Universe in the Park night sky, Monarch larvae/egg collection, rearing and release (big hit with visitors), Primitive fire building/building a better fire, Tree ID, Geology hike, Our Night Sky DVD series (ongoing)/IDA presentation, Orchids of Door County

August –Monarch seminar, Our Night Sky DVD series, navigation skills, Smokey Bear Birthday Party & story of Smokey, Universe in the Park – Perseid Meteor shower, History of Newport, Lee Frelich; Climate Change and the Boreal Forest, Mushrooms of Newport, Mushroom hike, Canid/wolf program at Potawatomi State Park

September – Our Night Sky (continuing), Newport Wilderness Day: Walk on the Wild Side hike, Geology hike, Coffee on the beach, Universe in the Park, bat survey, Open Door Bird Sanctuary presentation. Hotz family history, Half Day hike, Mushroom hike, Night photography, IDA presentation with a showing of “The Emissary” movie, formal star count for IDA submission.

October – International Dark-sky Association introduction/ “Our Night Sky” movie day, Universe in the park, Fall color/naturalist hikes, Earth Science Week fossil and geology presentations, Plants and animals preparing for winter hike, Trees and shrubs of Door County, Halloween nature hike, formal star counts, Was that a wolf - Canid presentation.

Impressions and successes

Approximately 1400 visitors enjoyed programs offered at Newport in 2016. Our monarch waystation garden and rearing enclosures were a big hit with visitors. All stages of monarch development were viewed and photographed by young and old alike.

The upcoming Dark Sky Park designation Newport is in the process of receiving has generated many inquiries. Although this has been a long process, we are confident that it will happen in 2017.

Newport Wilderness Day – Sunday of Labor Day weekend. This special event was very well received. With the help of the Newport Wilderness Society volunteers, the parks friends group, there were a variety of programs throughout the day. Advertising in The Peninsula Pulse brought in a record numbers of visitors.

B. Programs for school/community audiences

All about pollinators – Anton’s Greenhouses (Kenosha, WI)

Naturalist led hikes for The Clearing winter programs

IDA/Dark sky presentation to The Ridges and Northern Door Rotary Club

Write On Youth writing camp

Education opportunity at the WI State Parks booth-Camping and RV Show in Green Bay

Non-personal services

- A. Self-guided interpretive trail – Forest Heritage booklet guide for Upland Trail. Poetry Trail - Poetry by various local groups (including school groups); changed quarterly.
- B. Wayside exhibits - Discovery pens used on 7 interactive multi-format signs on handicapped accessible Fern Trail.

- C. Interpretive/Visitor's Center-Multi use room used daily, providing hands on exhibits as well as posters, displays and reading materials. Live monarch stations (in season). Bird viewing area with feeders and bird bath.
- D. Audio-visual programs - Full media usage geared towards enhancing hikes and programs. "Our Night Sky" DVD series ties in the educational aspect of IDA Dark Sky Park. International Dark Sky Park promotion, including effects of light pollution and the use of good lighting practices.
- E. Wisconsin Explorer - Very well received. Used by campers and visitors. Booklets - gave out 96 (3-5 yr.), 121 (6-8 yr.), 122 (9+). Patches - gave out 4 (3-5 yr.), 6 (6-8 yr.), 12 (9+).
- F. Interpretive publications - Brochures - Spring and Summer/Fall wildflower checklist, geology of Newport, Mammals of Newport, Birds of Newport, Newport history. Quarterly article for The Trillium, the NWS newsletter. New and in the works: Mushrooms of Newport.
- G. On-property: registered monarch waystation. Used for collection and observation of monarchs and other butterflies. Released 75 monarchs this year.
- H. Resource management projects - control of garlic mustard, phragmites, dames rocket. Search for evidence of and remove trees (if needed) with Beech bark disease and Emerald ash borer.

Objectives

The property interpretive plan is in place for final development, with a goal of getting it completed during the winter months of early 2017. Per DNR mandates, the focus of interpretive services is on natural resources, cultural resources and promoting outdoor recreation, from property to district.

The wilderness aspect of Newport State Park plays so perfectly into the emphasis on outdoor nature programs and wilderness skills. Derek Ferrier's skills are a welcome addition to our programs that support this.

Application for IDA (International Dark Sky Association) for International Dark Sky Park designation is ongoing. We are aggressively pursuing the designation with plans to be fully recognized as such by early 2017.



Michelle and Beth - Camping/RV Show in Green Bay.



School outreach – Pollinator program.



One of our success stories – a beautiful male monarch.



Derek and Ken – Primitive Fire building workshop.



Northeast WI DNR Naturalist training session.



Smokey Bear and escort at the Ellison Bay Days parade.

Personal Thoughts

On a personal note, continued emphasis will be placed on new and enriching interpretive programs, as well as seeking out areas for education and growth as a naturalist. I love Newport and am so fortunate to be able to call this place my work home.

One of the hardest things I had to deal with this past year was the loss of my teacher, friend and sensei, Roy Lukes. . On our many hikes, talks or ventures into the woods, I used to tease him that I was a perpetual student of the School of Lukes, for every moment I spent with him was an education. He was truly the consummate teacher and his loss is immeasurable.

On a trip to Rock Island, our last as it ended up, we rode the Karfi and spoke of nature, life and Rock Island's beauty. He was contemplative, more than usual. His words had an urgency that struck me deep. As we talked, he said to me, "Beth, you would've made a good teacher." Then turned to me, making sure he had my full attention, and said, "You ARE a good teacher." Though I felt unworthy of such words from my sensei, a greater compliment I could never receive.

Adjusting to life without my teacher has been difficult. He would always tell me that nature has much to teach us. If we would just pay attention, look around and listen, we will never stop learning. Although I find his words weaving their way into my own programs and adventures, there are still so many things I want to ask him. My job as a naturalist would not have come to be without his influence in my life. I hope I do him proud.



Roy Lukes and Beth by our favorite hemlock on Rock Island.



Roy Lukes on the Karfi heading to Rock Island.