

MAC MATTERS

MACKENZIE CENTER NEWS

WINTER
2014



Outdoor Skills and Environmental Education

This past year has been one of transition, renewal, and relationship building. We've had many successes in 2014, welcoming countless public visitors and providing educational programs and community events to well over 11,000 youth and adults. We've hired a consultant to lead us through a long-term strategic planning process, now in its beginning stages. We plan to have the strategic vision outlined early next year, with a business and implementation plan to follow by the end of 2015. With the help of the property's Friends groups, partner organizations, education leaders, local businesses, community members, and countless volunteers – we are headed down an exciting road. We even have a shuttle bus now to help get us there!

- JD Smith, MacKenzie Center Director



Our new shuttle will help make the MacKenzie Center and Game Farm an extension of the Poynette School District. We bring students to the Center, take students to Rowan Creek for stream studies, and provide many tours on the Poynette property.

FACILITIES & GROUNDS Josh Bruecken, Facilities and Grounds Lead

We are thrilled to welcome Brit Downing on to the MacKenzie Center team as a part-time facilities and grounds LTE. Brit brings a valued outlook to the team with over 20 years of construction experience and a strong entrepreneurship background. His interest in facilities and grounds is only topped by his love for nature. Many of his leisure activities involve nature: hunting, fishing and hiking.

Brit is enthusiastic about all of the opportunities at MacKenzie Center.

Another exciting change is the entrance sign to the property off County Road CS. There are two schools that are helping to enhance the image of the MacKenzie Center. First, the Poynette High School's technology education class led by John Von Wald is designing, routing, and

painting a new 5' x 10' sign. Second, High Marq Charter School led by Adam Brandt has developed several landscape designs to surround the sign and presented them to the MacKenzie Center team. Our team has selected a design, and now High Marq Charter School is collecting prairie seed, cutting timbers, and gathering rocks to create that design. Both schools hope to finish in early May, 2015.

WILDLIFE: COPING WITH THE COLD Kyle Coker, Wildlife Lead

Various animal species have specialized ways to deal with the cold beyond gaining weight and growing a thick winter coat. Some go into a state of torpor, which is when an animal slows down their metabolism, breathing, and even their heart rate in order to live off of their stored fat for the winter. Many bird species migrate, mostly due to a loss of local food sources. These species head to warmer climates to wait out the winter where food is plentiful.

A large number of other species have simply learned to adapt to colder weather and seek out new food sources.

At MacKenzie we help our resident wildlife prepare for winter. That means giving them extra food and fresh straw bedding. Thanks to a generous donation this year we've added goat and alpaca wool to some of the animals' bedding. We have also surrounded our small mammals' dens with leaves and pine boughs to provide

better insulation. Our raptor habitats are outfitted with heaters or heat lamps and windbreaks to help them stay comfortable. Our smaller mammals have an indoor enclosure we can place them in during the coldest times if necessary. With a little extra care and each animal's own adaptations our residents are prepared to make it through a hearty Wisconsin winter.

Winter has brought some staffing changes to the wildlife area as well. Anna Lynn



Our Canada Lynx are ready with thick fur coats for the winter.

Hammond has moved to part-time. Kate Scheffer is our new part-time wildlife technician. Kate started at MacKenzie as an intern this past summer.

EDUCATION

Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Education Co-Lead



Students enjoy exploring our giant Silver Maple log in the snow.

As 2014 draws to a close, we can reflect and celebrate the successful year we've had at the Center. Our programs have grown in so many ways. We've made updates and additions to our Course Offerings, and this Fall educators have been busy creating and implementing new classes such as Seasonal Ecology. Along with new classes, we've brought 31 new schools to the Center this year. From January through November, the Center hosted

150 multi-day and single day programs, serving a total of 5461 youth and 1489 adults over 241 days, for a total of 12,645 person use days. These numbers don't include community events such as skills day, the outdoor youth expo, and the maple festival.

Yet, with all of this activity, there is still room to grow. In 2015 we intend to reach more schools and serve more students, especially with increased day programs and

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better winter opportunities. Our new education intern, Jina Schoenberg is helping make some of this growth possible. Jina is a student from UW Madison and plans to spend the remainder of her school year assisting the education programs at the Center.

BECOME A FRIEND OF MACKENZIE

Ruth Ann Lee, Education Co-Lead



The Friends of the MacKenzie Center are a group of individuals who give of themselves to help encourage,

perpetuate, and promote environmental education in Wisconsin and most importantly, at the MacKenzie Center. Established in 1978 as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization, the Friends have had and continue to have a significant impact on the success of the MacKenzie Center. Helping in a variety of ways,

volunteers within the Friends group find their niche specific to their interests.

In 2014 the Friends have participated in several grounds improvement work days, assisted with teaching and leading education programs, provided scholarships to visiting schools, provided support to the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo for youth, and sponsored community events such as the Maple Syrup Festival, the Haunted Hay Ride, and more. All of their efforts have contributed to a very successful year.

The Friends group is a membership based organization that depends on its members to forward their mission. Please consider getting involved. Volunteering is rewarding! This fun, educational, and hard working group supports the MacKenzie Center while developing new friendships and memories. For more information, please visit our web site at dnr.wi.gov and search 'MacKenzie' then click on the [Friends & Volunteering tab](#).

TWO FUNCTIONS ON ONE PROPERTY

The Department's Poynette property consists of the MacKenzie Center and the Poynette State Game Farm. While MacKenzie focuses on environmental education and outdoor skills, the Game Farm raises thousands of pheasants each year to release around the state. This year, the Game Farm welcomed a new supervisor, Kelly Maguire.

MacKenzie and the Game Farm are teaming up for monthly meetings in the spirit of "one DNR" and working together. This year, Game Farm staff helped coral a MacKenzie doe into a new enclosure, and MacKenzie staff lent a hand with pheasant sorting and shipping. The Game Farm's Friends group is also very active supporting outdoor programs in Wisconsin.



Kelly Maguire, Game Farm Supervisor, holds a ring-necked pheasant on shipping day.

Learn more at:

www.friendsofwhunting.org

WISH LIST

Interested in donating?
Here are some items the
MacKenzie Center needs:

- Modern snow shoes
- Snow shoe repair
- 2 Gas grills
- Gator UTV
- Backpack leaf blower
- 5 iPads (for student use)
- New lounge couches
- Cross country ski repair
- High efficiency hand Dryers

Call us for details: 608.635.8105