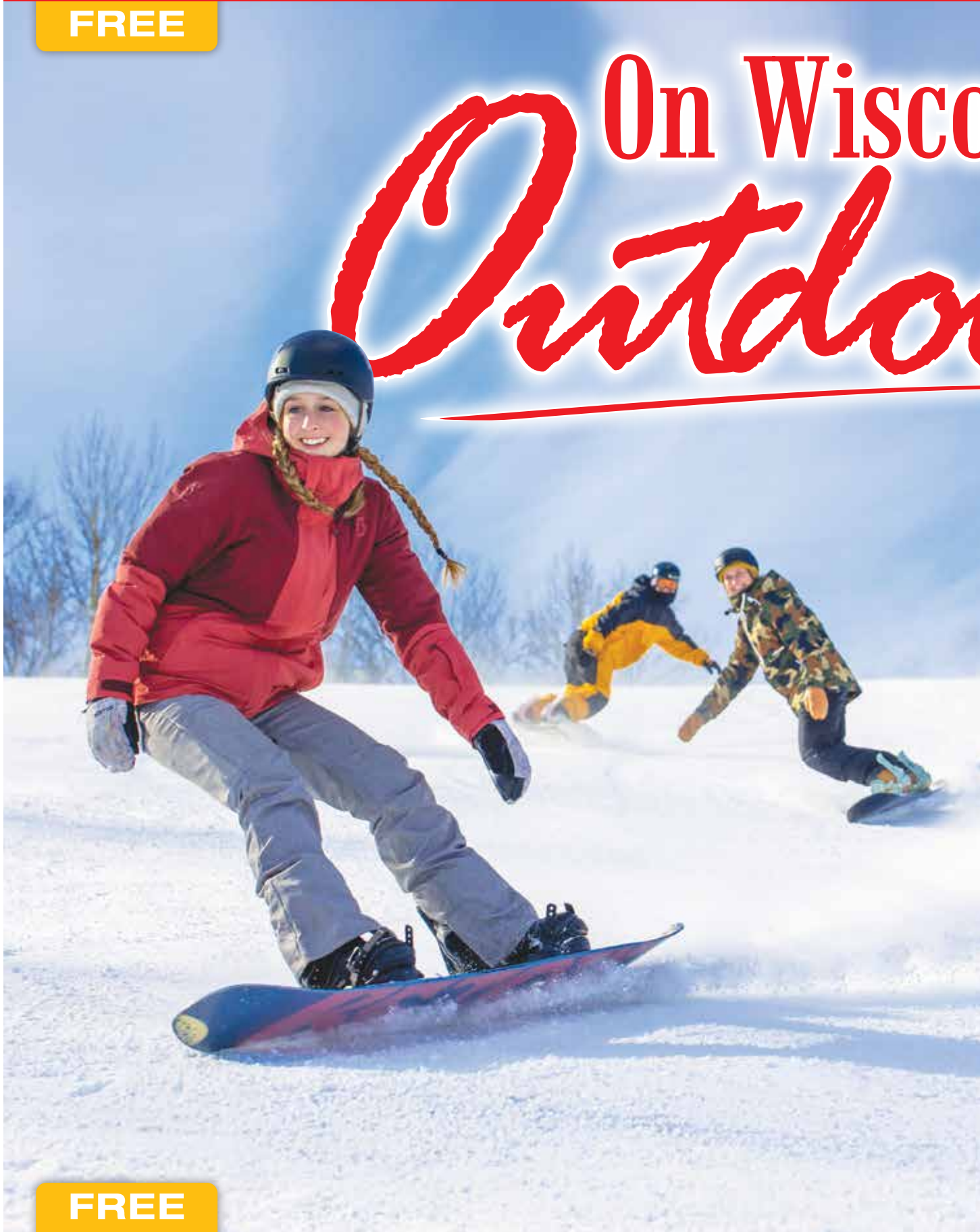


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DAVE FIDLIN

Willow River State Park

Spectacular year-round beauty

Regardless of the season, water is a focal point within the Willow River State Park. The 2,891-acre greenspace is located on the northwest part of Wisconsin, on the outskirts of the border community of Hudson in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

The backdrop to all of this is acres and acres of rolling countryside, which provides unique vistas and breathtaking beauty from one season to the next.

Willow River State Park is, perhaps, best known for the namesake Willow Falls, which provide spectacular year-round beauty. Depending on the temperatures, the falls become a winter wonderland with unique crystallized formations. In the warmer months, the falls showcase a powerful cascade of water that leads into a 200-foot-deep gorge.

Little Falls Lake is another noteworthy attraction within Willow River State Park. The shallow reservoir leads into the Willow River. When conditions warrant, the lake is an ideal spot for a bounty of recreational activities, including fishing, paddling and swimming.

Little Falls Lake features a boat ramp that offers access into the body of water for non-motorized watercraft. Fishing typically is abundant within the park's waters,

thanks to the frequent stocking, and reproduction, of such species as trout. The lake also features a beach on the southern shore.

While water is at the heart of Willow River State Park, there are plenty of non-aquatic activities within the greenspace throughout the year. Hiking is an especially popular activity within the park, with nearly a dozen - 11, to be exact - designated trails carved out. The trails range in length from 0.3 miles to three miles, and accommodate all skill abilities.

Other seasonal-dependent recreational opportunities within Willow River State Park include camping, with 72 specific sites, as well as rock climbing and a designated mountain biking route.

Willow River State Park also is steeped in history, and the site's rich heritage is displayed at the Willow River Nature Center. A variety of natural history exhibits are on display within the center, and a number of public programs are offered.

Historical documents and artifacts trace the park's earliest settled years to the late 18th Century. Two tribes - the Santee Sioux and the Ojibwe - inhabited areas in and near the parksite, attracted to the wild rice lakes that were



The Willow Falls are a popular spot within Willow River State Park. In the winter, the frozen falls are a hot tourist attraction.

plentiful in the region.

By 1830, the Willow River Valley that encompasses today's parksite became a popular spot for settlers since the St. Croix River was ideal for logistics for agriculture operations.

As development and settling in the region continued, a power company took root at the parksite through the mid-20th Century. The Wisconsin Conservation Commission acquired the land in 1967, and work toward the park's eventual opening in 1971 got underway.

The rest, as the saying goes, is history. 📺

Willow River State Park is located at 1034 Highway A, five miles north of Hudson. It is open daily from 6 am to 11 pm, year-round.

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DICK ELLIS

Sanity Lost on Winnebago

A sturgeon spearer's diary

4:30 a.m.: Opening morning. Heading north on Highway 45 toward Winnebago with just the stars as my companions. Mentally sharp. Ready. Enthusiastic. I haven't seen a sturgeon in eight years of sturgeon spearing. Today's the day.

6:30 a.m.: Met my guide, Bill Jenkins in Pipe, Wisconsin on the east side of Winnebago. Every year I give Bill \$50.00. He lets me stare down into a hole. Show me a better bargain.

6:45 a.m.: Jim Sullivan of Jefferson gives me a ride out to my one-man shack far out on the ice of Winnebago. Jim's been spearing for a decade, with hundreds of hours staring into the water. He thinks he saw one nine years ago. I'm in the presence of greatness.

7:00 a.m.: All settled in now, in my six-foot by eight-foot shack. The trap door in the floor has been lifted back and I can sit on this folding chair and stare down at a refrigerator sized hole. Above the hole hanging down from a nail is a heavy, iron, five-pronged spear, with a rope attached poised to drop when the monster appears. The gas heater has been lit by my guide. It will soon be toasty warm in here.

7:15 a.m.: Fire's out. It's freezing.

7:20 a.m.: It's quiet now, and black. I can see about 12 feet down into the swirling green hues of Winnebago and if I tilt this notebook just right, I can scribble by that



hue almost legibly. At about eight feet my guide has suspended my decoy, a two-foot-long white piece of plastic pipe. What a stupid fish to rise to a piece of PCV pipe I think as I stare down at a piece of PCV pipe. Unexplained, brief flashback to my beautiful wife, Lori, in a warm bed that I left on a Saturday morning so I could drive up here alone and sit in a cold shack and stare at this pipe. Yes, for sure...that's a stupid fish all right.

8:30 a.m.: Well, at least it's warm now. It's been 90 minutes and Mr. Big no doubt is just a minute or two from arriving underneath the ice. I'm still mentally sharp.

8:32 a.m.: A bubble just came all the way up. I watched it.

8:33 a.m.: Nuther one.

8:35 a.m.: John Jenkins, Bill's son and veteran spearer, just showed up. He has many sturgeons under his belt. He wants this reporter to get one too. I don't know why but year after year after year after year John wears the same look of pity around me. He gives me his secret weapon decoy. It's a...and please keep this quiet so everyone's not utilizing it...a plastic pail. I thank John profusely as the pail is lowered to hang next to the white pipe. John tells me that Paul Wargowsky is on his first sturgeon hunt, his shack just 100 yards from mine. Old Paul (who's actually is only about 30) flipped back the lid this morning and there was a 58-inch sturgeon. Just three minutes into his first season, and his tag is filled.

Publisher Note:

The 2026 Lake Winnebago system sturgeon season begins February 14th and will run for a maximum of 16 days or until harvest caps are met. Have you missed this party, either at the DNR registration stations, the bars and restaurants surrounding Winnebago, or in one of the thousands of shacks dotting the big lake? OWO has not, over many years. Here's a sampling from our archives of what you don't want to miss. See you on the ice, Wisconsin.



I tell John to congratulate good old Paul Wargowski of Whitewater for me. Although I don't know him.

8:36 a.m.: John just left. I don't like Paul Wargowski of Whitewater.

8:37 a.m.: I'm humble, a little emotional as John leaves the shack. I mean, how many guys give you a pail? I make a note to give John a can, or maybe even a bottle some day.

8:46 a.m.: Well, no wonder it's a secret weapon. I stare down and the pail is going round and round... twirly, twirly, twiirrrlly in the green hues. The pipe just sits there like a lazy pipe. "Pull your weight, man," I yell. No reaction.

9:45 a.m.: Twiirrrlly, twiirrrllyyy, twwwwiirrrrrlly. Still mentally sharp. But I think there may be someone in here.

9:48 a.m.: He's here all right. Somewhere in the dark. Lurking. I'll act unalarmed.

10:30 a.m.: If I stand on my tip-toes, I can just barely squash my hair on the ceiling.

11 a.m.: Discussing things with myself for an hour now. Made unsettling self-discovery. I'm pretty boring. Not good. This shatters my whole self-image. Little wonder I never had a date in high school.

11:30 a.m.: Tried playing 100 questions about my life. Only missed seven. Self-esteem rising again.

11:37 a.m.: Just checked my notes. 27 pages of "all work and no play make Dick

a dull boy." What the heck does that mean? That guy in the shack is messing with me.

11:45 a.m.: It is indeed toasty warm in here. Should have worn Lori's skirt. That short, black leather number.

11:55 a.m.: I'm down to my T-shirt, sweating. There's a fly climbing up the wall. Yea, right. In February. In Wisconsin. Like that's not a "plant." Now I know someone is in here, watching... watching... watching me. Watching me to see if I kill the fly. To see if I'm sane. I saw "Psycho". Norman Bates. Dressed in his mother's clothes (you wouldn't have caught me in that outfit). He wouldn't kill the fly either. He knew "they" were watching, too. I'll wait this thing out. I will not touch that fly.

NOON: Just smashed the fly with the spear. I knew they were watching. A siren just went off.

12:30 p.m.: Bill Jenkins is here. Spearing's over for the day. Bill wants to know why I look so flushed. He pries my fingers off the spear handle. "Dick...Dick...Are you alright?" I hear his distant voice.

"Am I alright?" I hear my answer. "Am I alright? I will be just as soon as you sign me up for next year."



Erik Kollmann was on the cover of the OWO January-February 2012 issue.



Forgotten Wisconsin STUART WILKE



Wisconsin Moves Forward

The state flag celebrates progress and prosperity

Wisconsin's state flag is chock-full of meaning. Unfortunately much of it is a mystery to modern eyes. The flag was adopted in 1913, and over the past 100 - plus years, many people no longer recognize what its symbols represent. Once you understand the purpose of them, the flag can be deciphered. Despite its age and mysterious elements, many of the products, aspirations and philosophies commemorated by the flag still accurately reflect those of present day Wisconsin.

