Welcome to the Spring issue of Wisconsin Natural Resources. In addition to the magazine now publishing four times a year with the seasons, we’ll be adding a Secretary’s Update column in each edition.

It’s been six months since I became secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, an honor for which I am grateful every day as I interact with the dedicated professionals throughout this agency. I’ve been impressed and inspired as I’ve met more and more members of our talented team, who demonstrate such commitment to the values, goals and mission of the DNR. The scope of the department’s work is striking. From what I’ve seen so far, I can tell you our state’s natural resources are in excellent hands.

A lot has been going on during the past six months. We had a successful deer hunting season but more importantly a safe one. Our Forestry divisional headquarters has completed the initial move to our Rhinelander office and we’re now gearing up for another camping season at our state parks and forests.

I also have spent time in my new role traveling around the state and meeting with our customers, the people of Wisconsin, and with groups such as the Sporting Heritage Council, Conservation Congress and Wisconsin County Forests Association, as well as attending events such as the Governor’s Small Business Summit and World Dairy Expo. We at the department have some great partners, including the citizens of Wisconsin, and we are committed to working together to protect our valuable resources.

This is a milestone year for the department as we celebrate 50 years of service. We will be acknowledging our historic beginnings throughout 2018, especially in our four editions of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine beginning with this Spring issue. In addition, 2018 also happens to be the 50th anniversary of what is now the Natural Resources Board. The citizen-based NRB was established by the Legislature in 1968. Our agency is proud of that five-decade history and will be taking time during the year to celebrate the many accomplishments achieved.

We’ve come a long way in 50 years and we as an agency still have work to do in the next 50 and beyond. I look forward to working with staff and stakeholders statewide to ensure that Wisconsin’s exceptional natural resources, so important to the heritage and culture of our great state, remain an outlet for recreation, outdoor pursuits, tourism and economic success — and a source of pride for generations to come.