

Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Update



September 2022

YCC delegates and mentors,

Outdoor opportunities are endless this time of year. It is a perfect month to spend enjoying some of the last warm days of summer, hiking, fishing, or scouting for the upcoming hunting season. Please reach out to your mentor if you are interested in hunting opportunities in your county. If you are new to hunting and want to learn more, check out the Wisconsin DNR's featured [hunting webinars](#).


In October, YCC delegates are invited to a fall upland bird hunt at Mead Wildlife Area. The morning will be spent hunting for grouse and woodcock. New and experienced hunters are encouraged to attend. Mentors will provide instruction and trained dogs will be present to assist with the hunt. We hope to see you there!

Take care! ~Kyle Zenz, YCC Coordinator

We want to feature photos of you in our monthly newsletters. Email or text outdoor pictures of yourself to:
kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov
or 715.299.0295



Visit the [WCC Facebook site](#) to see what's new



Outdoor Adventures



Tommy, YCC delegate from Vilas Co. traveled to Canada on a family vacation and caught this huge Musky - his personal best!



Caleb, YCC delegate from St. Croix Co. participated in a Trout Unlimited fishing camp.



Gavin & Gabby, YCC delegates from Jefferson Co. set up a booth talking about youth shooting sports opportunities. Gabby is using this outreach as part of her YCC Individual Focus Opportunity.



Wisconsin Youth Conservation Contacts

YCC Oversight Committee Chair: Trent Tonn (262) 534-1962 / ttonn@basd.k12.wi.us

YCC Oversight Committee Vice Chair: Reed Kabelowsky (920) 242-3144 / r.kabelowsky@sbcglobal.net

YCC Oversight Committee Secretary: Tashina Peplinski (262) 483-2483 / tashina@startistries.com

YCC Coordinator: Kyle Zenz (715) 299-0925 / kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov

WCC Liaison: Kari Lee-Zimmermann (608) 266-0580 / Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov

Welcome

We are excited to welcome new delegates to the YCC:

Parker, Portage County

Charlie, Ozaukee County



OUTDOOR ADVENTURES - DUCK BANDING

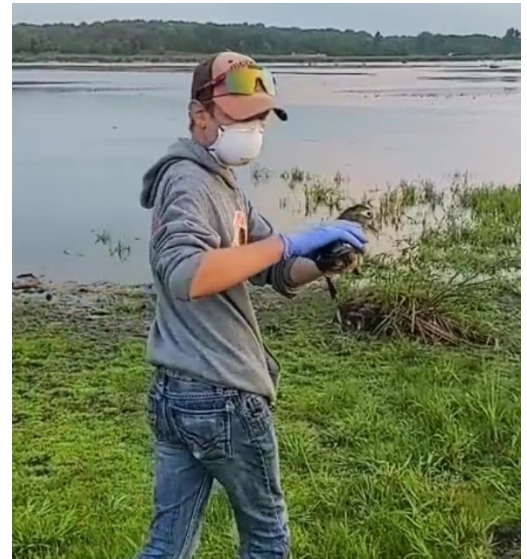
YCC delegates assisted the WI DNR with duck banding across the state. Biologists utilize help from volunteers to hold the ducks while individual data is recorded and identification leg bands are positioned. This is a great opportunity to see ducks up close and learn more about their overall population and migration patterns.



Caleb, YCC delegate from St. Croix Co.

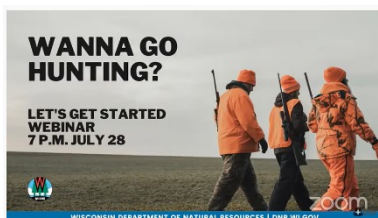


Shawn, YCC delegate from Racine Co.



Brody, YCC delegate from Racine Co.

WANNA GO HUNTING? DNR HUNTING WEBINAR SERIES



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting several educational hunting webinars for members of the public that are new to hunting or hunting curious. The webinar series is in partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever and Becoming an Outdoorswoman.

The series is designed for those interested in learning about hunting, fishing and trapping. Each episode will feature guest speakers sharing their experiences getting started with hunting and include discussions addressing common challenges faced by those new to hunting, fishing or trapping.

[The first webinar of the series – Wanna Go Hunting? Let's Get Started!](#) – will cover how to get started and includes insights from novice hunters who explain their hunting journey through the eyes of a beginner.

[The second webinar – Wanna Go Hunting: What Can We Hunt?](#) – covers the wide variety of hunting opportunities available in Wisconsin and basic equipment needs to get started.

[The third webinar - Wanna Go Hunting: Where Can We Hunt?](#) - will share information about finding lands open to public hunting and tips on getting access to private land. This will be held live on September 21st.

Follow the [DNR YouTube](#) channel to learn more.