(This is the last of a series explaining the flag. For more information on its other elements, see the July/August and September/October 2025 editions of On Wisconsin Outdoors.)

During the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, Wisconsin workers and skilled laborers made the state a manufacturing powerhouse and celebrated it on the flag with an arm holding a hammer. Among the

many parts and machines made in early Wisconsin were heavy machinery, tools, vehicles, farm implements and ships. The state is still renown for its heavy industry and manufacturing prowess.

Farming has been a mainstay of the Wisconsin economy since its founding in 1848. Corn, dairy, poultry products and soybeans, among others, have long been major contributors to Wisconsin's economy. The flag honors these industries and farmers with an illustration of a plow.

Wisconsin soldiers weathered some of the Union's highest casualty rates during the Civil War and the state was one of the most pro-abolition in the nation. More than half of the state's 91,000 Union soldiers were registered voters. Twelve thousand Wisconsin soldiers, 13 percent, died in service to their country. The state recognizes their and others fidelity to the Union with a shield in the center of the flag with stars and

stripes and the nation's motto, E Pluribus Union, "Out of many, one." The flag is set upon a blue background signifying loyalty. The year 1848 is noted because that was the year Wisconsin was welcomed to the Union. The word "Wisconsin" is emblazoned on the bottom of the flag to distinguish it from other state flags because, frankly, so many of them look alike.

Finally, the flag represents hope for the future. A cornucopia stands for prosperity, something that all Wisconsinites have strove for themselves and others since its inception as a state. They have long understood that to obtain prosperity, they must move ahead in a positive fashion. This is signified by the words "Forward" in bold letters on the flag.

And forward the state moved. Wisconsin became one of the most influential states in the Union, a reputation that it held for many years. Wisconsin public officials, governors and legislators established direct primary



elections that gave voters, rather than political party leaders, the right to choose primary candidates. They also broke up business monopolies, preserved state forests, and defended small farmers.

Some of the most important legislation passed in Wisconsin in the early 20th century were one of the nation's first workers' compensation programs, factory safety regulations, and limited work hours for women and children. State officials also initiated the Wisconsin park system.

Many of the attributes that Wisconsin held dear and commemorated on its flag over 100 years ago hold true today. We will continue those attributes into the future as long as we remain a united people. 🇺🇸

On The Cover

Inspired by vivid memories ranging from downhill skiing the slopes of Wisconsin at warp speed as a young man to the peril of everyone else on the slopes, to mentally willing my skis turn to no avail and at great peril to myself decades later, this OWO publisher asked a simple enough question heading to press. Just how many ski hills are in Wisconsin?

"Looking to hit the slopes and find your next skiing adventure in Wisconsin?" answered one site. "You've come to the right place! Wisconsin is home to a variety of ski hills, offering everything from gentle beginner slopes to challenging runs that will test the skills of even the most experienced skiers."

Quick review of several sites verified that there are approximately 30 hills to play on across Wisconsin. And they're not just for skiing, like those of us who remember the slopes of the 70s or 80s...and remember too what terms like "leisure suits" mean. The hills today offer new ways to terrorize the casual skier, like snow-boarding and tubing and lessons for those new to the sports.

New? I can almost hear my 31-year-old daughter's response. "Duh...Dad. They've been doing that for decades."

Yes indeed. Anyway, it's not just the hills. It's our trails for the snowmobilers and snowshoers and the ice for the anglers, the festivals for everyone and much, much more. You'll, get a good idea from our tourism partners and advertisers in the pages inside just why the cold and snow of Wisconsin makes it one hot state in winter to travel and play.

Finally, OWO also asked a few of Wisconsin's ski establishments for photos that might make a great cover shot. Ultimately, we came away with this photo courtesy of Granite Peak in Wausau reflecting Wisconsin's fun in the snow from Superior to Kenosha.

So, see you on the hardwater, and see you on the trails, and see you on the slopes. Break a rib. I know I did.



On Wisconsin
Outdoors
With the Dick Ellis Experts

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TOM CARPENTER

Hardwater Tips And Tricks

How to catch sunfish this winter

Ice fishing for sunfish, bluegills, pumpkinseeds and related members of the panfish clan is fun, packed with action, and can produce some of the best fish meals of the year.

Hitting the ice with an organized plan, and taking care of details, makes the difference between going home empty handed or hauling in a mess of good fish to filet.

Use these tactics, techniques, tips and tricks to catch more and bigger sunnies this winter.

Fish Shallow Early During the first month of early ice, sunfish will be shallow. Look in as few as three or four feet of water, down to as many as eight to 10. Look for weed tops poking above the clear ice, then drill your holes along the outside edges of the weed beds.

Find Green Weeds In winter, as in summer, weeds and bluegills go together. After drilling and clearing a hole, get down on the ice, drape a coat over your head and peer into the hole. Spy any green weeds? If so, try your luck. If not, or if the weeds are brown and dead, move on. In clear water, you might even be able to spot cruising sunnies.

Use Tiny Lures Use tiny lures when fishing for sunfish. Size 10, 12 and even 14 hooks are the norm. Lures with some flash (usually bright silver) on one side seem to attract more fish.

Make an Eye Lures with a single dot or “eye” on them catch the most bluegills, probably because most bluegill prey has an eye. If a lure doesn’t have an eye, paint one on.

Try Different Colored Jigs and Lures Bluegill preferences change by the day and even the hour. In dark or stained water, start with bright colors like blaze orange, bright yellow and neon chartreuse. In clear water, opt for darker colors such as green, blue or black.

Use Goldenrod Grubs For sunnies, goldenrod grubs may be the best live bait of all. Goldenrods are small (fit easily into a bluegill’s mouth), juicy (scent attracts fish) and seem to glow in the water (bluegills can see them easily). Collect goldenrod galls while hunting all fall; I have pockets full of them after pheasant and deer hunting seasons.

Offer Other Baits Other grub selections to tip your lures with include waxworms, mealworms, spikes, mousies and eurolarvae.



Jig ‘Em In Sunfish respond to different jigging patterns every day, so change things up. Here’s one consistently good jigging pattern: Rapidly twitch your bait for several seconds as you raise it up about a foot, then drop your rod tip back down so the bait flutters freely back to where it started. Fish will hit on the drop or when the lure settles, so be ready to set the hook.

Move Out Deeper In midwinter, look for fish suspended off the fringes of the deeper weeds, often 15 to 20 feet down over deeper water. Another midwinter hotspot is a bar or hump that rises out of deep mid-lake

water. Early and late in the day, fish “up” on the hump and around its edges, from five to 15 feet down. Midday, back off the structure and fish “down,” exploring the surrounding water from 20 to 25 feet down.

Thread Your Bait If you’re getting bites but can’t hook fish, thread a waxworm or other grub *lengthwise* onto your hook, instead of leaving it dangle. Then the sunfish has to bite where there’s a hook instead of nibble at a hanging morsel.

Put these ideas to work on the ice this season, and start heating the oil for a winter fish fry. 🍷

CAPTAIN DAVID DUWE

Fishing in The Dark

How glow lures increase success

When you’re targeting fish during low-light conditions, adjusting your presentation can make a big difference. Fish tend to become more active and less cautious as the light fades, but their feeding behavior also shifts, meaning your lure choice and technique should shift with it. By paying attention to subtle changes in light and water clarity, you can refine your approach and catch more fish.

Ice anglers have long known that the most productive times of day are the first hour after sunrise and the final half hour before sunset. Glow baits capitalize on these windows by making your lure easier for fish to see from greater distances. Today’s market

offers a wide variety of glow spoons and ice jigs, and while they shine (literally) during dawn and dusk, they’re also effective during the day in murky water, overcast conditions, or deep water where natural light fades quickly.

One of the latest ice-fishing trends is high-intensity glow spoons, which use glow sticks rather than traditional phosphorescent paint. The advantage is constant illumination—there’s no need to “recharge” the lure. However, glow sticks tend to dim as they sit in cold water. A simple fix is to warm the lure in your hands or give it a quick breath every 15 - 20 minutes to boost



CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 Nathan Duwe with a deepwater perch caught on a glow rat-fink.

PHIL SCHWEIK

Scouting New Hardwater Doing the homework from home

Brrrr... The dead of winter. What do we do? Hey, I have an idea! Let's go look at some new lakes for ice fishing. Now that's not what most people want to hear, but in my world, it's music to my ears.

Tracking down and targeting a new lake is not as hard as you may think, but most people don't like the idea of trudging out on foreign hardwater without any idea of where to start or where to go. But it is not as hard as it may sound. With today's modern technology and apps for your phone, you can break down a lake pretty quickly, and frankly, a lot of that work can be done from the comfort of your warm home well before you even venture out on the ice.

Before I even head out on a new body of water, I do my research on the lake. I check online DNR maps and I use apps like Navionics or OnX Fish, and I study the depth, the structure, and contours of the lake. I also like to see what type of fish species the lake has to offer and, if possible, their size structure. From there I look for access points or locations where I can get on the water. I also keep a journal that lists these potential lakes that I have found to scout with detailed notes.

Once I have my list, I am ready to go and can head out to my predetermined lake locations with confidence to start scouting. By doing your research ahead of time with the available tools you make your scouting adventure easy and most likely successful. I can't tell you how many lakes I have ventured out onto over the years that don't even have a footprint on them, but they have been outstanding for fishing. Isolation and success are great partners to meet on the hardwater.

Enough of sitting around all winter looking at the cold outside and thinking about that new water you may want to try. Go online, find the lakes that look interesting and do your research. I know personally, your efforts preparing can be time alone or with a friend on the hardwater and a bucket of fish heading home again.

A cold, welcome payoff that began in the warmth of your home. 🐾

Phil Schweik | Hooksetters Guide Service | Phone 715-693-5843 | Web: www.hooksetters.biz



Ice fishing perch.

TOM LUBA

Wisconsin Fishing Memories *Gifted dreams that never fade*

Growing up in the seventies, my best memories were kindled annually in mid-July. That's when my brother and I headed north to Hayward from central Illinois with our aunt and uncle for two weeks of Northwoods fishing. The worst memory, plainly stated, was leaving.

We fished Nelson Lake and the river that exited the lake and formed the Totogatic Flowage. One of the families we met each year stayed in a nearby cabin. While we hung out with the two kids, it was really their dad, Ed, who created the most magical of memories involving one very big northern pike.

The year before Ed's memorable catch, I thought I had caught my own memory but lost the large pike at the boat. The memory remains vivid, just not with the satisfying ending all fisherman dream of. I hooked the fish on my spinning rod, and skillfully brought it boatside despite, as I would soon learn, the drag being set too tight. When the net touched the northern's back, it initiated a "no surrender" reaction from the pike. That fish must have tail-walked 20 feet across the surface, and was gone.

I was heartbroken, but I kept soldiering on, knowing there were more giants out there looking for a fight. A year later, Ed tangled with a true heavy weight, and won the battle.

We returned from a trip to town to discover the local commotion naturally stirred by a special catch. Ed had scored on a 13 and one-half pound summer northern that for young boys resembled a monster come to life. All we could do then was say "Wow!" an exclamation I still tend to repeat to this day when I look at the photo of Ed's fish mounted in their rec room that we received later that year. The pike that had fallen to an injured minnow sporting three treble hooks.

Looking back, Ed was a knowledgeable fisherman who knew the lures and tactics that would entice strikes on more than just northers, with a willingness to pass his "secrets" on to generations of students like my brother and me. Nelson was also a good walleye lake and Ed targeted the fish in June each year.

When another couple who accompanied our aunt and uncle annually to the cabin each June cancelled, my brother and I were invited back again, earlier than our usual mid-summer get-a-way. Talk about being sky high!

During our stay, Ed taught us how to target walleye and introduced us to the blue and white Canadian Jig Fly. He used this excellent walleye jig routinely with success, and showed us how to retrieve it. The fish we caught on Nelson were our first walleyes on jigs, thanks to Ed.

