

SUBJECT: Re-naming DNR Nature Center commemorating former Dept. Employee - Leslie "Les" Neustadter

FOR: SEPTEMBER 2012 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY / TITLE: Tom Hauge - Bureau Director - Wildlife Management

SUMMARY:

Conservation Education Inc. has been an important partner and advocate for conservation in Manitowoc County and specifically Collins Marsh Wildlife Area since the 1950's. They have operated the Collins Marsh Nature Study Center through a lease agreement in cooperation with the department for decades to provide educational opportunities to the surrounding area. Conservation Education Inc. has requested to rename the facility to the Neustadter Nature Center in recognition of Leslie "Les" Neustadter. Les worked with tenacity to acquire property and develop a vision for Collins Marsh during a portion of his 34 years of service with the Department of Natural Resources. Conservation Education Inc. and the Neustadter family have indicated their support of this project.

The property is one of five parcels purchased from Manitowoc County in 1965 by the Wisconsin Conservation Department. The nature center facility consists of a residence, classroom, garage, observation tower, screened outdoor shelter and pit toilets. The parcel and buildings are located along county highway JJ east of Collins. Legal description: SWSE Section 27, T19N R21E (31.4 acres).

The Northeast District, Lakeshore Area and Bureau of Wildlife Management are all supportive of this effort.

RECOMMENDATION: The Board approve a resolution naming the described facility as the "Neustadter Nature Center".

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|-----|-------------------------------------|----------|
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Background Memo | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

APPROVED:

Tom Hauge
Bureau Director,

[Signature]
Administrator,

[Signature]
Secretary, Cathy Stepp

7/31/12
Date

7/31/12
Date

7/31/12
Date

cc: NRB Liaison
DNR Rules Coordinator

DATE: July 31, 2012

FILE REF: Collins Marsh WA

TO: Cathy Stepp - Secretary

FROM: Tom Hauge – Wildlife Management

SUBJECT: Renaming Collins Marsh Nature Study Center to the Neustadter Nature Center

Located on the Collins Marsh State Wildlife Area in Manitowoc County is the Collins Marsh Nature Study Center which is leased from the DNR and operated by our long time conservation partner Conservation Education Inc. (CEI) and is supported by the property Master Plan. CEI was formed in 1954 as an organization to promote conservation through education. CEI was instrumental in the 1950's and 60's in raising and donating over \$20,000 to purchase property for the Collins Marsh Wildlife Area. CEI continues its conservation education mission by providing a summer environmental education program for future and current teachers in partnership with Silver Lake College. CEI also provides nature experiences and educational programs at the Collins Marsh Nature Study Center.

At the annual meeting of Conservation Education Inc (CEI) on September 20, 2011 a resolution was passed unanimously by the Board of Directors to rename the Collins Marsh Nature Study Center to the Neustadter Nature Center in honor of former DNR employee Leslie "Les" Neustadter who passed away on May 13, 2011. Les was responsible for securing much of the existing acreage for the Collins Marsh Wildlife Area and has a legacy of involvement with the wildlife area and promoting outdoor education and outdoor experiences through Conservation Education, Inc.

Les graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 1952, soon after he began employment with the Wisconsin Conservation Department. His first position with WCD was the Game Manager for Rock and Dane Counties. Later he transferred to the WCD Game Manager's position in Plymouth, Wisconsin. He was most proud of acquiring properties and developing management plans for the Collins Marsh Wildlife Area (WA). He also acquired properties and developed management plans for the Killsnake WA and the Brillion WA. Persons who today hunt and use these areas owe a debt of gratitude to Les for his foresight and tenacity in acquiring these properties for public use. He enjoyed many years of hunting and fishing on these wildlife areas with his sons, daughters and grandchildren.

In 1970, with the reorganization of the Conservation Department to the Department of Natural Resources, Les became the First Area Director of the DNR Green Bay Area, supervising all DNR Fish, Game and Parks programs in the area. He was also the First Park Superintendent of Heritage Hill State Park in Green Bay and was very active in the acquisition and development of Heritage Hill State Park. Les retired from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in 1986 after 34 years of service to the citizens of Wisconsin. Even years after retirement, he would routinely have to take a cruise through the Collins area and explain to anyone who was with him how individual properties were acquired, the why's and how's for the various developments and all the people he met and got to know in his work.

The "Neustadter Nature Center" is fitting recognition of Les Neustadter's commitment to Collins Marsh. It will serve as a reminder to current and future generations of Wisconsin citizens of the dedication and hard work done by individuals such as Les to protect and maintain natural resources for their enjoyment.