Throughout 2018, the Department of Natural Resources’ Facebook page — facebook.com/WIDNR — featured “Throwback Thursday”-style posts, just about once a week, to highlight the agency’s five decades of history. It worked out to a nifty 50, with fun photos from the agency’s archives highlighting everything from hunting and fishing, to state parks and trails, to environmental milestones, to conservation success stories, to legendary sports greats like Ted Williams and Bart Starr enjoying Wisconsin’s beautiful outdoors. All of those posts are now reprinted here — 50 for DNR’s 50th anniversary. What’s your favorite?
February 1

50 years of the DNR... and before! Can you spot the February celebrity? These photos of a groundhog — and the “wrong” shadow cast by the cameraman — come from Conservation Department employees back in the ’40s and ’50s. The department became today’s DNR in 1968, 50 years ago this year. Will the groundhog see it’s shadow tomorrow? #TBT #DNR@50

15,426 people reached

February 1

DNR@50 Celebrates the Olympics. With the 2018 Winter Olympics underway, we found a DNR 50-year anniversary photo that also pays tribute to our U.S. Olympic athletes. In 1971 DNR photographer Dean Tvedt captured the action during the 1971 U.S. Speed Skating Trials at the Olympic Ice Rink in West Allis. The trials were the lead up to the 72 Winter Games in Sapporo, Japan. The rink opened in 1957 at State Fair Park and made Vil the center of the U.S. Olympic speed skating world. In 1992, the outdoor oval was replaced by the enclosed Pettit National Ice Center, which continues to host high-level training and competitions, including the most recent U.S. Long Track Olympic Trials in January. For the record, the Pettit says, at least one speed skater from Wisconsin has been in each U.S. Winter Olympic team since 1952. #TBT #DNR@50

February 1

DNR@50

February 9

DNR@50 – Sturgeon spearing opens Saturday, and as DNR celebrates 50 years as an agency we wanted to share this photo of Isabelle Bloechl, Coshkosh, with her 91-pound lake Winnebago sturgeon speared on opening day 1964. Can you top Mabel’s catch this weekend? #TBT #DNR@50

4,724 people reached

February 9

DNR@50 – The 1998 sturgeon spearing season was a truly unique season. In addition to concern about ice conditions, it brought extremely favorable water clarity conditions, with 19” of visibility. The water clarity translated to spearing success as the opening weekend harvest was on or, not the largest ever on record. #TBT #DNR@50

February 22

DNR: Sturgeon opening was 1 of the best ever

16,439 people reached
March 2

DNR@50 at the movies: Hollywood hands out the 90th annual Academy Awards on Sunday and the Oscars have us in a movie state of mind. Using film to document Wisconsin’s wildlife and great outdoors has long been part of the work of DNR and its predecessor, the state Conservation Department. This photo from 1955 (by Reese Staber) shows Dean Tvedt in prime position atop a Ford County Sedan to capture video of a pheasant near a hedgerow. These days, video has become an even more vital tool for DNR’s work. From clips highlighting a multitude of agency programs and documenting successes, to Wild Wisconsin podcasts and web series, to Facebook live presentations and more — DNR is using today’s ever-advancing video tools to continue the agency’s first-rate performance. #DNR@50

#FlashbackFriday

March 15

March is Women’s History Month and there’s no more worthy candidate for DNR@50’s praise than Ruth Hine. Hine was not only DNR’s first woman biologist, she was the first woman to be awarded a Ph.D. by the University of Wisconsin in 1949. As a researcher for the Conservation Department and then DNR, Hine edited over 400 research reports, led field projects on mice, pathology and rattlesnake dens, and counted deer, waterfowl, pheasants and prairie chickens. With fellow scientist Mike Mossman, in 1981 she created the Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey — which continues as the longest running study of its kind — and chaired the committee that developed the state’s first endangered species list. She was posthumously inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in 2010. Learn more about this DNR trail-blazer at wchf.inductees/hine.html.

March 3

DNR@50 — For decades, hunters and anglers raced to be first in line to buy licenses at DNR’s exhibit at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show. Licenses at DNR’s exhibit at the State Fair Park in West Allis, in addition to still being able to purchase your license at the booth, you’ll find other exciting departments for people of all ages during your visit to the “kids’ corner” where they’re more than welcome to touch an assortment of wildlife pets. More their skills at a free casting clinic; or view bluegill, perch and bass in the 600-gallon at a free casting clinic; or view bluegill, perch and bass in the 600-gallon freshwater tank. You’ll find them in the northwest corner of the exposition building on March 22. Come through the end of the show. Shows runs are noon to 6 p.m. weekdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, March 10, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

