



ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE REPORT 2020

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: 2020

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Personal Services

A. Programs for non-school audiences

- January- First Day hike (NWS volunteers)
- February – Candlelight ski/snowshoe evening event, Winter Tree ID, Leap Day Hike and Activity
- March – December - No programs due to Covid protocol

B. Programs for school/community audiences

- No programs due to Covid protocol

Impressions and successes

As this year is anything but typical, there is not much to report on. With the spread of COVID-19 bringing all programs to a stop, early January and February resulted in only 4 scheduled programs. Approximately 548 visitors enjoyed taking part in programs offered at Newport in 2020. Many visitors were here for day use and our backpack camping was continuously booked.

Despite the fact that there were no formal programs the park saw an influx of visitors, with attendance records showing an annual increase of approximately 35%.

As our designation as an International Dark-Sky Park continues to garner much attention, and I am personally still very proud of this accomplishment. Even without formal programs, this brings many visitors in during the evening hours to check out the incredible skies at Newport.

In a normal year, setting up and running programs is, of course, my “main” job. Some of my many “small” jobs are (when applicable):

- 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, including videos this year
- 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.

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 (some were not used in 2020)

- 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 – Used by campers and visitors.
- 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 25 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. Maintain bird feeder/viewing area established outside the Nature Center. Collaborative effort with DCIST to obtain new boot brushes to help control invasive species.

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.



LEAP Day hikers!



Leap Day Hikers making origami frogs



August (2019) Hike with the Naturalist



A female monarch visiting our monarch waystation