

A hunter safety instructor teaches a group of youth the proper method for crossing a fence with a firearm. The photo was taken in Washington County in 1969.



Children pile in the back of a pickup truck to go fishing for panfish planted the same day by the Wisconsin Conservation Department. Children under 14 only were permitted to fish in the city-maintained pond in Portage, Wis. during the summer of 1950.



Chock- full of grainy goodness

DNR HISTORIC IMAGES
LIVE AGAIN ONLINE.

A little girl dips smelt from the Menominee River in Marinette, Wis. in spring of 1938.



DOROTHY FERGUSON



O.G. Grant sells the first Wisconsin fishing license to John Graas (son of Frank Graas) in Madison. According to the calendar on the wall behind them, the year was 1933.

STABER W. REESE



A warden "plants" fish (a process now called "stocking") in Princeton, Wis. in 1941.

DNR FILE

STABER W. REESE

Natasha Kassulke

I've always liked this quote by Pulitzer Prize winning author Eudora Welty: "A good snapshot stops a moment from running away."

Time truly does seem to stand still as you thumb through the thousands of historic images that comprise the Department of Natural Resources' photo collection. It's a state treasure that spans from the early 1900s through the 1970s.

Until recently, many of these photos were locked in a room in DNR's Madison office. I know that because I'm one of only a few who knows where the key to the room is kept.

But earlier this year, the Department of Natural Resources announced that it had — in a partnership with the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center — digitized 500 historic images, making them available to the public online, with plans to digitize a total of 2,200 black and white images by May 2016.

Since releasing the first batch

of photos it has been a pleasure hearing from people who have recognized family members in photos and even shared some of their own photos with us.

The first batch attracted a lot of media interest and included a Who's Who of famous recreationists who visited Wisconsin and our own home state conservationists, including Gypsy Rose Lee rowing a rubber boat, General Dwight D. Eisenhower fishing, Aldo Leopold addressing the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Gov. Warren Knowles coyote hunting and Boston Red Sox baseball star Ted Williams handling a tame deer.

A new batch of 500 just added to the collection includes photos from fisheries management (fish hatcheries, propagation, lake rehabilitation projects and rough fish control), wildlife man-

agement (deer browse, winter feeding, Chambers Island deer reduction project) and lots of warden and warden activities. There are also several aerial photos of Madison taken from the 1930s through 60s, photos of fishing and hunting violations, and of course a couple more of General Eisenhower and Ted Williams.

The fashion — including trendy fishing footwear and one piece bathing suits of the time — will make you laugh. But you also might find some familiarity in the looks on the faces of children including the one featured here of the first fishing license sold in the state.

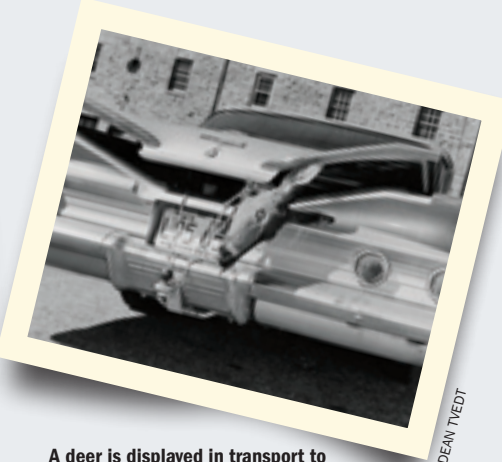
Many of the photos have dates (mostly the year), locations and some caption information. They are "retro" and likely to appeal to classic car lovers — there are several photos showing classy cars covered in deer carcasses — and a crowd that has come to love the coiffures on the television drama, "Mad Men."

Old state park photos just cry



STABER W. REESE

Wisconsin Conservation Department photographer Dean Tvedt takes a movie of a pheasant near a hedgerow in Dane County in 1955.



DEAN TVEDT

A deer is displayed in transport to a registration station. This photo was taken in 1960 in Madison.

out, challenging us to return to the same spot and try taking a photo there today. There are photos of prairie chicken hunting — proof that Wisconsin once had a season, the Hodag Snowmobile Marathon, scuba divers, ski jumping, regattas, children dipping for smelt and so much more. There are even photos of early DNR photographers in the field.

“These photos are treasures that should be shared with the public,” said DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp when the project was launched. “Just like old family photos, for years they’ve been stashed in the basement of the State Natural Resources Building waiting for somebody to put them in an album. This project makes them a click away to anybody who wants to see them.”

Aside from their historical value, they show how life and places in Wisconsin have changed, and in some cases, how they have stayed the same. The photos were taken by photographers and other staff of the Wisconsin Conservation Department (1930s to 1960s) and Department of Natural Resources (1960s to present).

Traditional conservation duties were the focus of the early Conservation Department and the prevalence of those kinds of images reflects that emphasis. The agency began in 1885 with three fish wardens, and gradually grew with the addition of four game wardens (1887), a forestry department (1903) and a state park board (1907). Pollution control responsibilities were added in 1967 when Wisconsin’s executive branch was reorganized and the Department of Natural Resources was created by combining the Conservation Department with the Department of Resource Development.

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To find the images go to uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/wi/dnrphotos/.

Natasha Kassulke is editor of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine. A special thanks to Kathryn A. Kahler, editorial writer for the magazine, for contributing to the story and for taking on the time-consuming task of culling and tagging the photo collection for digitizing.



EUGENE SANBORN

A Packard car in 1938, loaded with illegal deer confiscated by a warden in Poynette, Wis.



DNR FILE

Duck hunters holding their harvests in Packwaukee, Wis. in 1910. From left to right: Niels Johnson, Dana Sandall, a member of the McDermott family, and E.G. Trumpf. The photo was taken in front of McDermott’s Place, a local restaurant.