2022 Waterfowl Hunters Expo YOUTH ZONE



The Oshkosh [Waterfowl Hunting Expo](#) is only in its second year, but you wouldn't know that from the size of the crowd on Saturday, August 27, 2022. The expo was co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and included presentations on wetland productivity, waterfowl breeding and research, habitat restoration, and information on the 2022 waterfowl hunting season.

Hands down, one of the main attractions was the Youth Zone designed and led by the YCC oversight committee with assistance from many WCC and YCC volunteers. Youth Zone partners included the Outdoor Heritage Education Center (Touch of the Wild trailers), the Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructor Association (pellet gun shooting), MEC Outdoors (reloading equipment demonstration) and Buck Gardner (duck calls).

The Touch of the Wild trailer, and large WCC and YCC kiosks caught visitors' attention as they entered the Youth Zone. Young visitors were welcomed with a check-off card to indicate which youth zone stations they visited. Visiting at least half of the stations qualified them for a prize drawing. The stations were staffed by enthusiastic, patient, and hard-working YCC delegates and others who guided the assembly of duck feather flies and lures, duck stamp art, pellet gun and archery shooting, proper use of goose decoys and blinds, shotgun shell reloading, and learning about the WCC & YCC.

Thanks to WCC delegate, Mary Ellen O'Brien for photographing and reporting on the event.



WI DNR Secretary, Preston Cole talked about Youth Zone activities with WCC delegates, Tashina Peplinski and Trent Tonn



YCC delegates, Liv and Caleb taught participants how to make fishing lures and flies with duck feathers



YCC delegates, Tyler and Logan share tips on making successful lures and tying flies



YCC delegate, Madison designed her own duck stamp



WCC delegate, Reed Kabelowsky demonstrated hunting tactics, and encouraged hands-on learning with field blinds and decoys



YCC delegates were still smiling at the end of the Expo!

YCC SUMMER PROGRAM



YCC delegate, Liv's perspective on the YCC Summer Program as shared on her facebook page:

Another amazing trip with the Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress!

I arrived to Tony (one of our WCC delegates) and Judy's land on a warm Thursday afternoon. I set my tent up and went swimming in the river to cool off.

The next day (Friday) we got to go look for Elk in Northern Wisconsin with a Wildlife Biologist. He showed us all the technology they use to locate and keep track of the Elk.

After, we took a trip to learn about Forest harvest operations. They talked about why they do this and how they manage where they cut the trees down to make sure that the forest will naturally regrow itself. All the youth and WCC members got to go right up to their big equipment and got to listen how they worked.

The YCC then got the opportunity to listen about wildland fire management. We learned about all the preparation they go through to make sure it's a safe fire that won't spread out of their control. They showed us how their tools work to start the fire and also put out the fire. Some of us also got to spray the big fire hose!

Once we got back to our tents we got to go out to the river and fish until supper time!

Saturday had a slow start since everyone was pretty tired. We had ate breakfast and had the plan to go canoeing down the river at 10, buuuut we didn't get out there until close to 11:30-noon. I canoed down the river with Reed and had the best time ever! We caught a couple of beautiful smallies and some of Reed's bigger catches....a couple of trees and logs:) I believe it took us close to 2.5-3 hours to get down the river and once we were back it gave everyone time to relax and in my case a nap until supper time. We had a couple of Dutch oven dinners and DELICIOUS apple crisp and chocolate lava cakes that were made out of the Dutch ovens as well.

Sunday was our last day and everyone got up randomly to pack up, eat some breakfast and depart.

Another amazing trip!! I got to get close to so many of the youth delegates and the mentors. I got to learn so much and again I'm so grateful for these opportunities!!



WISCONSIN DNR NEWS—INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGERS: GOATS

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has announced a special class of new land managers working at the Brule River State Forest. Goats.

Beginning in May 2022, the DNR partnered with Regenerative Ruminants to place goats in portions of the Brule River State Forest overrun with buckthorn, an invasive plant, as part of the department's integrated pest management plan.

"Buckthorn has been a problem on the Brule River State Forest for a long time," said Dan Kephart, DNR Brule River State Forest Property Manager.

"It's really important to the forest ecologically and aesthetically that we inhibit these invasive species as much as we can and promote native species. We're trying to evaluate how effective this project can be, so it's exciting to see what will happen."



Watch a [video](#) highlighting this story

Invasive plants, animals and pests are taking a toll on Wisconsin's lakes, rivers and landscapes. The DNR is working with the public and other partners to slow the spread of invasive species across the state. Through educational outreach, strategic planning and active management – including the use of goats – we are protecting our environment and economy from invasives.

The goats eat woody invasive plants, including buckthorn, that outcompete native vegetation and are detrimental to ecosystem health. Clearing out these harmful plants will allow the forest to regenerate.

