



ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE REPORT 2021

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: 2021

Prepared by: Beth Bartoli, Naturalist

Personal Services

A. Programs for non-school audiences

- January - May - No programs due to Covid protocol
- June - OutWiGo weekly Challenge Hikes
- July - OutWiGo weekly Challenge Hikes, Monarch Madness, Trees and Shrubs of Door County, Herb Hike, Monarch Lifecycle, Great WI Bat Count
- August - OutWiGo weekly Challenge Hikes, Monarch monitoring, and programs, Trees of Newport, Dark Sky viewing, Perseid Meteor shower event, Primitive fire building
- September - OutWiGo weekly Challenge Hikes, Hikes with the Naturalist, Mushrooms hikes, Herb hike, Full Moon hike,
 - ◆ Newport Wilderness Days (a two day annual event held over Labor Day weekend):
 - ◆ Coffee on the Beach
 - ◆ History of Newport
 - ◆ Signs of Autumn Naturalist hike
 - ◆ Bug Walk
 - ◆ Geology; The Story in the Rocks
 - ◆ Trees and Shrubs of Newport
 - ◆ Days Gone By, Residents of the Town of Newport
- October - Mushroom ID, Trees in Autumn, Full Moon hike, Walk on the wild side with the Naturalist, Halloween hike

B. Programs for school/community audiences

- No programs due to Covid protocol

Impressions and successes

As Covid-19 continued to shape our choices and decisions, naturalists were given the OK to start programs again in June. It was a long time coming, not only for the naturalists and those that volunteer, but for our many visitors that look forward to our quality programs held at our state parks each year. Though we got a late start, approximately 900 visitors enjoyed taking part in programs offered at Newport in 2021. Many visitors were here for day use and our backpack camping was continuously booked.

A big accomplishment in 2021 was the installation of a new kiosk depicting the history of Newport. Following Newport's "Out of Wilderness, Into Wilderness" philosophy, the fluid timeline takes visitors from geologic history through present day changes and challenges, as the town came, prospered and disappeared. It focuses on the land becoming DNR property and a state park and what our role is in preserving, protecting and interpreting this unique property. This was a collaborative effort between myself, Julie Hein from LakeLedge Naturalist, the Newport Wilderness Society and the WI DNR.

Though attendance records were off the charts with an increase of over 35% for 2020 (as Covid drove people outdoors), 2021 attendance records showed an annual increase of approximately 8% from 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. Even with fewer 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.
- Help with the maintaining the NWS Facebook page
- Updates of current conditions for the DNR website
- 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 report

I worked a visitor's services position (paid through the DNR), working closely with others on staff. That position ended for me on October 31, 2021.

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 was to "rebrand" the NWS image and attract new members and people who love our park. I work closely with NWS board member Deb Ford, who completely overhauled the NWS website. I also maintain a strong line of communication with the volunteer coordinators, as well as the many volunteers.

Non-personal services (some were not used in 2021)

- 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 books and backpacks – 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 37 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 last year 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

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.



A young visitor checking out a monarch egg during a monarch program.



OutWiGo Challenge Hikers, July, 2021.



Award from Friends of WI State Parks – Best Park to Learn Astronomy



With Julie Hein from LakeLedge Naturalist LLC. We worked closely together to design the new History of Newport kiosk.