March 22

#DNR@50 — DNR Secretary Dan Meyer cut the ribbon at the new hatchery building at the Pouette Game Farm on March 20th. Here’s a look back at some photos from the old hatchery, which has been in operation since the 1930s. The new equipment will cut work load for areas in half while the building and equipment are constructed to help make them easier to clean and disinfect. The hatchery will be the cornerstone of the future of Wisconsin’s pheasant farming program for generations to come. #TBT
Celebrating 50 years of DNR

March 29

TBT - today's Throwback Thursday post highlights the many accomplishments and hard work of those staff who have served on DNR film and video crews over the years. These talented individuals have provided education and informational visuals to millions of people for generations, often recording in difficult weather, in cramped locations or from precarious perches, but always with a professional attitude and with the DNR's mission, vision and values foremost in their minds. #DNR@50

April 19

Despite the white April landscape across Wisconsin today, we recognize Wildfire Prevention Week in our DNR@50 post with a look back on the long history of our fire program. We honor the work our firefighters have been doing for more than 100 years. When the snow-cover disappears, spring wildfire season will again be upon us, so keep our firefighters safe by preventing wildfires! #DNR@50

April 12

DNR's 50th anniversary celebrates our traditional spring turkey season. DNR's 50th anniversary celebrates our traditional spring turkey season. DNR's 50th anniversary celebrates our traditional spring turkey season. DNR's 50th anniversary celebrates our traditional spring turkey season. DNR's 50th anniversary celebrates our traditional spring turkey season. DNR's 50th anniversary celebrates our traditional spring turkey season.

April 16

Wisconsin's school forest program is still growing 50 years after it was started. Pictured here is the Madison School Forest, one of the more than 247 school forests helping Wisconsin students learn about our forest resources. A 1945 state statute revision offered school forests free tree seedlings from the DNR reforestation program and services of DNR foresters to develop management plans for the properties. Under the leadership of Wisconsin's 'Ranger Ma' McNeel, a state 4-H leader in the 1920s and an early school forest visionary, students across the state helped reclaim cut-over, burned-over land. Today, tree planting continues to be an important education opportunity – especially on Arbor Day.
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

May 3

Waiting for walleye on the opening day of fishing season is nothing new, as this 1949 image indicates. These crowds were photographed in Fremont, in Waupaca County. There will be plenty of patient people out on the water this Saturday for the 2018 fishing opener. Be prepared by checking out details on regulations and bag limits, places to fish, youth fishing and more on the DNR website — https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/. And get your license at gowild.wi.gov before you're gone fishin'! #DNR@50

May 18

Pictured here are planes used by DNR air quality monitoring staff as part of the Lake Michigan Ozone Study conducted in 1990 - 1991 designed to monitor air quality over Lake Michigan. These planes helped DNR's monitoring staff understand how air pollutants travel and interact over the lake. DNR@50

May 24

Tomorrow is National Bike to Work Day. In honor of Throwback Thursday, DNR is looking back on vintage bikes and bike trails across WI! Biking to work is not only a good form of physical activity, but also helps reduce air pollution by reducing vehicle emissions! DNR@50

May 21

DNR has worked hard for decades to reduce air pollution in our state. In fact, all monitored pollutants in WI have seen significant reductions over the past several decades. To learn more about air quality trends, visit https://www.wi.gov/topic/AirQuality/Trends.asp DNR@50
Celebrating 50 years of DNR

School's out around the state (some kids might say finally!) and for many youngsters that can mean one thing: it's time to go fishing. Through the years, heading out to catch a few fish has been a great way to spend those glorious days of summer break. These youngsters were photographed in Milwaukee County in 1939, one of many historic DNR photos. For all you need to know about Wisconsin angling, including plenty of information about taking kids fishing, check https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/ DNR@50

Forestry Helpers: Teenagers from Milwaukee cutting trees from a burned plantation in 1968 as part of a work-experience project in the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. #DNR@50

DNR@50 goes fishing! Governor Warren Knowles caught this sweet trout back in 1970 - what fishing excitement awaits you on Wisconsin waters?

Have fun boating this weekend! Only two things are missing from this vintage DNR photo of boating on Menominee Waters - life jackets! Have fun boating this summer weekend and please remember to wear your life jackets! https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/buoypdf.html... #DNR@50
Happy 4th of July holiday weekend!
As this photo from July 1959 proves, camping at Devil's Lake has always been a popular activity! Enjoy making memories at Wisconsin's great state parks this July 4th holiday weekend and don’t forget to sign the OutWiGo pledge, here: https://bit.ly/2H1hVDJy
#DNR@50 #OutWiGo

The DNR’s 50th anniversary means plenty of history to highlight. Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine takes readers through the last half-century with a year-by-year timeline of events, awards and agency accomplishments. Find it at https://dnr.wi.gov/OutWiGo.