Depending on the site, there are various ways to treat invasive plants. Goat grazing is often an effective method for reducing herbicide use.

"We're always being asked to reduce the amount of pesticide that we use. We want the forest to be able to regenerate our native species. If invasive species get in the way, it makes it very difficult to do so," said Mary Bartkowiak, DNR Invasive Plant Coordinator. "If the invasives out compete all of the native vegetation, we won't have the sugar maples, red pines or the white pines because they would be overtopped by the invasives."

Like other management methods, goat grazing is a long-term treatment. The goats have rotated throughout this site at the Brule River State Forest several times this summer and are now back for another round of grazing. Since the seeds of the invasive plants remain in the soil for several years, the department will evaluate the area in upcoming seasons to determine if the goats or other treatment methods are needed. Learn more about [invasive species on the DNR website](#).

HELP POLLINATORS BY COLLECTING COMMON WILD MILKWEED SEEDPODS

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) asks nature lovers and landowners in Wood, Portage, Adams, Juneau, Waushara, Marquette, Waukesha, Milwaukee, Walworth, Jefferson and Washington counties to collect wild common milkweed seedpods to help grow habitat for native pollinators on state lands.



The DNR encourages volunteers to harvest seedpods from their property or neighbors' uncultivated fields (with the property owner's permission) from Sept. 1 through Sept. 30. The DNR will use collected seeds as part of a monarch habitat restoration project across several State Natural Areas in the [Central Sands](#) and [Southern Kettle Moraine](#) regions.

"We're trying to plant local native seeds, including milkweed, in established and new prairies to help pollinators like monarchs and the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly," said Tim Holme, DNR Conservation Biologist. "Collecting milkweed seeds is a great opportunity for the public to help sustain Wisconsin's prairies and pollinators for generations to come."

[Learn more](#) about details related to collecting seedpods for habitat restoration.

YCC Upcoming Opportunities

SEPTEMBER

- 14th - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30pm. Learn about Ruffed Grouse.
- 17th - Archery deer season opens
- 17th - Fall turkey season opens
- 17th - 18th - Youth Waterfowl Hunt, 15 years and younger

OCTOBER

- 8th - YCC upland bird hunt at Mead Wildlife Area.
- 8th - YCC Oversight Committee meeting, Mead Wildlife Area.
- 8th & 9th - Youth deer hunt, 15 years and younger.
- 12th - YCC virtual gathering. Topic to be determined.

NOVEMBER

- 9th - YCC virtual gathering. Topic to be determined.
- 19th-27th - Gun deer season.

YCC UPLAND BIRD HUNT

Saturday, October 8th, 8:30am to 12:30pm
Mead Wildlife Area

All YCC delegates are invited to participate in an upland bird hunt with YCC delegates and mentors. Mead Wildlife Area actively manages habitat for Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock.

Safety information and hunting plans will be presented prior to heading out for the hunt. Both new and experienced hunters are encouraged to attend. Non-hunters are also welcome to participate with the group.

Safety equipment and guns will be provided if needed.

Watch your email for additional information.

The YCC Oversight Committee will have a meeting at the Mead visitor center after the hunt.



SEPTEMBER- YCC VIRTUAL GATHERING - Learn about Ruffed Grouse

Wednesday, September 14th, 7:30-8:30pm



Stephan Nelson with the Ruffed Grouse Society will be talking to our group about grouse habitat, biology and hunting considerations.



Learn more about the Ruffed Grouse Society:
<https://ruffedgrousesociety.org/>

Watch your email for a zoom link.

YCC VIRTUAL SUMMER FISHING CONTEST

All YCC delegates are invited to join a summer fishing contest using the Fishdonkey app. There are various species, combo and "any other fish" categories.

Any kind or size of fish, caught anywhere could be recognized. Even if you catch nothing at all, you can follow the leader boards to see how everyone is doing.

This contest runs from Saturday, May 7 through November 11th. You can join anytime throughout the contest.

- Download the FishDonkey app:
fishdonkey.com/app

- Tap: Fish in a Tournament

- Join: YCC

<https://tourney.fishdonkey.com/#/tournament-info/9361/details>

Watch a 1 minute tutorial on [How to Enter a Fish](#)

Watch a 1 minute video on [How to Measure a Fish](#)

Please read all rules. All fish must be entered through the FishDonkey app. **A photo of the fish (on a measuring board/tape) AND a photo of you holding the fish are required for the caught fish to be verified.**



FISH is sponsoring this event. Its absolutely free for you to join. Read more about the specific contest details. To learn more about FISH check out our web site at: www.spoonerhatchery.com

DNR SAFETY COURSES

Hunter/archery education safety classes are being held across the state. Search for classes near you: <https://gowild.wi.gov/customers/safetyedclass>

