



ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE REPORT 2019

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: 2019

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Personal Services

A. Programs for non-school audiences

- January– First Day hike (NWS volunteers)
- February – Candlelight ski/snowshoe evening event, Our Great Universe Lecture Series, Tracking class for The Clearing, Winter Tree ID
- March – Attracting Bluebirds
- April- Monarch Larva Monitoring Training, Arbor Day hike, Bluebird Trail monitoring
- May – Bluebird Monitoring (ongoing), Wildflower identification hikes, Birding hikes, Trees and Shrubs of Door County, Herb hike, Birds and Blooms presentation, OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge hike (ongoing), Fire building workshop, Dark Sky viewing program
- June –Wildflower hikes, State Park Open House Hike with the Naturalist, Bluebird Monitoring (ongoing), Monarch Watch monitoring (ongoing), Dark Sky night viewing programs, BYO Boat Kayaking with Bayshore Outfitters, Statewide Bat Count, OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge hike (ongoing), Geology hike
- 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), Tree ID, State wide Bat Count, Herb hike, Monarchs 101, Dark Sky viewing, Animals of Land and Water presentation, Moon Watch
- August –Monarch watch, Door Peninsula Astronomy Club night viewing and programs, Universe in the Park – Perseid Meteor shower, Mushroom hike, Star gazing, Monarch Watch monitoring (ongoing), Open Door Bird Sanctuary Raptor

program, Monarchs 101, OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge hike (ongoing), Challenge Hike Potluck Picnic, Full Moon hike, Full Moon Campfire, Orienteering/ Map and Compass, Naturalist Led hike, What's the Buzz About Bees?

- September – Newport Wilderness Days* - Coffee on the Beach*, Herb hike*, Dark Sky viewing, Trees and Shrubs of Door County*, Bug Walk*, Mushroom Hike* Dark Sky Viewing, Universe in the Park, Monarchs 101, Fall Equinox/Full Moon fire, Fall Findings hike, Full Moon hike, Newport History, Mushroom 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, Universe in the Park, Walk on the Wild Side hike, Full Moon hike, Halloween hike

B. Programs for school/community audiences

- Animal Tracking – The Clearing
- IDA/ Dark Sky Park presentation to the Kiwanis club
- Dark Sky program for the Festival of Nature – The Ridges
- Newport Talk at NWS Annual meeting
- Education opportunity at the WI State Parks booth-Camping and RV Expo in Green Bay
- IDA/ Dark Sky Park presentation – The Clearing
- Full Moon Hike-Women Hiking Wisconsin

Impressions and successes

Approximately 2866 visitors enjoyed taking part in the 90 programs offered at Newport in 2019.

As our designation as an International Dark-Sky Park continues to garner much attention, and I am personally still very proud of this accomplishment. This brings many visitors in during the evening hours to check out the incredible skies we have here. The night sky viewing programs continue to be a huge draw for Newport. We have some top notch astronomy volunteers to go along with the equipment purchased by the Newport Wilderness Society to really give our visitors an awe-inspiring experience.

Another highlight this year was the resurrection of the OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge Hikes. With knee replacement surgery finally behind me, the hikes started mid-May and ran until August 22nd. We reached our goal of hiking every trail in Newport, from shortest to longest. With groups as small as 9 and as large as 35, we hiked an average of 40 total miles. These hikes were ran in conjunction with the DNR's OutWiGo state initiative to get people out doing healthy activities. There was a great comradery among this group, which was wonderful to see develop over the summer. After the last hike (7 miles on Europe Bay Trail), we all enjoyed a potluck picnic together. Plans are in the works to do some winter hikes, again following the OutWiGo initiative.

There were several volunteers that really stepped up this year to help with the Bluebird Trail counts and the Monarch Larva Monitoring Program. These are weekly commitments to my naturalist programs and I am so grateful for their selfless gift of time. Both programs are very popular during the busy visitor season, so the extra help was a godsend.

Setting up and running programs is, of course, my "main" job. 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
- Weekly Outdoor Report 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
- Keeping WI Wildcards and Explorer Books and backpacks in stock and available
- 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
- Set up and tear down of telescopes etc. for night viewing programs
- 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 Communications Committee, whose goal it is to "rebrand" the NWS image and attract new members and people who love our park. One of the ideas employed was an upgrade and overhaul of NWS newsletter, The Trillium, now the North Star News. The new monthly format is engaging and precise, with photos, articles of interest and up to date schedules. This is sent via email to all members. I volunteer my time to design and write the North Star News. Other projects were new membership brochures, designing a giveaway bookmark with NWS information and beautiful advertising with the Door County Living Philanthropy Issue, a local magazine.

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 PowerPoint presentations, including effects of light pollution and the use of good lighting practices. New this year, I designed and scripted a Mammal Tracking PowerPoint class.
- Wisconsin Explorer - Very well received. Used by campers and visitors. Booklets - gave out 102 (3-5 yr.), 126 (6-8 yr.), 125 (9+). Patches - gave out 2 (3-5 yr.), 4 (6-8 yr.), 4 (9+).
- Interpretive publications - Brochures - Spring and Summer/Fall wildflower checklist, Geology of Newport, Mammals of Newport, Birds of Newport, Newport history, Dark Sky Park information, North Star News (NWS monthly newsletter). Still in the works: Mushrooms of Newport.
- On-property: registered monarch waystation. Monitored the area weekly as part of the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project. Released 117 monarchs this year. Bluebird nesting boxes monitored for Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW).
- Resource management projects - Planted Tithonia (annual Mexican Sunflower) for pollinators. New pollinator garden was planted this spring as part of a multi-year project. This was planned and planted by 2 volunteers from the WI Master Gardeners. New bird feeder/viewing area was established in the Nature Center.

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 the outdoors, nature programs and wilderness experiences. I am grateful to be able to play a part in our visitor's Wisconsin state park experience.



August Hike with the Naturalist



OutWiGo Trails of Newport Challenge Hikers



Camping and RV Show in Green Bay, WI State Parks booth.



A female monarch visiting our monarch waystation



New Dark Sky Kiosk



Leading the Hiking group on Rock Island