Though this happened more than fifty years ago, I'll never forget those days. Often, dreams on the water are made when people who were passed down "secrets" are willing to pass them down again to next-generation students, like us, who follow. The ultimate reward are the memories that simply never end.

Who is waiting to watch, learn and cherish what you know? 🐾



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DICK ELLIS

A Superior Tactic

Bobbing for deep water lake trout

With the setting sun splashing his growing shadow on the Lake Superior ice, Chris Beeksma abandons the portable shanty to feel an almost balmy February breeze, and sends the heavy beetle jig through the augured hole to seduce another lake trout. The journey down is a long one. Line screams off the reel for more than 90 seconds before the anticipated thud and slack announces a meeting of bottom and bait 250 feet below.

Beeksma assumes the position. Each angler adopts his own jigging motion, and the Ashland area fishing guide has on this morning already seen his own tactic mislead two lakers. He seeks a third, staring intently at his tiny hardwater porthole, his arm playing the rod like a maestro might play the baton.

In the distance, the Wisconsin mainland near Red Cliff north of Bayfield and several of the Apostle Islands; Hermit, Basswood, Madeline adds to a natural masterpiece of endless blue skies and textured ice painted by the Superior winds. To the west, Craig Putschat of Washburn, and On Wisconsin Outdoors contributing writer Mike Foss play their own conductor's music on the short jigging rods.

Use of rods and reels represents a relatively recent evolution from the traditional deep water "bobbing" tactic utilized for decades to target Superior Lake Trout. Beeksma's grandfather utilized bobbing, with an oval or straight stick to hold line and a hand-over-hand retrieval method, off of Cornucopia in the 1950s.

Catgut line initially used in bobbing evolved to nylon, to a non-stretch coated wire that continually improved the ability to entice and fight deep water trout. The instrument for holding line also evolved about 20 years ago from an oval stick to a 12-inch plastic hoop that was discarded with the strike as the angler began the hand over hand retrieval



Mike Foss enjoys unseasonably warm February temperatures to vertical jig for lake trout without shelter on Lake Superior off the Apostle Islands.



OWO contributor Mike Foss shows a beautiful lake trout taken in late afternoon among the Apostle Islands. Fishing with Chris Beeksma and Craig Putschat. Over two days, the group of six anglers would take fish up to 22 pounds vertical jigging in 250 feet of Lake Superior water.

process, and evolved again recently to the short rods and reels most often used today.

"Long ago, with bobbing, the fisherman would set the hook and take off running away from the hole to bring the fish up," Beeksma said. "Hopefully, someone would be waiting at the hole to grab the fish for you. A big innovation was the 60-pound test, coated wire. Very recently thin diameter braided line with only two to six percent stretch gave us the ability to use rods and reels. Now you can fight the fish like you normally would fishing anywhere. You have a drag...and all those other good things."

Among those other good things is the locally developed Beetle Jig that, Putschat said, flies out in a horizontal plane with the jigging motion to cover significantly more water than just that area directly below the angler. The beetle is a flat pancake of lead with a large saltwater hook molded in the top-side and with safety pins protruding from each side of the hook eye. Cut herring or shiners are placed on each pin.

"They're made here," Beeksma said. "This is their home. You go to other places and they laugh at you for using these, but they kill the lake trout anywhere."

The hunt on this late February morning begins in Red Cliff. Running snowmobiles, and acutely in tune to ice conditions that can change quickly, the local experts will hit and run among the Apostle Islands until they find active lakers hitting and running with their forage base.

"Lake trout are large predators at the top of the food chain, like muskies," Putschat says. "They don't eat every day. You can see them on the bottom but maybe they won't bite. The next day they will. They continually move and we have to stay mobile too. It's not like walleye fishing. We don't set up on the same reef at the same time of day."

OWO Note: Looking ahead to a new year here, we also look back to where we've been; 1000 column trips over 20 years from every corner of Wisconsin. The playground below, targeting deep water lake trout on Chequamegon Bay off of Ashland, never gets old. See you on the new ice.

Depending on ice conditions, anglers may travel up to 20 miles, seeking deeper water and bigger fish. Although some lake trout are stocked here, the fish is a successful spawner and known as a native species.

"We fish for lake trout in 110 to 250 feet of water," Beeksma said. "It seems that the deeper you go, the less chartered the water, the bigger the fish. But we look for rock piles or other structure too. A 20-pound fish is absolutely a possibility for anyone out here."

Wednesday, the anglers play hide and seek with the roving schools of lakers far out among the Apostle Islands. Pulling portable shanties, they ride the snowmobiles to desirable depths and structure and set up angling camp. Unsatisfied with action, three times they relocate, always over deeper water. In depths even too great for Vexilar readings, they find consistent action on bigger fish over two consecutive days.

In the warm breezes and dying sunlight of afternoon one, the maestros continue to work their special music, hopefully to the full attention of an orchestra of lake trout far below. Eventually, Foss' rod bends over the weight of a good fish. The struggle begins that will bring the fish up more than one-eighth mile from the dark Superior depths.

The fight is slow, and several times during the journey up the fish "burps", the adjustment in the air bladder told by the bubbles rising to the surface. It is an adjustment that will enable the fish to be released safely, despite the great transition in depth. Eventually, the 10-pound laker surrenders and is pulled from the hole.

From this seemingly bottomless honey hole, many lake trout will be taken over the next day. Including a 22-pound fish probably more than three decades old that will discharge an 18-inch herring from its belly when iced.

"I'm pretty new to this," says Foss. "It's pretty exciting. If you've never experienced this country, the lake, the islands and the beauty of the sandstone cliffs as your traveling past on the sleds, it's enough in itself to make the whole trip."

"But not many people fish out here. Knowing that you're going after big lake trout and that you'll be fishing in more than 200 feet of water is just incredible."

BEFORE YOU GO...

Safe ice off of Red Cliff near the Apostle Islands, and the ability to safely fish for lake trout is highly dependent on weather. Do not attempt this trip without consulting local experts for ice conditions, or to hire a guide. If you do not wish to hire a guide, consider fishing just off the plowed Ice Road that runs from Red Cliff to Madeline Island.

According to the Bait Shack (see ad page 6), Chequamegon Bay already had good ice in late December. They're waiting for you now with everything from answers to your questions, bait, and a new line of gear. Connect at 715-373-2380. 📞



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ski-doo

BOB'S BEAR BAIT

The Bear Hunters Calendar

A must-do timeline for the 2026 season

With Wisconsin bear tags being released soon, now is a great time to get your plans in order. If you are one of the lucky hunters to draw a tag, this simple timeline will help you prepare, stay consistent, and make the most of your season.

February – March: Planning and Permission

Winter is the ideal time to lay the groundwork for a productive season. Start by using aerial maps to identify secluded, bear friendly habitat such as swamps, alder edges, berry patches, oak ridges, and waterways that serve as natural travel routes. Creek bottoms, clover patches and marsh transitions often provide reliable movement.

This is also the best time to secure permission on private land. Landowners are more receptive in winter, and early access allows for proper scouting before the woods green up. While one well-maintained bait can produce a great bear, having multiple

sites, ideally on different properties, provides insurance if one dries up right before the season opens.

April – May: Early Advantage

Wisconsin hunters can begin baiting on April 15th. Starting early increases your odds by bringing bears to your site before natural food sources appear and before other hunters begin baiting.

You do not need large amounts of bait yet. Light, steady feeding is enough to keep bears checking the site. Always use a strong scent attractant to help them find it no matter the season.

Even if you aren't baiting yet, now is the time to start purchasing quality bait. As the season progresses, bait shops sell out quickly and may not have what you need in stock.

June: Building Patterns

If you want to conserve bait while still building opportunity, June is an excellent time to start. Bears are active and traveling widely, and with the mating season still

underway, bears especially cover a lot of ground. June provides plenty of time to establish patterns before activity shifts in mid-August.

Some hunters wait until late July or August to begin baiting. Although it can work, we strongly encourage you to start earlier. Starting late does not give bears enough time to find your bait and begin visiting regularly before the mid-August switch when berries, hazelnuts, and early acorns peak. Once that shift happens, a bait that is not already part of a bear's travel loop may never make the list.

July - August: Consistency and Variety

This is the time to finalize stand placement and trimming. From this point forward, consistency is critical. Stick to your baiting schedule, whether daily or every few days, because bears quickly learn which sites are reliable.

Use a variety of bait types each time you fill. Include protein rich, sticky, oily, crunchy, and aromatic options. Variety keeps multiple bears interested and



Will your preparation efforts prior to the 2026 season bring a 400 pound bear to your bait?

encourages repeat visits. Continue to keep scent attractants fresh throughout the season.

September: Success

By opening day, focus on keeping bait fresh, minimizing disturbance, and monitoring how bears are using the area. Just remember, you can do everything right and a bait can still dry up. It happens to everyone. Stay consistent, keep your sites maintained, and provide quality bait. 🐻

For updates on news and sales, follow us on Facebook. To see our full bait list and locations, visit bobsbearbait.com. To speak with Bob directly, email sales@bobsbearbait.com or call (920)419-1238. Stock up early for the best goodies at Bob's Bear Bait, your one stop shop for all your baiting needs.

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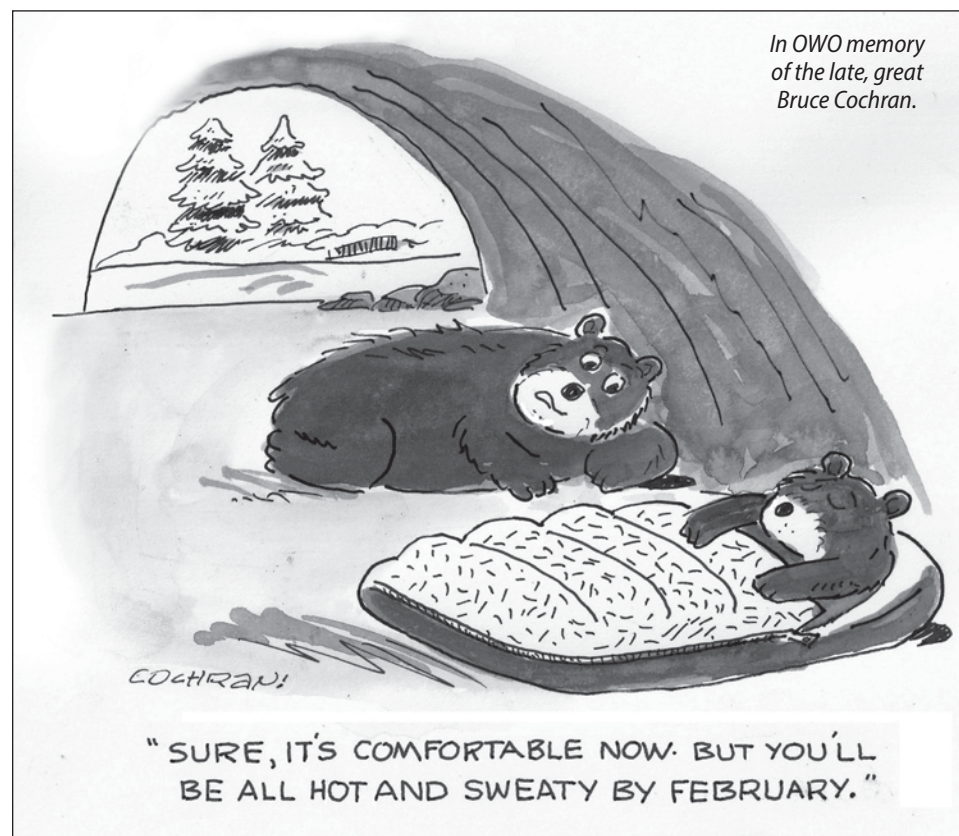







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DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report Man's best friend

Anybody who has bow hunted for years knows that bowhunting has its highs and lows. The following is a perfect example.

On November 17, I was sitting in a ladder stand on a ridge behind my cabin in Vilas County. As the sun was setting, I had a deer walk up the trail behind my stand. Once past me, I could see the deer was a nice buck. High. When the buck turned what I thought was broadside, I bleated to stop him and pulled the trigger on my crossbow. I heard the hit and felt good about the shot. Higher.

