

A message from

DNR Secretary Dan Meyer



BEN PIERSON

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.



Dear Readers,

At *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine, 2018 is a big year. For one, we are adjusting to our new publication schedule — Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Look for the magazine in your mailbox around the change in seasons.

We've made an addition to the magazine on Page 2, adding a regular letter (above) from Department of Natural Resources Secretary Dan Meyer, who will check in with seasonal updates. The "Back in the day" feature moves to the inside back cover.

We've also adjusted our back-page feature to broaden its reach beyond State Natural Areas and include all state properties. In 20 years of writing about SNAs, program director Thomas Meyer notes: "We took readers to 120 wonderful places and along the way taught them a thing or two — I hope — about Wisconsin's rare flora, fauna and natural landscapes. ... It's been a pleasure." Now the feature, renamed "Outside in Wisconsin," will seek to

bestow the same love on state parks, forests and trails as well, while still spotlighting SNAs on a regular basis.

But perhaps the most fun note from the new year involves a celebration. Around here, we are kicking off a year-long commemoration of the DNR's 50th anniversary. As the DNR reflects on a half-century of history, our magazine will look for opportunities to share anniversary-related stories and photos with readers.

It starts in this issue with a bit of a history lesson explaining the official emergence of the DNR in 1968 and related excerpts from that year's Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin. We also have a "Back in the day" offering on walleye fishing from that same year — timely since the annual Fishing Report is included with this issue.

Another story with historic ties examines the legacy of Gordon Bubolz, a legislative leader in the 1940s and '50s who championed public lands, including High Cliff State Park. And our cover photo and back page highlight the historic Elroy-Sparta State Trail, which is itself just about 50 years old. Subsequent issues this year will focus on other aspects of the DNR at 50.

In addition to all that, this issue contains the magazine's regular spring feature detailing some of the many great field trips offered by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. As it happens, the NRF also is marking an anniversary: 25 years of these wonderful hands-on outdoor experiences.

Thanks for coming along with us as we turn over a new leaf or two and celebrate some important milestones. And, as always, thanks for reading.

— WNR staff