



ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE REPORT 2017

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: 2017

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Personal Services

A. Programs for non-school audiences

- January- First Day hike
- February – IDA (International Dark –Sky Association) Star Count, Candlelight ski/snowshoe evening event, Winter Bird Count
- March – All About Bluebirds, Milkweed for Monarchs planting/info Workshop
- April- Dark Sky Week Night Sky Viewing, IDA presentation
- May – Bluebird Monitoring (ongoing), Wildflower identification hikes, themed nature journaling hikes (ongoing), Birding hikes, Trees and Shrubs of Door County, Dealing with invasive plants, Trails of Newport Challenge Hike (ongoing), Timberdoodles; Dance of the Woodcock, Rachel Carson Bio
- June –Wildflower hikes, State Park Open House Hike with the Naturalist, Open Door Bird Sanctuary, Birds and Blooms presentation, Fossils, Invasive plant identification, Bluebird Monitoring (ongoing), Trails of Newport Challenge Hike (ongoing), Fern hike, Survival Series; Backpack Basics, What’s the Buzz About Bees?, Orchids of Door County, Smokey Bear Meet and Greet/parade, Dedication as International Dark Sky Park
- July –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, Full Moon/Poetry Reading, Star Party, Trails of Newport Challenge Hike (ongoing), Bats Alive

- August - Monarch watch, Our Night Sky DVD series, navigation skills, Universe in the Park - Perseid Meteor shower, History of Newport, Dragonfly Adventure, Arachnid Facts and Folklore, Mushrooms of Newport, Mushroom hike, Night Photography workshop, Star gazing, Trails of Newport Challenge Hike (ongoing), Total Eclipse viewing, Milkweed planting, Monarch Trail restoration
- September - Our Night Sky (continuing), Half Day hike, Night photography, IDA presentation, Trails of Newport Challenge Hike (ongoing), Newport Wilderness Days* - Walk on the Wild Side hike, Geology hike, Trees and Shrubs of Door County, Coffee on the beach, Mushroom hike, Universe in the Park, Open Door Bird Sanctuary presentation.

*Newport Wilderness Days - 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 both Saturday and Sunday. Advertising in The Peninsula Pulse brought in a record numbers of visitors.

- October - International Dark-sky Association introduction/ "Our Night Sky" movie day, Fall color/naturalist hikes, Plants and animals preparing for winter hike, Trees and shrubs of Door County, Halloween nature hike, Trails of Newport Challenge Hike (ongoing), Poetry Trail hike and Reading, Star Party

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 Liberty Grove Historical Society, Liberty Grove Property Owners, 55 Plus Group and Northern Door Rotary Club
- Write On Youth writing camp
- Milkweed Planting, Monarch Trail restoration with Surly Gives a Damn Foundation, Surly Brewing
- Education opportunity at the WI State Parks booth-Camping and RV Expo in Green Bay

Impressions and successes

Approximately 3042 visitors enjoyed programs offered at Newport in 2017. This is over double the amount of 1400 visitors attending programs in 2016. I believe the reason is two-fold:

First, our designation as an International Dark-Sky Park garnered much attention. This first in Wisconsin event was heavily publicized throughout the Midwest as well as nationally from IDA, the press and the DNR. I am personally very proud of this accomplishment, as it has been a major focus of mine for the past 3 years. Though there were some growing pains associated with this new designation, I believe new signage, electrical work, maps and brochures that are in the works for 2018 will help smooth things out.

Secondly, as I started into my fourth season in 2017, I made it a personal goal to “up my game”, so to speak, and offer more programs. I think the numbers speak for themselves. I hope it is obvious that I take great pride in our park. I also take great pride in my work; pride in a job well done, no matter how big or small. Setting up and running programs is, of course, my “big” job. In addition to updating the Nature Center this past year, some of my many “small” jobs are:

- Writing press and publicity releases
- Getting information out to the press, website
- Getting information out to visitor and tourism bureaus, hotels, etc.
- Maintaining the NWS Facebook page
- Weekly updates of current conditions for the DNR website
- Posting all signage for programs
- Keeping message board up to date, daily during busy summer months
- Maintaining contact with all guest and volunteer presenters
- Thank you/follow up with presenters
- Updating and cleaning displays etc. in Nature Center
- Being on hand, accessible, approachable and available to answer questions and interact with visitors
- Maintaining monarch waystation garden
- Rearing and care of monarchs at all stages of development. This is a daily commitment during July and August
- Signs, lights and/or equipment ready and set up for programs
- Maintaining/filling bird feeders and bird bath outside of Nature Center
- Continued training with DNR Northeast Region Naturalists and North East Wisconsin Naturalist Association
- Writing year end reports

In addition, I work a visitors services position (paid through the DNR) and help out in the office as much as I can.

Non-personal services

- Self-guided interpretive trail – Forest Heritage booklet guide for Upland Trail. Poetry Trail - Poetry by various local groups (including school groups); changed quarterly.
- Wayside exhibits - Discovery pens used on 7 interactive multi-format signs on handicapped accessible Fern Trail.
- 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. Furs/mammal showcase area. Children's activity area.
- 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.
- Wisconsin Explorer – Very well received. Used by campers and visitors. Booklets - gave out 122 (3-5 yr.), 140 (6-8 yr.), 155(9+), increase of about 15% from 2016. Patches - gave out 4 (3-5 yr.), 8 (6-8 yr.), 7 (9+), increase of 1% from 2016.
- 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, Dark Sky Park information.
- On-property: registered monarch waystation. Used for collection and observation of monarchs and other butterflies. Released 122 monarchs this year, up from 75 in 2016.
- Resource management projects – Habitat restoration of Monarch Trail, planting native milkweed seed.

Objectives

The property interpretive plan is finished, a goal from 2017 successfully completed. 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 experiences.



Beth and Michelle representing the WI State Parks

At the Camping and RV Expo - Green Bay



New monarch!



Training for Northeast Region Naturalists



Hike and Newport History.



Snowshoe Hike



Wisconsin's **FIRST** International Dark Sky Park!!!!