Once I got down from my stand and found my bolt (thanks to the lighted nock), my spirits sank. Close scrutiny of

the bolt indicated a low and less than ideal hit. Low. I snuck out of the woods and summoned a friend who is not afflicted with color blindness like me to meet me in the morning to try and track the buck.

After more than a half hour of searching, my friend Gary Ridderbusch notified me that he had found blood. High. Three hours and three hundred yards later, I told Gary "Thanks" and told him I was pretty sure that I didn't have a fatal hit. Low. I went home and got my dog Mabel planning to do a few loops in the direction the buck was headed, hoping she would get a whiff of a dead deer. Nothing. Hopes drop to rock bottom.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 I couldn't have been happier to find this buck.



Louie, bloodhound in disguise.

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-Gregg Borneman



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Presents Firearms Info from Ron Stresing

RON STRESING

On Target Shooting Five Stand sporting clays

Cold temperatures and blustery winter winds used to spell an end to clay target shooting until spring. Well, it used to be anyway. Today, you can continue shooting clays in heated trailers with the newest shooting discipline, Five Stand. It's sporting clays shot from five positions, often in a heater-equipped trailer or converted shipping container. In summer, five stand is often shot from an open deck with the same five shooting stations.

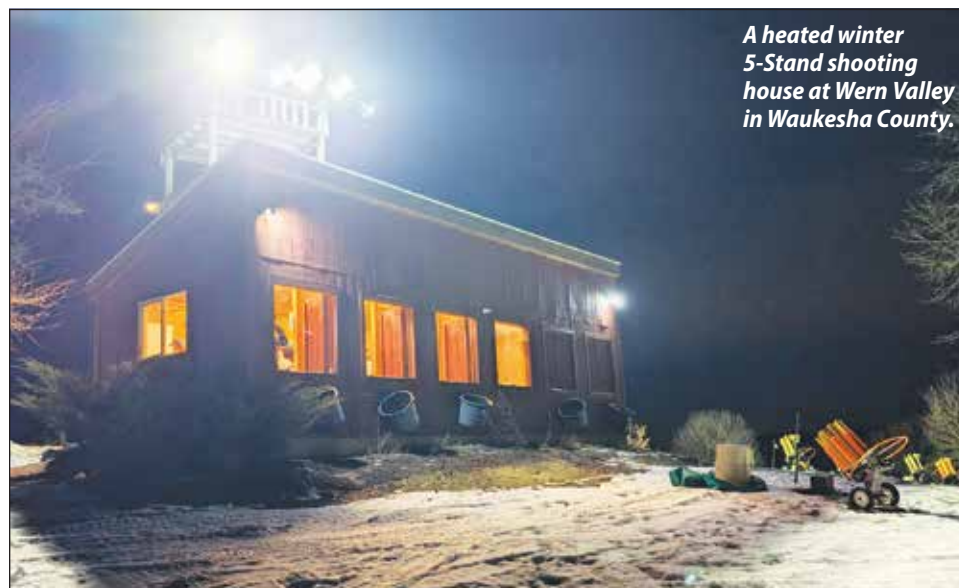
Five Stand offers a combination of the elements of trap, skeet, and the true and report pairs of sporting clays. A Five Stand course has five stations for the shooter to rotate through, engaging a variety of targets from varied angles. The angle you engage the targets from changes with the station you are on, adding an additional challenge. Each station will have a menu of how the targets will be thrown. This usually starts with a single, and then two pairs of targets.

The pairs can be either report pair (target thrown after the first shot is fired) or a true pair (both targets thrown at once). Usually, five or six machines in various positions throw the targets. Targets may also vary in sizes. Shooters then advance to the next

station like you do in trap. A summer time round of sporting clays often has a leisurely walk and takes about 45 minutes to an hour. A round of Five Stand can be shot in as little as 25 - 30 minutes.

Helpful Hints for Five Stand: Unlike regular sporting clays, you can start with your gun mounted, like in trap. I suggest that you do. Body position is also a big deal; set your feet and position yourself to swing on the spot where you plan on breaking the target. I find the enclosed confines of shooting in a trailer similar to being in a crowded pit blind or duck blind. Is the limited space really a factor? For me it is, but that's just me. Your shooting experience may be different. Try to visualize the flight of the target, pick it up, swing with it and break it. Having a plan on where to break the bird will improve your scores.

Because of the close quarters of shooting in a trailer, gun safety is paramount. Keep your shotgun broken or the action open, with the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Load only when it's your turn to shoot. Locally Boxhorn Gun Club by Big Muskego Lake and Wern Valley in Waukesha have Five Stand set ups. 🦋



A heated winter 5-stand shooting house at Wern Valley in Waukesha County.

CHRIS VAUGHAN

Hunter Nation Vote to protect your heritage

Engaged hunters and anglers showed up in Green Bay to discuss the power the outdoor community has at the ballot box. We want hunters voting their values! We need to keep the pressure on our elected officials and NEVER miss an election.

HUNT THE VOTE

- Before Hunter Nation – 50% of licensed hunters did not vote
- Wisconsin has a hunting base of 855,000
 - 56% Conservative and 44% Liberal
- Since 2016 Hunter Nation has reached over 12 million hunters in all 50 states
- In Wisconsin, Hunter Nation was directly responsible for getting 475,498 licensed hunters out to vote in the 2024 election
- Out of the 475,498 voters:
 - 20,259 had not voted in the last 16 years
 - 82,429 had only voted once in the last 16 years
 - 15,307 were first time voters



WISCONSIN ADVOCACY

- Hunter Nation supports H.R. 845 Pet and Livestock Protection Act
 - Federal gray wolf delisting AND removes judicial review
- Hunter Nation is fighting for a wolf numeric population goal vs a vague adaptive management plan
 - Wolf populations need to be guided by science and not social pressure
- Currently the Wisconsin DNR states that Wisconsin has an estimated wolf population of 1,226 – This is somehow 102 less than last year!?
- Hold the DNR accountable for their lack of spending on programs that primarily benefit hunters and anglers – Less than 50% in FY 2023-24. 🦋



For more information, contact Chris Vaughan, Hunter Nation Wisconsin State Director, at Chris@HunterNation.org.

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Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | ALGOMA

CAPT. LEE HAASCH

Winter Comes Alive in Algoma

Mother Nature has a funny way of rearing her head on the lakeshore, and wintertime is no exception. Snow drifts, iced over lakes and barren, leafless trees leave the countryside with a special kind of clean-looking beauty. To the outdoors enthusiast, this is what we wait for - snow covered trails for cross country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling and frozen lakes and ponds for ice fishing.

There is something special about the quiet time spent ice fishing. Sitting over an eight-inch hole precision cut through two feet of solid ice and waiting patiently for a hungry fish to take your bait on the end of a three-foot ice rod and reel. It is a magical moment when that trout or northern pike pokes its head into the hole and comes to the surface to present itself to the angler tugging at the other end of the line. Whether bucket sitting outside in the elements or in a wood fire stoked ice shack, ice fishing in the Algoma area is more than a past-time, it kind of is like an obsession for most avid anglers.

The Algoma area has all of that and then some. The

Ahnapee Trail connects Algoma to Casco, Kewaunee and Sturgeon Bay and offers over 50 miles of perfectly groomed snowmobile trails and also connects to hundreds of additional miles of trails that wind through Kewaunee and Southern Door Counties. Cross country skiers and hikers also enjoy the groomed snowmobile trails as well as the many local county and city parks available to them.

For the avid bird watchers, the winter months offer a great time to visit Algoma and document the many different variety of birds that call our area home. Large Eagles frequent the lakeshore where open water allows them abundant feeding opportunities and from finches and warblers to hawks and owls, many bird sightings occur in this bird city area. Wintertime is a special time to hike the Ahnapee Trail, part of the Ice Age Trail system and experience some of the best bird sighting opportunities in Wisconsin!

Experience for yourself the great fishery Lake Michigan has to offer. And if you want BIG fish, check out Algoma! For charter information or fishing reports, visit our



Algoma has miles and miles of groomed snow covered trails for snowmobilers and cross country skiers to enjoy.

facebook page at: Algoma, Wisconsin, Fishing. For fishing and calendar of events and activities information, check out our website at <https://visitalgomawi.com/>

The winter outdoors is yours in Algoma!

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ICE AGE TRAIL



WINTER BIRDING



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Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | ST. GERMAIN



Your Winter Wonderland of Events Await in Wisconsin's Northland

There's plenty to do this winter in St. Germain. Listed below are some of the highlights.

January

JANUARY 17: AWASSA TRAIL BY CANDLELIGHT

Experience the beauty of the Awassa Trails by candlelight at this family-friendly event. You can snowshoe, ski or fat bike the 1.4-mile, groomed loop. Then enjoy hot chocolate and s'mores by the bonfire. Park behind the St. Germain Elementary School. Well-behaved, leashed pets are allowed.

Hosted by the St. Germain Non-Motorized Trails Committee

Event is free

When: Saturday, January 17, 6 pm – 8 pm

Where: Awassa Trail, behind the St. Germain Elementary School, 8234 Hwy 70

<https://st-germain.com/events/awassa-by-candlelight-2026/>

February

FEBRUARY 4 - 5: ARROWHEAD GROOMER SHOW

How are snowmobile trails kept in such great shape? Hamblen Equipment, the home of Arrowhead Groomers in St. Germain, hosts the Arrowhead Groomer Show. It is one of the largest groomer shows in the Midwest. Come and see the equipment displays and learn how the snowmobile trails are kept in such great shape.

When: Wednesday, February 4 - Thursday, February 5

Where: 6351 State Hwy 70, St. Germain

<http://www.ArrowheadGroomers.com>
715.479.4200



A family rides their fat bikes on the Fern Ridge Trail in St. Germain.

FEBRUARY 13 - 14: ST. GERMAIN RADAR RUN

The St. Germain Chamber of Commerce, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club, St. Germain ATV Club, and the West Bay Racers are teaming up with the Snow Outlaws for a radar run. The Snow Outlaws are a professional racing organization and will race on a 500' track on the West Bay of Little St. Germain Lake. Paddle races will be held for other racers and don't forget the Bikini Races.

When: Friday, February 13 – Saturday, February 14

Where: Little St. Germain Lake, St. Germain
<http://www.st-germain.com> 715.477.2205

FEBRUARY 20 - 21: RIDE WITH THE CHAMPS

The annual ride will be presented by Livingston's Arctic Cat of Hillsboro, New Hampshire, and hosted by the Snowmobile Hall of Fame of St. Germain. Friday will be the John Deere Reunion Ride leaving the Hall of Fame at 9 am followed by the fish fry at 5 pm at Whitetail Inn. On Saturday, choose from one of six different rides. Check out the Hall of Fame's website for more details on all the rides and the fish fry.

When: Friday, February 20 - Saturday, February 21

Where: 1246 Sled World Blvd (off State Hwy 70 West)

<http://www.snowmobilehalloffame.com>

For more information on St. Germain's many events and activities, check out the St. Germain Chamber of Commerce web site at <https://st-germain.com/>.



JANUARY/FEBRUARY EVENTS

JAN. 17 Awassa Trail by Candlelight

FEB 4,5 Arrowhead Groomer Show

FEB 13,14 St. Germain Radar Run is back!

FEB 20,21 Ride with the Champs

Winter in the Heart of the Northwoods!

www.st-germain.com
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SPOTLIGHT | ELKHORN



Winter in Elkhorn: A Season of Quiet Adventure And Cozy Charm

For many, winter in the Elkhorn area begins on the slopes of Alpine Valley Resort, where skiers and snowboarders carve their way down hills suited to all experience levels. The resort hums with energy throughout the season, offering families, friends, and weekend adventurers a chance to savor the exhilaration of fresh snow. Those seeking a quieter connection with nature can glide along the White River State Trail, a serene stretch of beauty ideal for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or a scenic winter walk.

The region's lakes, Delavan and Geneva among them, take on a new identity in winter. When conditions allow, they become gathering places for ice anglers who relish the peaceful solitude of frozen water and the possibility of a great catch. Meanwhile, local parks, including Price Park Conservancy and the Kettle Moraine, provide inviting spaces for winter

photography, birdwatching, or simply enjoying the quiet stillness of a snow-covered landscape.

