



ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE REPORT 2018

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: 2018

Prepared by: Beth Bartoli, Naturalist

Personal Services

A. Programs for non-school audiences

- January- First Day hike (NWS volunteers) Hike for The Clearing
- February - Hike for The Clearing, Candlelight ski/snowshoe evening event, Winter Bird Count, Tracking class for The Ridges, Winter Tree ID
- March - Bluebirds in Door County, First Day of Spring Hike
- April- Dark Sky Week IDA/Good Lighting practices, Milkweed for Monarchs planting/info Workshop
- May - Bluebird Monitoring (ongoing), Wildflower identification hikes, themed nature journaling hikes (ongoing), Birding hikes, Trees and Shrubs of Door County, Dealing with invasive plants, Herb Hike, Birds and Blooms presentation
- June -Wildflower hikes, State Park Open House Hike with the Naturalist, Open Door Bird Sanctuary, Bluebird Monitoring (ongoing), Monarch Watch monitoring (ongoing), International Dark Sky Park Intro to Good Lighting practices, Dark Sky night viewing programs, History of Newport
- July - Universe in the Park night sky, Monarch larvae/egg collection, rearing and release (big hit with visitors), Bluebird Monitoring (ongoing), Monarch Watch monitoring (ongoing), Primitive fire building/building a better fire, Tree ID, Campfire cooking, Wolves of WI, State wide Bat Count, Herb hike, Monarchs 101, Dark Sky viewing

- August - Monarch watch, Door Peninsula Astronomy Club night viewing and programs, Universe in the Park - Perseid Meteor shower, Mushrooms of Newport, Mushroom hike, Star gazing, Monarch Watch monitoring (ongoing), Full moon poetry writing, Open Door Bird Sanctuary Raptor program, Emissary Movie night and sky viewing, Monarchs 101
- September - Newport Wilderness Days* - Coffee on the Beach*, Herb hike*, Dark Sky presentation*, Geology hike*, Trees and Shrubs of Door County*, Bug Walk*, Animals of Land and Water*. Mushroom Hike, Poetry Trail Reading - Full Moon, Dark Sky Viewing, Universe in the Park, "My Favorite Universe" DVD, Fall Equinox/Full Moon fire, Fall Findings hike

*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 - Fall color/naturalist hikes, Trees and shrubs of Door County, Mushroom Hike, "My Favorite Universe" DVD, Universe in the Park, WI Science Festival - Geology, Walk on the Wild Side hike

B. Programs for school/community audiences

- Animal Tracking - The Ridges
- Naturalist led hikes for The Clearing winter programs
- IDA/Dark sky presentation to North Central Region Astronomical League
- Our Dark Sky Park presentation at the NWS Annual Meeting
- IDA/ Dark Sky Park presentation to the Kiwanis club
- Write On poetry writing - Dark Sky
- Education opportunity at the WI State Parks booth-Camping and RV Expo in Green Bay

Impressions and successes

Approximately 3387 visitors enjoyed taking part in the 93 programs offered at Newport in 2018.

As our designation as an International Dark-Sky Park garnered much attention, and I am personally still very proud of this accomplishment. We've made some much needed improvements: a new kiosk has gone up, new maps and brochures were designed and printed and many new visitors enjoyed our dark sky park.

I was honored to speak at NCRAL's Midwest region conference held in Sturgeon Bay this past May. I spoke with the likes of Kevin Poe, "The Dark Ranger" from Brice Canyon, as well as Kate Meredith, the Education Director at the University of Chicago Yerkes Observatory and Tyler Linder, a professional astronomer supported by NASA's Near Earth Object Observations. Sturgeon Bay was chosen specifically because it was close to Wisconsin's only dark sky park. And I was chosen as ambassador of our beautiful dark sky park. An exciting moment, for sure! My presentation was very well received and I made some new contacts.

This past season was not without struggles. I had ongoing knee issues that kept me from doing any sort of longer or strenuous hikes. This led to a total knee replacement at the end of October. Never a pleasant venture, but I am glad it is behind me. I look forward to next season with a new knee, ready to take on those trails!

Setting up and running programs is, of course, my "main" 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 and NWS 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, August and into September
- Maintaining blue bird houses and areas

- Signs, lights and/or equipment ready and set up for programs
- Maintaining/filling bird feeders and bird bath outside of Nature Center
- Maintaining and learning about our equipment used for dark sky programs – 3 telescopes, numerous eye pieces, power packs, 4 pair of binoculars
- Continued training with DNR Northeast Region Naturalists and North East Wisconsin Naturalist Association
- Writing year end reports

In addition, I work a visitor's services position (paid through the DNR), working closely with others on staff. Since my manager Michelle Hefty manages two properties, I am proud to be her eyes and ears at Newport when she is away.

I am member of the Merchandise Committee for the Newport Wilderness Society, volunteering my time to help with purchases and inventory. I am also a member of the new Communications Committee, whose goal it is to "rebrand" the NWS image and attract new members and people who love our park.

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" and "Our Favorite Universe" DVD series tie 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 151 (3-5 yr.), 169 (6-8 yr.), 133(9+), increase of about 12% from 2017. Patches – gave out 2 (3-5 yr.), 3 (6-8 yr.), 4 (9+), a decrease of 50% from 2017.
- Interpretive publications – Brochures - Spring and Summer/Fall wildflower checklist, Geology of Newport, Mammals of Newport, Birds of Newport, Newport history, Dark Sky Park information. Quarterly article for The Trillium, the NWS newsletter. New and in the works: Mushrooms of Newport.

- On-property: registered monarch waystation. Monitored the area weekly for Monarch Watch. Used observation of monarchs and other butterflies. Released 171 monarchs this year, up from 122 in 2017.
- Resource management projects – Habitat restoration of Monarch Trail, planting native milkweed seed, planted Tithonia (annual Mexican Sunflower) for pollinators. New bird feeder/viewing area in the works for 2019.

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.



Guided snow shoe hike



Southern Sky over Newport, our Dark Sky Park

(By Denny Moutray)



Fall Findings Hike



Hike and Newport History.



Making a "track" for the mammal tracking class!



A male monarch visiting our monarch waystation



Speaking at the NCRAL Conference in Sturgeon Bay