And of course, winter in Elkhorn wouldn't be complete without its cozy social spaces. Stops like Duesterbeck's Brewing Company provide the perfect backdrop for gathering with friends, sampling local flavors, and escaping the chill for an hour or two. Downtown shops and boutiques invite leisurely browsing, adding charm and warmth to even the coldest afternoons.

Winter here isn't a season to endure, it's one to savor. Elkhorn offers a harmonious blend of adventure and relaxation, where snow-dusted landscapes meet inviting indoor experiences. Whether you're chasing the thrill of the outdoors, enjoying a quiet hike, or settling in for a show or a craft brew, Elkhorn welcomes you to experience winter at its most delightful.



Winter in Elkhorn is ideal for snowboarding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or a scenic winter walk.

ALPINE VALLEY RESORT

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MOERICKE, FROM PAGE 11

Trying to salvage something from the morning, I drove out into the Nicolet National forest to check out a potential rifle hunting spot. It was then that I realized that I'd lost my phone during my grid search. How could this morning get any worse!?

I drove back to my cabin and noticed that my neighbor Mark Bugni was at home for lunch. I went over and explained my predicament wondering if he could call my phone to help me locate it. When I told him about the buck, he said "My dog is a bloodhound; let's go look for your deer." (To be clear, Louie is a Golden Doodle, not a bloodhound.)

Nonetheless, 20 minutes later after crossing a state highway, running a woods edge, and crossing yet another road, Mark yelled back to me that "I've got pretty good blood here." I caught up to him and 40 yards later, there was my buck! Sky high!

Oh, and retracing my steps I found my phone where it had fallen out of my sweatshirt pouch while climbing over a log. Double sky high!!

For the record, I bought my neighbor a bottle of medicinal rum and his dog a nice steak for their efforts. A good dog really is a man's best friend! Thank you, Louie!!

Talk about the ups and downs of bowhunting! I was spent. Just sayin.' 🐾



SPOTLIGHT | HAYWARD LAKES

Snowmobiling The Hayward Lakes: A Winter Adventure in Wisconsin's Northwoods

The Hayward Lakes Area in northwest Wisconsin boasts over 600 miles of groomed snowmobile trails winding through forests, glacial lakes, and rivers. Sawyer County's system is ideal for riders seeking space, scenery, and small-town charm, with plenty of fuel stops, restaurants, and cozy lodges ready to welcome visitors all winter.

These trails are maintained by dedicated local snowmobile club volunteers, who ensure safe, smooth conditions throughout the season. A great starting point for any trip is the Hayward Lakes Visitors and Convention Bureau, which offers trail maps, winter lodging options, and planning resources. Accommodations range from full-service resorts to rustic cabins, many with direct trail access. Staying along the scenic Chippewa Flowage puts riders within easy reach of classic Northwoods stops like Pat's Landing, Deerfoot Lodge, Musky Tale, and Chippewa Pines, many hosting fun T-shirt or hat runs throughout the season.

The Hayward Lakes trails extend well beyond the Flowage. Here's a suggested two-day itinerary:

Day 1: Begin on Trail 3, crossing the Chippewa Flowage and winding through forested routes to Highway K near Grindstone Lake. Stop at LCO Quick Stop for fuel, then follow the Grindstone Lake Trail along the east shoreline to Lac Courte Oreilles. Trail 3 continues the length of LCO, connecting to Corridor Trail 31 and the Tussock Trail (Corridor 10), passing villages like Couderay, Radisson, Ojibwa, and Winter, where fuel and food stops are available. Turning north onto Trail 5 takes riders across the East Fork of the Chippewa River and into the Chequamegon National Forest, with a must-stop at Louie's Landing near Moose Lake for a classic Northwoods meal. Loop back via Trail 3 to the Flowage for evening relaxation.

Day 2: Head north through the Chequamegon Forest on Trail 3 toward Lost Land Lake, with a snack stop at Reel Livin' Resort. Continue into Bayfield County via Corridor Trail 8 to Lake Namakagon, visiting Lakewoods Resort and Staudemeyer's 4-Season Resort. Return southwest to Sawyer County on Trail 4, touring Nelson Lake and stopping at Park Island Resort and Revell's Resort. Finish by looping back via Trail 9 to Trail 3 and the Flowage.

With its exceptional trails, welcoming communities, and abundant lodging, the Hayward Lakes Area is a snowmobiler's paradise. Seasoned riders and newcomers alike will find adventure around every turn, and plenty of reasons to return year after year. 🏂

By Mindy Simons-Executive Director, Hayward Lakes Visitors and Convention Bureau.



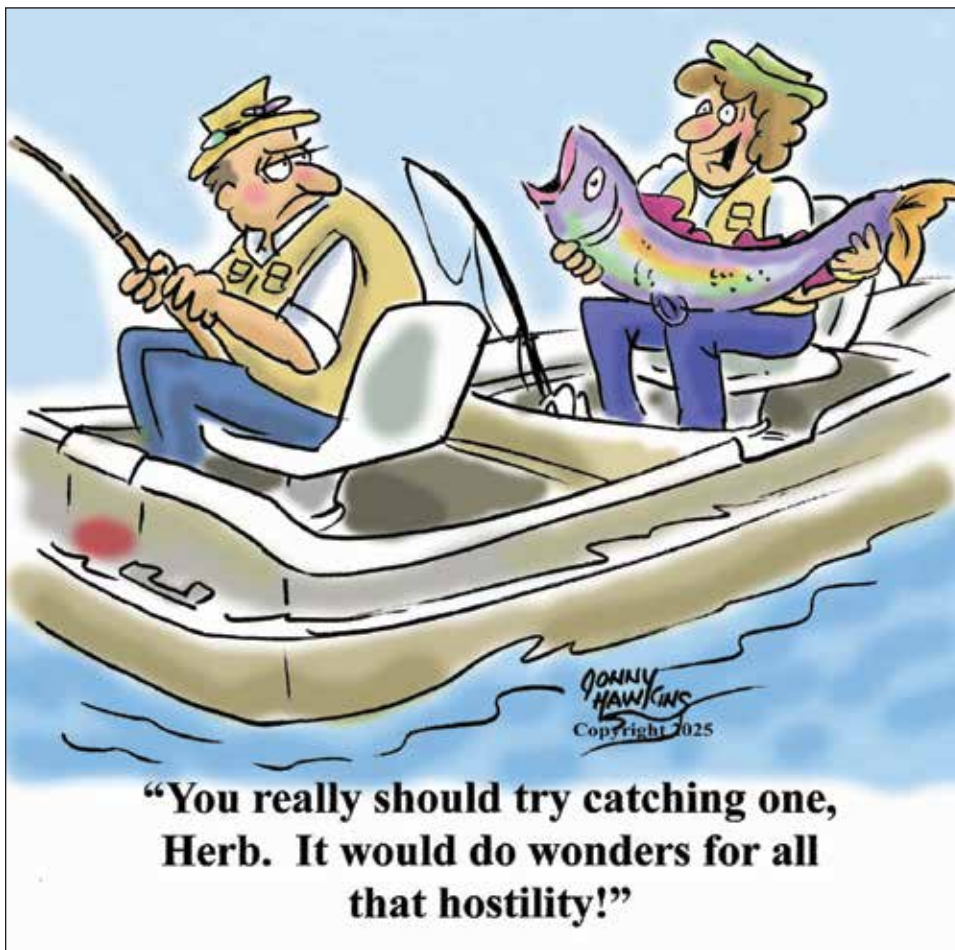
Snowmobile adventures await on 600 miles of groomed trails

HAYWARD LAKES
WISCONSIN

Visitors and Convention Bureau



haywardlakes.com
715-634-4801
Hayward, Wisconsin



Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | ASHLAND COUNTY

Book Across The Bay

Step into a winter tradition unlike any other! Saturday, February 14, 2026 Book Across the Bay transforms Chequamegon Bay into a shimmering path marked with candlelight, laughter, and adventure.

Skiers and snowshoers travel from near and far to be part of this magical nighttime experience. After crossing the finish line, celebrate in the big heated tent with music, food, drinks, and the famous high-energy after-party that keeps the fun going.

Enjoy Ashland's inviting restaurants, shops, and lodging to round out your getaway. www.visitashland.com





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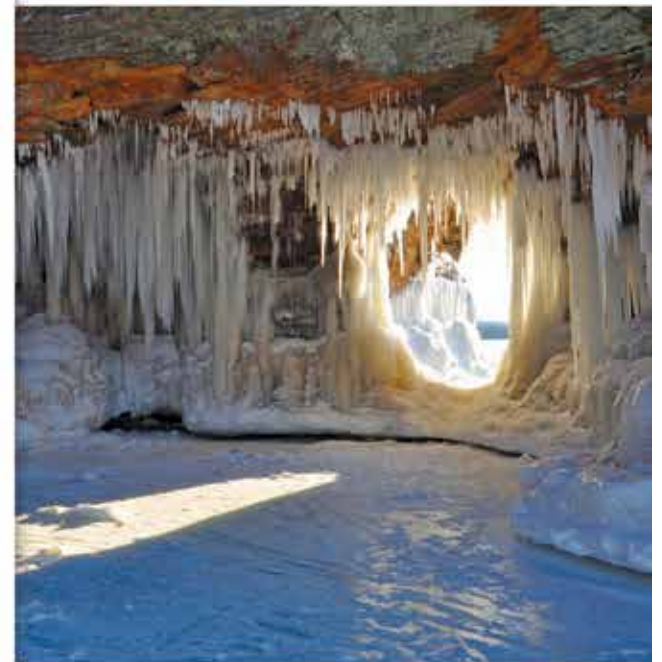


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SPOTLIGHT | KENOSHA

Winter Fun in Kenosha

Wisconsin winters are a great time to get outdoors and embrace the fresh, crisp air. From solo activities to family fun, there is an adventure beyond the expected in Southeastern Wisconsin. Hit the slopes at Wilmot Mountain. Enjoy skiing, snowboarding, and snow tubing. Families will appreciate the people mover conveyor that brings everyone back to the top of the tubing hill with ease. The ski hills range in skill level, and lessons are available on site for novice snow enthusiasts.

Enjoy FREE ice skating at Veterans Memorial Park. The City of Kenosha sponsors a free rink, with free skates available to borrow. You can hop aboard an authentic electric streetcar for a ride along the lakefront or stroll through the nearby Sculpture Walk and charming downtown before or after your spin.

Visit one of the many parks in Kenosha County with your favorite sled, toboggan, or saucer to cruise down a local hill. Several parks also have cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trails. Pringle Nature Center even has snowshoe rentals available. Select parks offer trails for snowmobiles and bike trails for fat tire cycles for those with



There's winter fun for everyone in Kenosha.

their own equipment. Hansen Park, located in Bristol, has a free ice rink as well!

There are many indoor activities to explore as well. Make friends with a T-Rex at the Dinosaur Discovery Museum

– a very manageable sized gallery for families with smaller children. “Seeing the Elephant” is a 360-degree movie experience which puts viewers in the center of a battlefield at the Civil War Museum. Mammoths excavated in Kenosha County can be seen at the Kenosha Public Museum. The Kenosha History Center houses the industrial narrative of Kenosha’s formative years, including the heavy presence of auto-manufacturing.

You can enjoy indoor recreation and dining with virtual golf at Tavern on Sixth, axe throwing at Hold My Beer, and more. All the activities are sure to work up an appetite, so stay for dinner. From the iconic HobNob Restaurant & Cocktail Lounge to traditional Italian venues like Villa D’Carlo and Casa Capri, Kenosha sets the table for something special. Breweries, sweet shops, and venues with items to bring home are abundant. If you’re a real foodie, mark your calendar for Kenosha Restaurant Week, February 21 – March 1, 2026. Schedule your getaway to Kenosha during this nine-day culinary adventure.

So put on your favorite winter gear and head out for a winter break in Kenosha! Start planning your getaway at VisitKenosha.com



RAISE A FORK TO SOME LOCAL FLAVOR

Have a taste for something different? Come in from the cold this winter and warm up with hot eats and deals. From diners, bistros and supper clubs to food festivals, live music and nightlife, Kenosha sets the table with food and entertainment just waiting to be savored.

KENOSHA
restaurant week

February 21 - March 1, 2026

Scan to explore the culinary scene in Kenosha



VISITKENOSHA.COM





SPOTLIGHT | PORT WASHINGTON



Own The Winter, Claim Your Adventure

Forget the cozy indoors. Lake Michigan in winter is raw, beautiful, and ready for action.

Port Washington isn't just a place to wait out the winter; it's a destination to own it. We embrace the quiet intensity of the season, transforming our bluffs, woods, and harbor into an authentic playground for those who seek more than just comfort. The iconic Port Washington Lighthouse beacons you over a scene of icy solitude, calling the brave to explore.

While the dedicated angler claims their space on the hard-water shoreline, the adventure doesn't end at the dock.

Tackle the frozen coastline.

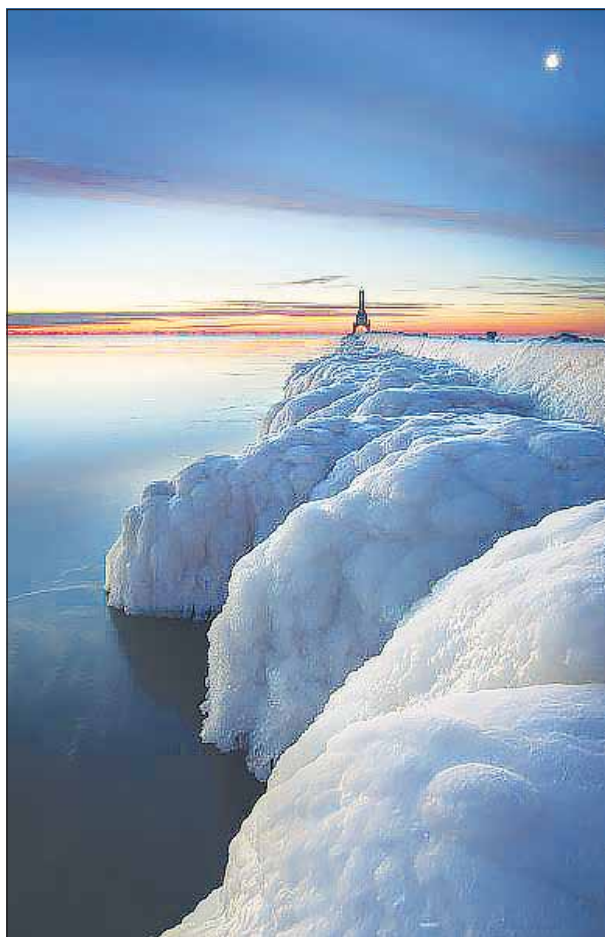
Our miles of coastal trails and wooded paths are primed for discovery. Feel the satisfying crunch of snow beneath wide tires as you take on the trails on your **fat-tire bike**. This is high-energy, year-round cycling at its best, demanding focus and rewarding you with thrilling descents and unique winter views.

For those who prefer a different kind of challenge, the deep snow awaits. Strap on your **cross-country skis** and glide across silent, snow-laden trails. Alternatively, **snowshoeing** offers a meditative way to navigate untouched terrain and uncover vistas overlooking the steel-gray expanse of Lake Michigan and our charming, historic downtown. Or traverse the frozen bluffs and accessible paths with winter **hiking**. Crisp air, panoramic views, and challenging inclines provide the ideal antidote to cabin fever. You'll feel the true spirit of a Wisconsin winter in your lungs and under your boots.

But true adventure waits where the wind and waves collide. Brave the chill and join the few who experience the thrill of **freshwater surfing** on Lake Michigan. When the right cold-weather swell hits, Port Washington is where you suit up for a truly unique and raw challenge.

After a day of tackling the elements - whether you're reeling in a cold-water trout, carving a track in fresh powder, cycling the frozen terrain, or logging miles on a hike - Port Washington welcomes you back. Find a warm, locally-owned spot to refuel, share stories of the day's conquest, and plan tomorrow's adventure.

This winter, don't just endure the season—**dominate it**. Bring your gear, feel the fresh air, and **claim your adventure on Wisconsin's most iconic winter coast**. 🌊



Tackle Wisconsin's most iconic winter coast

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Hiking

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NORTHERN PINES SLED DOG RACE

EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF THE NORTHWOODS!



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7		
8:45 AM	8-Dog Race	32 Miles
10:00 AM	14-Dog Race	17 Miles
10:00 AM	Weight Pull	16 Feet
12:50 PM	Kids Fun Mutt Run	75 Feet
12:45 PM	4-Dog Race	4 Miles
2:15 PM	6-Dog Race	8 Miles

ALL DAY ACTIVITIES

- * Food and Craft Vendors
- * Sled Dog Rides for Public
- * Free Snowshoeing
- * Race Swag
- * Meet the Mushers & Dogs

JOIN US FOR THE RACE – DON'T MISS THIS UNIQUE WINTER ACTIVITY

NORTHERN PINES GOLF COURSE & EVENT CENTER
IRON RIVER, WISCONSIN

FREE ENTRY/FREE PARKING/FREE SHUTTLE
WARM UP INSIDE OUR LARGE INDOOR VIEWING AREA!




northernpinessdr.com




SPOTLIGHT | IRON RIVER



Annual Sled Dog Race a Remarkable Wisconsin Tradition

Each winter, as snow settles deep across the Northwoods, one of Wisconsin's most remarkable outdoor traditions returns to life. The 7th Annual Northern Pines Sled Dog Race once again brings the vibrant spirit of mushing to Bayfield County, celebrating the enduring partnership between sled dogs and their human counterparts. More than just a competition, the event reflects the values that make northern communities strong - family connection, environmental stewardship, and a shared love for wild, winter adventure.

This cherished race draws over 60 professional and recreational mushers from across the Midwest, each ready to test their skill, teamwork, and determination on the scenic trails of the Bayfield County Forest. With five different racing categories, from high-speed pro teams to family-friendly recreational classes, the Northern Pines Sled Dog Race welcomes athletes and enthusiasts of all ages. Young adventurers are never left out - the popular kid-centered mutt run, snowshoe events, and exhilarating sled dog rides ensure that the next generation gets a true taste of mushing excitement.



Deeply rooted in a tradition dating back thousands of years, sled dog racing is far more than a winter pastime. It is a testament to perseverance, heritage, and the profound bond between humans and their canine partners. Organizers of the Northern Pines Sled Dog Race take pride in honoring this legacy. Their mission centers on promoting the spirit and heritage of sled dogs while championing community, family, and environmental values. The race is committed to the highest standards of canine welfare, sportsmanship, and ecological care, ensuring that every participant - two-legged and four-egged - can compete in an atmosphere of respect and excellence.

For spectators, the event offers a rare chance to immerse themselves in the intensity and beauty of mushing. With free admission and multiple vantage points - whether from the cozy warmth of the Clubhouse or along the forested trail - visitors are treated to a genuine front-row seat. Throughout the day, thousands gather to cheer, mingle with local businesses, and experience the electric energy that sweeps through the pines as each team races by.

More than a race, the Northern Pines Sled Dog Race is a Northwoods celebration: a community gathering, a tribute to tradition, and an invitation to experience winter's wild heart. Mark your calendars for February 7 - this is a day you'll remember long after the snow has melted! 🐾

For more information, visit northernpinessdr.com.

Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | CITY OF MARINETTE



Don't Escape Winter...Experience it With Us

Winter in Marinette transforms the city into a crisp, snow-dusted playground where outdoor adventure, cozy comforts, and small-town charm come together. When the temperatures drop, the experiences only heat up.

Start outdoors, where winter truly shines. Snowmobiling is a local favorite, with miles of well-groomed trails weaving through forests and along scenic waterways. Riders can explore the region known as Wisconsin's Waterfall Capital, where frozen cascades like Dave's Falls and Long Slide Falls create striking, photo-worthy backdrops. For those who prefer a quieter pace, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing offer peaceful ways to experience the stillness of winter. Glide through wooded trails, breathe in the fresh

air, and enjoy the kind of silence only winter can provide.

Ice fishing is another must-try experience. The Menominee River and nearby bays become hubs of activity as anglers set up shanties and wait for a bite. Even for beginners, local bait shops and outfitters make it easy to give it a try. There's something uniquely satisfying about pulling a fish from beneath the ice while surrounded by a frozen landscape.

If staying warm indoors sounds more appealing, Marinette delivers there, too. The city's Community REC Center has an indoor ice rink, pickleball, tennis, basketball courts, and an indoor turf section to accommodate a wide variety of sports activities.

Winter is also the perfect time to explore Marinette's dining scene. Cozy cafés invite visitors to linger over hot coffee, homemade soups, and fresh-baked treats. Local restaurants serve everything from classic comfort food to creative takes on regional favorites, making it easy to warm up after a day outside. Pair dinner with a local craft beer, local distilled cocktails, or Marinette's winery, and you've got a perfect winter evening.

Families will find plenty to do as well. Sledding hills come alive after a fresh snowfall, and skating rinks provide classic winter fun for all ages. Seasonal events, holiday markets, and winter festivals bring the community together, filling the calendar with opportunities to celebrate the season. From parades to pop-up events, winter in

Marinette feels festive and welcoming.

For those seeking relaxation, winter offers a slower, more reflective side of the city. Take a scenic drive along the river, watch snow fall gently over the water, or enjoy a quiet walk through downtown shops. The combination of natural beauty and small-town warmth makes winter an ideal time to reconnect, recharge, and explore at your own pace.

In Marinette, winter isn't something to escape—it's something to experience. Whether it's chasing outdoor adventure, savoring local flavors, or enjoying a cozy night in town, visitors will find that winter here is full of memorable moments waiting to be discovered.

Make It Unforgettable!

MARINETTE

Perfectly Seasoned

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We still distribute 600,000 print copies of *On Wisconsin Outdoors* annually throughout Wisconsin, including from 450 Kwik Trip stores. Simply stop in and pick up a copy.

All six issues of *OWO* are still posted on our homepage at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com for the online reader.

OWO hunts, fishes and travels Wisconsin. See you in the field. See you on the water. See you on the road.



JOHN FAUCHER

Put Your Show on Ice

Central Wisconsin fishing report

Anglers Welcome Early Ice

Anglers across Northeast Central Wisconsin, especially in Waupaca and Portage Counties, are celebrating an early, solid freeze-up. A strong early hard water season means better access and a longer overall fishing window. As one local angler put it, “The more ice the merrier.”

Key Fishing Forecast: Low Water Outlook

Anglers fishing the Wolf River system are predicted to see two crucial times of high fish activity this year:

Phase 1 (Early Ice): The season has already started hot for nice bluegills and perch in the river’s bayous and backwaters.

Phase 2 (Late Ice Surge): As ponds and shallow lakes attached to the backwaters begin to freeze out, anglers will see an increase in fish moving to more oxygenated water. This is shaping up to be a great year for backwater perch off the Wolf.

For all Wolf River area fishing needs, connect with Johnny’s Little Shop of Bait at www.thelittleshoppeofbait.com or 920-982-4802.



Dakota and Mindy Otto show off a pair of fish caught on Hatch Lake near Iola. Photo by John Faucher.

DENNY MURAWSKA

Pick a Stick

Your safety grip

Despite our best intentions, we all slip and fall. This propensity seems to increase exponentially with ice, snow, and old age. Throw in an artificial hip and gimpy, arthritic knee, and you will be just like me.

Years ago, after my first hip surgery, I learned to walk very, very carefully during my times afield. The consequences of dislocation or breakage are daunting. Unlike the young bucks in commercials, I cannot vault off the back of a pickup anymore. Yet, I continue to get out as much as possible and hike, hunt mushrooms, and scout new hunting grounds.

I have been using my long staff for many years, and actually feel uncomfortable without it while exploring or penguin walking across a frozen parking lot. Not to be confused with a short cane, which will make you look hunched and geriatric, a staff allows you to instantly grip it if you feel yourself going down.

A short candy cane design will not do this. One of my wooden sticks is 47 inches long with a knobby end on it almost like an Irish shillelagh, which were useful weapons in their time. The longer Japanese staff known as a bo is a devastating weapon in



trained hands. A rubber tip protects the wood walking stick and tile floors. In winter, I add a short spike for gripping ice.

The hilly Coulee region of Wisconsin has plenty of wet roots that just beg to be slipped on. A good staff can help you catch yourself and avert a tragedy. Getting in and out of a boat in shallow water is made much simpler with this “extra leg” to balance on. Need a shooting stick? A screw hole in one end will allow an attachment perfect for a

monopod. If you want to get a bit crazier, there are spear points, frog gigs, and other sharp things that you can modify your all-purpose tool with.

While there are high tech aluminum, adjustable models out there, I prefer my wooden helper. There are many strong woods to choose from, but I highly recommend wax wood or rattan. Almost unbreakable, you can get long lengths that can be modified in the wax wood. I have a



few simple carvings on mine. Escrima stick masters in the Orient use a torch to burn designs on theirs. The look is very nice, and has a camo effect like a leopard.

A well-designed and balanced long staff will be a friend for sure. It will save some wear and tear on your knees and hips and add to your upper body workout in addition to providing many other uses. Buy one or make one. There will come a time when you will be glad you did. 🐾



SPOTLIGHT | TWO RIVERS



Two Rivers Wisconsin Charter Fishing

Experience world-class charter fishing in Two Rivers

Nestled along the scenic shores of Lake Michigan, Two Rivers offers one of the Midwest's best destinations for charter fishing enthusiasts and families alike. With its charming small-town feel, beautiful waterfront views, and welcoming community, Two Rivers provides the perfect setting for a day, weekend, or weeklong getaway filled with adventure, relaxation, and unforgettable memories.

At the heart of the local fishing scene is Seagull Marina and Campground, a full-service facility that offers everything you need for a comfortable and convenient stay. From spacious campsites and modern amenities to easy lake access and friendly service, Seagull Marina is the ideal home base for your Lake Michigan fishing experience. Whether you're parking your RV, pitching a tent, or docking your boat, you'll find everything you need just steps away from the water.

Two Rivers is home to a number of experienced charter boat captains who are passionate about sharing their love for Lake Michigan fishing. With years of expertise, these captains know where the big ones are biting and how to make your trip both safe and successful. Anglers can look forward to reeling in trophy-sized salmon and trout, all while taking in the breathtaking views of the sunrise over Lake Michigan. Each charter is fully equipped with professional gear and state-of-the-art technology, ensuring that your day on the water is truly the trip of a lifetime.

After a rewarding day of fishing, guests can take advantage of the fish freezing service at the Lighthouse Inn, making it easy to preserve and take home your fresh catch. The Lighthouse Inn also offers comfortable accommodations, on-site dining, and stunning lakefront views—perfect for unwinding after a long day on the water.

Beyond fishing, Two Rivers offers a variety of activities for the whole family. Explore the nearby beaches, bike along scenic trails, visit local shops, or enjoy delicious Wisconsin-style dining downtown. Whether you're casting a line, relaxing by the campfire, or simply soaking up the lakeside atmosphere, Two Rivers offers something for everyone.

With its exceptional value, friendly hospitality, and world-class fishing opportunities, charter fishing out of Two Rivers promises an experience you'll never forget - a true Lake Michigan adventure waiting to be discovered. 🎣



Two Rivers offers one of the Midwest's best destinations for charter fishing enthusiasts and families alike.

For a full list of charter boats, places to stay, dining, and activities, visit exploretworivers.com.

DUWE, FROM PAGE 5

brightness. Most glow sticks last six to eight hours and are easy to replace.

Traditional glow lures painted with phosphorescent coatings still have a place in your tackle box. They do fade, so recharging is essential. Small LED lights work best and can refresh the lure in seconds. The budget-friendly option - your phone's flashlight - also gets the job done.

Glow ice jigs come in a huge range of sizes, shapes, and glow patterns. All have their moment. The ongoing debate between lead/tin versus tungsten continues, and each

material has its strengths. Lead/tin offers a slower, more natural fall, which is ideal for subtle, finicky bites. Tungsten is heavier for its size, allowing your jig to reach fish faster and often eliminating the need for a split shot.

Many newer jigs now feature multiple glow colors, increasing visibility and giving fish more to key in on. Since no single glow color works best in all situations, having two glowing shades can double your chances of triggering a strike.

Line choice matters just as much as lure choice. During daylight hours, I typically use two-pound fluorocarbon for

its low visibility. Under low-light conditions, I switch to four-pound line. The slightly larger diameter is easier to manage, reduces tangles, and rarely affects the bite when visibility is already low.

Going with the glow can help you put more fish on the ice, especially during early morning and late evening. Try incorporating glow baits into your routine - and don't be afraid to arrive a little earlier or stay a little later with this new secret weapon. 🎣

Dave Duwe owns Dave Duwe's Guide Service in Southeastern Wisconsin. He can be reached at 262-728-8063.

The Wisconsin Outdoor Events Page

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EVENT	DATES	LOCATION	CONTACT
SCI Wisconsin Chapter Grand Banquet	Feb 13-14	Brookfield Conference Center	www.sciwi.org
SCI-Northeast Wisconsin Chapter, 27th Annual SCI Hunters Banquet	Feb 28	Stadium Bar and Grill, Green Bay	www.newisi.com
Wisconsin State Hunting and Fishing Expo	February 27-March 1	Resch Expo, Green Bay	920-676-1915
2026 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show	March 6-8	State Fair Park	www.jssportsshow.com
2026 Wi Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show	March 13-15	Hilton Garden Inn-Oshkosh	www.wisportingcollectibles.com or 920-379-5889

Promote your outdoor show or gathering at no cost. To list your coming event, send event name, dates, event location and contact information to ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com or 262-352-5579.

Coming Soon! **The \$25,000 Spring Sportsman's Giveaway**

Register now to win \$25,000 worth of outdoor raffle prizes from fishing equipment to firearms in the 2026 Spring Sportsman's Giveaway!

Connect with www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com after January 1 for more information from the Spring Sportsman's Giveaway sponsors.

- 1) You will be asked to provide your email and phone contact information to enter.**
- 2) You're registered!**
- 3) The raffle giveaways begin this spring.**



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DICK ELLIS

Wolf Tracks

Bill passes House, sportsmen vote critical

As Hunter Nation-Wisconsin Chapter State Director Chris Vaughan continued his presentation November 14th at a Town Hall meeting in Green Bay focused on the critical need for sportsmen and women to protect the heritage of hunting by voting, a few photos were worth 1000 words. Wolf and whitetail deer management in Wisconsin were under scrutiny. Vaughan pointed to a slide with four trail cam shots sent from Wisconsin hunters that Hunter Nation had received in days prior to the meeting.

“There are 42 wolves total in these photos,” Vaughan said. “The photos were taken over four consecutive months in 2025 from July through October, in four different counties. The Wisconsin DNR 2025 wolf population estimate is 1,226 wolves. Does that mean with these four photos we have captured 3.4 percent of the entire Wisconsin wolf population?”



10-29-2025 Clark County 1 Wolf Pursues Deer (Still shot edited from approximate 5-second video posted now at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com including predator/prey).

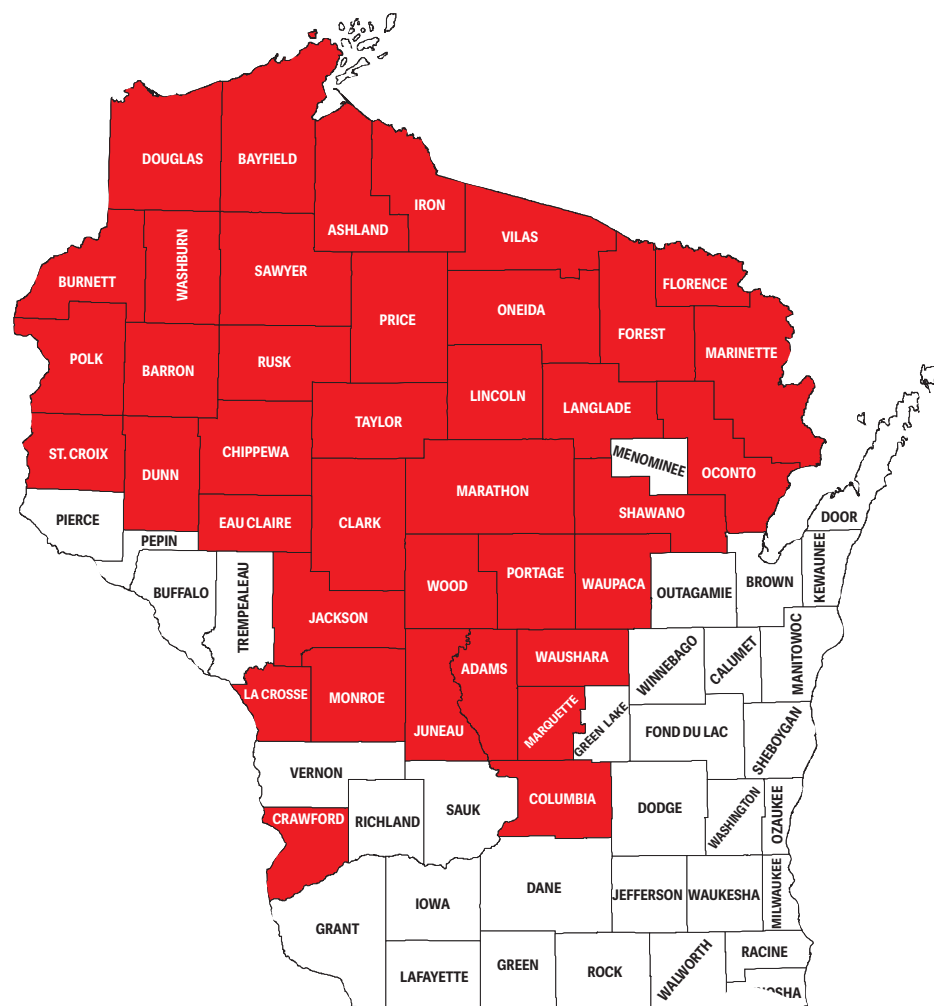


09-14-2024 Adams County 8 Wolves (Still shot edited from video posted now at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com).

On Wisconsin Outdoors has been asking similar questions since launching our informal wolf population census two years ago asking our audience of hunters and landowners to submit their trail cam photos and videos in an effort to determine accurate numbers of wolves in Wisconsin.

OWO publishers did not agree with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) population estimate that placed wolf numbers in Wisconsin at 1007 animals during the winter of 2022/23. We do believe that an unmanaged wolf population in the state directly correlates with a severely declining deer hunting experience, beginning in the north country. We believe that the decline in our Wisconsin tradition will magnify further as individual wolves and wolf packs continue to expand to create an increasingly out-of-balance predator-prey ratio. Recent submissions of readers still shots and increasingly more videos reinforce that belief.

In October, an OWO reader sent us a video of nine wolves in southern Bayfield County. In November, another reader sent a 10-second video of a whitetail deer being pursued by a wolf on his Clark County property. In December, we received a video from an Adams County of eight wolves traveling a winter landscape past the camera, which followed the receipt of a large pack in a fall video from the same county. To watch each video from start to finish, connect with our new website at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com. The clips will be periodically rotated on site. Along with wolf depredation reports received by OWO from USDA Wildlife Services, reader contributions from the field makes



us question, like Hunter Nation, just how many wolves are in Wisconsin, and what is their impact on a balanced predator-prey relationship.

On November 12, 2025, USDA-Wildlife Services verified in a report received by OWO that wolves killed a cow on a property in the town of Port Wing, Bayfield County. On December 5, 2025 USDA-Wildlife Services verified a wolf depredation of a hunting dog in the town of Millston, Jackson County. On December 11, 2025, USDA-Wildlife Services verified a wolf depredation of a hunting dog in the town of Little Rice, Oneida County. On December 15, 2025 USDA-Wildlife Services verified a wolf injured a pet dog in the town of Texas, Marathon County.

Depredation reports like these received by

OWO from Wildlife Services are frequent enough to accurately be defined as routine. With the number of photos and videos also received from our audience growing, we conclude that wolf numbers in Wisconsin are far understated. What can't be overstated is the importance of your vote toward placing judges and lawmakers in office who will protect the heritage of hunting.

On December 18th, a Bill introduced by Wisconsin Congressman Tom Tiffany and Colorado Representative Lauren Boebert, the Pet and Livestock Protection Act passed the full U.S House by a vote of 211-204. The bill now moves to the senate. H.R. 845 would direct the Secretary of Interior to reissue the Department of the Interior's 2020 final rule that delisted gray wolves in the 48

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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ELLIS, FROM PAGE 27

states from the Endangered Species Act and ensure the decision is not subject to judicial review. The legislation is necessary due to a ruling by a radical California judge that placed wolves in states like Wisconsin with ever-increasing wolf populations under federal protection.

Also, 2025 State of Wisconsin Bill 687 would require the DNR to establish a statewide wolf population goal in its wolf management plan. The amendment reads, "If the wolf is not listed on the federal endangered list and is not listed on the state endangered list, the department (DNR) shall allow the hunting and trapping of wolves and shall implement a wolf management plan that establishes a statewide wolf population goal."

As legislation plays out, your photos will continue to help verify or challenge state population estimates. Science-based wildlife management is only possible with accurate numbers of predator and prey serving as the foundation for decisions. Help us verify truth in numbers. Wherever it leads us.

Send your trail cam photos, videos, or hand-held camera shots of wolves in Wisconsin to: wolves@onwisconsinoutdoors.com. List the county where the photos were taken, the date, and verify the number of wolves visible in each photo. Your name will not be published without your permission. 🐾



At a Town Hall meeting in Green Bay, Hunter Nation-Wisconsin Chapter State Director Chris Vaughan stressed the importance of sportsmen and women voting to protect our heritage. Hunter Nation Founder Keith Mark and Wisconsin Gubernatorial candidate Tom Tiffany also addressed the audience. Vaughan's presentation is outlined in this issue on page 12.

Outdoor Media Includes Wisconsin Wolf Talk

On Wisconsin Outdoors' publishers have been guests on the Steve Schroeder podcasts to offer views on the Wisconsin wolf population and correlating effect on deer hunting. We will soon also be guests of Dean Romano's Outdoor Wild.

To listen to Steve Schroeder's talk shows, connect with WHBL.com Sheboygan Am 1330 and FM 101.5 or WTAQ.com Green Bay AM1360 and 97.5 FM. Schroeder's wolf interview with OWO will be sent upon request.

To listen and watch the TV Show, Outdoor Wild with Dean Romano, connect with Gen 7 outdoors, YouTube and Rumble www.outdoorwild.net.



08-23-2025 Wood County 2 Wolves.



10-11-2025 Bayfield County 9 Wolves (Still shot edited from video posted now at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com).



10-11-2025 Bayfield County 9 Wolves (Still shot edited from video posted now at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com).

GARY LANGER

Protecting Your Truck

The Story of the Legend Brush Guard

Origins: A Farmer's Challenge

Several years ago, Bryce Harding - a young dairy farmer from Wausaukee - found himself facing a serious obstacle. His truck wasn't just transportation; it was the lifeline of his farm, a rolling toolbox stocked with welders, wrenches, fuel tanks, and spare parts. Without reliable access to it, daily operations became a struggle. Protecting this vital equipment wasn't optional, it was essential. That realization sparked an idea that would change the way vehicles are safeguarded.

Innovation: Turning Necessity Into Design

Starting with his existing Boss™ Snowplow Mount, Harding began sketching and building a protective barrier that could withstand the toughest conditions. The result was the **Legend Brush Guard** - a rugged, functional solution that blended durability with smart design. Recognizing

the originality of his invention, Harding secured a patent and set out to share his creation with others who understood the importance of keeping their vehicles and gear protected.

Collaboration: From Vision to Market

To bring his innovation to a wider audience, Harding partnered with **Industrial Works**, a respected metal fabrication powerhouse in Green Bay. Known for their mastery in design and manufacturing, Industrial Works helped refine the Legend Brush Guard, elevating it into a product that delivers uncompromising quality, resilience, and performance.

Impact: More Than Protection

What began as a shield against deer strikes, brush, and debris has evolved into something greater - a symbol of resilience, ingenuity, and adaptability. The

Legend Brush Guard now serves a diverse community:

- Hunters navigating rugged terrain
- Anglers hauling gear to remote waters
- Snowmobilers braving icy trails
- Loggers working deep in the woods
- Ranchers managing unforgiving landscapes
- Utility contractors tackling demanding jobs
- Emergency response teams operating under pressure

Its design emphasizes not just protection, but **ease of use, efficiency, and versatility**, making it the preferred choice across industries and outdoor pursuits.

Adaptability: Expanding Possibilities

The Brush Guard's versatility grows even further when paired with accessories like



the Warn® Winch or Vehicle Tow Mount, unlocking new levels of functionality for virtually any operational need.

Legacy: A Testament to Collaboration

The success of the Legend Brush Guard underscores a powerful truth: when designers, engineers, and industry experts come together, they don't just build products - they set new standards of excellence. Harding's journey from farmyard necessity to industry innovation is proof that resilience and collaboration can create solutions that stand the test of time. 🤝

For more information, connect with www.legendbrushguards.com and www.ind-works.com. Dealership opportunities available in select areas.

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Supreme Consequences

The Wisconsin Supreme Court and Act 10

In the next few months, the State Supreme Court will rule on the constitutionality of Act 10. In simplest terms Act 10 has saved Wisconsin property tax payers an estimated \$36 billion dollars, since 2011. Now, our highest court has a case before it to eliminate Act 10.

How did it save those dollars? In 2011, Wisconsin was in dire financial difficulty with a huge deficit. The legislature and governor looked for ways to reduce state spending and ultimately focused on employee benefits that were out of line with the private sector. At the time state employees made no contribution toward their health care coverage or pension plans. The legislation eliminated the concept of a closed shop for state employees and limited pay raised to no more than the inflation rate. With government pay rates consistently higher than the private sector, Act 10 called for a minimum contribution for health insurance of 12.6% and a minimum pension contribution 3% of the annual contribution. These were well below the public sector at that time.

Three principal groups; state employees (teachers a main factor), union leaders because of lost power and revenues and, one political party that relied on the other two groups for financial and voting support understandably opposed this. Rather than adapt, they choose to fight.

Over the past decade, they have gone to court on numerous occasions, including Federal court, and pleaded for a reversal of Act 10. These appeals lost each time. Until now.

In the spring of 2025, a Madison circuit judge ruled Act 10 unconstitutional. The case is now headed through the court system to the Supreme Court.

What is different now? The makeup of the court. Many believe the majority of the court members are predisposed to reversing the law because of their political and work backgrounds. For example, the newest justice actually was an attorney representing the unions when Act 10 was passed. And, has been said to consistently support its repeal over the years.

If Act 10 is repealed, the result will include an average estimated property tax increase of \$624.00 annually to fund state employees getting 100% pension and health care contribution coverage. Unions get mandatory membership revenues from dues and a political party will significantly improve its' strength.

What does this have to do with economics? Individually, the average annual \$624 tax will hurt any person's budget. Second, on a state wide level, Wisconsin will become less competitive as it will cost more to do business here. Taxpayers are not buying better or expanded services. They are only paying more for the existing level of services. Essentially an inflation factor.

All we can suggest is communication with friends, neighbors, legislators, and the State Supreme Court with respect to your opinions on this legislation. Unfortunately, this is in the legal system/political arena and, the economic consequences are set. 🗳️

James Bohn, Greg Grambow and Rob Mulcahy are with Personal Economics, Inc. an economic and financial education non-profit. Contact them at personal.economis.org.

DICK ELLIS

White House Introduces Media Bias Portal

Invites American citizens to participate in submitting incidents of misinformation

The White House in early December launched a website specifically designed to include everyday Americans in the “overwhelming” task of watchdogging a corrupt media. In a press release received by On Wisconsin Outdoors, the White House introduced the Media Bias Portal (www.whitehouse.gov/biastips.com) as a “service to truth and transparency” and invited all citizens to directly participate in submitting incidents of media misinformation.

The purpose of the website is to combat baseless lies and purposely omitted content of the media, “a tall task”, according to the White House communication, that demands the help of everyone who believes in facts and accuracy. “That’s why the White House is calling on everyday Americans to support the truth and hold the fake news accountable. By visiting www.whitehouse.gov/biastips.com anyone can submit biased or undeniably false articles, and valid submissions will be used to keep the Media Bias Portal updated.

“So-called ‘journalists’ have made it impossible

to identify every false or misleading story, which is why help from the American people is essential,” the release concludes. “The days of the Fake News Media controlling the narrative with lies, fake anonymous sources, and willful bias are over. If the legacy media won’t honor their responsibility to accurately inform the public, we know the American people will.”

At a live press conference December 2nd, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt reinforced the message and said that daily media corruption is overwhelming to the point that it’s “difficult to keep up with it all.” “It goes to our promise on day one to hold the media accountable,” she said.

OWO Publisher opinion: Intentional media bias can range from a selected photo or wording in a headline, to omission of content, to orchestrated campaigns of deceit like ‘Russian collusion’ lasting years and targeting the disengaged citizens who rely on media for facts. Learning to critically think when interpreting ‘news’ is critical to the survival of our Constitutional Republic. 🗳️



Secretary of War Pete Hegseth photo as published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel October 9. Was this photo chosen to evoke a favorable response of Hegseth from readers, unfavorable, or neither?

OWO Launches New Website

Bringing you outdoor sports, Wisconsin trips, truth in news

With the new year, On Wisconsin Outdoors introduces its new website at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com. In addition to every OWO issue as usual posted on our homepage at no cost for the online reader, expect hunting and fishing stories from our field experts, trip destinations from our tourism partners, and straight news and examination of topics of vital importance to our audience from election verifiability to management of wolves, walleyes and whitetails.

Use the website if you choose to sign up for every issue of OWO delivered right in your inbox as a PDF. No cost, as always. Connect with freeowo@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

In our 19th year, thank you for checking in with On Wisconsin Outdoors. Read OWO online, or pick up each copy at one of more than 500 Kwik Trip stores across Wisconsin. We appreciate it. And as they sayhere we grow again. 🗳️

Editorials are the opinions of the OWO Publishers and do not reflect the opinions of our advertisers or contributing professionals.

JOHN ELLIS

Schoemann, Tiffany, Or Someone Else Who will be the leader Wisconsin voters overwhelmingly support?

On October 3rd, 2025, *Waukesha County Circuit Court Judge Michael Maxwell* ordered that 3.8 million names on the Wisconsin Elections Commission's (WEC) voter registration list be audited for citizenship. But Judge Maxwell's order doesn't go far enough for three reasons.

1. *There are factually more than 8.2 million total names on the WEC's voter registration list, not 3.8 million.*
2. *Non-citizens are only a small subset of all the ineligible voter names on the WEC's list. The other subsets that make up the majority include:*
 - A. *People who have died.*
 - B. *People who have moved.*
 - C. *People who have committed a crime that makes them ineligible to vote.*
 - D. *People who have been found mentally unable to vote.*
3. *Only a complete audit of all 8.2 million names for overall voter eligibility, would find and remove more than 4 million ineligible voters.*

The candidate for Wisconsin Governor who clearly communicates this information to the voters, as part of his larger plan to restore verifiability to our elections, will demonstrate that he has a thorough understanding of Wisconsin's most important issue.

He will be the leader Wisconsin voters overwhelmingly support.

Will it be Schoemann, Tiffany, or someone else? 🗳️

JOHN ELLIS

Request your free copy of *Restoring Verifiable Elections*

For more than two years, *On Wisconsin Outdoors (OWO)* has reported on *why* Wisconsin's elections are unverifiable.

We used the information gathered to outline a seven-step plan that would restore verifiability, by ensuring that *every vote counted is tied to an eligible voter.*

The plan, titled *Restoring Verifiable Elections*, was published in the November/December issue of OWO.

To get your free copy, email jellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com. 🗳️

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