First Downs... For Trees!
Our weekly DNR@50 post honors the Green Bay Packers and their First Downs For Trees partnership established with DNR and businesses in the Green Bay area. This photo from 2011 (courtesy of WEC Energy Group) shows Packers president Mark Murphy and friends planting a tree in Green Bay with community officials, business representatives and residents at another First Downs For Trees planting at Kipling Park.

Memorial Gathers Up DNRs! While the DMA is celebrating 50 years as a state natural resources agency, we’ve got moving on Peninsula State Park. The scenic park located in Door County in western WI is celebrating its 50th anniversary on August 4 with a day of fun recreational activities and events. To mark the occasion, a special commemorative coin is being released. Enjoy these and other historical events and beautiful views found only at Peninsula State Park. Learn more at https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/peninsula.
Celebrating 50 years of DNR

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Published by Rachelle Cine-Bell / August 2

“The very destiny of man and the hope of his future are bound up with conservation of the soil and all that grows upon it.” Wise words coming from a DNR display at the Wisconsin State Fair in 1960. Today, the Fair opens again for the 125th time and the goal of conservation remains important to the DNR. Enjoy the Fair and these photos of conservation education throughout the decades. #DNRat50

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Published by Rachelle Cine-Bell / August 9

“Visiting the fishery, state parks and natural areas of Wisconsin, and how you can do more. The Fair may look a little different, but 125 years later the DNR’s goal of doing conservation remains the same. #DNRat50

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Published by Rachelle Cine-Bell / August 10

Recognize that big guy in the middle? If you said former Red Sox broadcaster Ted Williams, you’re some kind of baseball devotee. That’s what Wisconsin was when it came to fishing. This 1965 photo taken on Lake Winnebago by Arthur C. Pempin, shows Williams with several Conservation Department wardens and other staff during one of the many fishing trips to our state.

The Conservation Divisioncapitalized on Williams’ party hosted four days in Lac la Belle waters and other Winnebago lakes, and three days in the Hayward area. "Getting "keeper" walleyes every day." Just three weeks before this photo was taken, Williams cut his 22nd career hit against the Yankees. In his 22-year with the Red Sox, he won the American League home run title and RB Title, and the Triple Crown (leading average, home runs and RBIs) twice. All while playing most of five seasons in active major league in WIA and the National League.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Published by Rachelle Cine-Bell / August 16

As the DNR celebrates 50 years, the Wild Rivers State Trail marks an anniversary. It’s been 20 years since the Natural Resources Board approved the trail’s master plan in May 1996, bringing to fruition work on this rail-to-trail project in northwest Wisconsin. The scenic trail runs 104 miles through Barron, Washburn and Douglas counties, from Rice Lake to just south of Superior. And true to its name, rivers are quite a thing along the way; with the Yellow, Namekagon, Togeloc, Eau Claire, St. Croix, Brule and Amico rivers just some of the many wild waterways the trail crosses over or passes near. Check trail conditions before heading out, as June flooding to closed trails in Douglas County. But do head out if you get the chance to enjoy this spectacular and scenic state trail. #OutdoorWisconsin #DNRat50

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Thinking about a little fall hiking? Try one of the 41 state rail trails!

What’s a rail trail, you ask? It’s a former railroad corridor that has been converted into a recreational trail. It’s been a little more than 50 years since the Elroy-Sparta State Trail became the first rail trail in the country. Since then, 36 more have been developed by the state, as well as dozens of others by local communities in Wisconsin.

Find out more about these amazing trails and maybe hike or bike one of them to celebrate the DNR @ 50 at https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/trails/index.html

50 years ago our ancestors would never have imagined that finding the bird you’re looking for is something that could be done from a telephone while sitting in your living room.

Whether you are looking for ruffed grouse, pheasants, dove or quail, experts in the DNR’s FFLIGHT tool will help you quickly locate the cover suitable for these species in your area. This year, the DNR is offering a wide variety of hunting opportunities, including ruffed grouse and woodcock, for hunters to participate in.

Instead of tackling Buffalo Bills like the Green Bay Packers will be doing this weekend, today’s DNR@50 photo shows legendary Packer quarterbacks Bart Starr and Zeke Bratkowski tackling goose hunting back in 1964.

We wish everyone a safe hunting season this fall.

Check out our new Wild Wisconsin podcast that covers the basics of migratory game birds in Wisconsin.

Get it on iTunes: https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/wild-wisconsin/id1393683302

Get it on Stitcher: https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/wild-wisconsin-off-the-trail
Looking to enjoy some fall colors? The Mountain Bay State Trail, which spans almost half way across Wisconsin between Green Bay and Wausau, is a good bet. Built along an old railway 25 years ago, the trail offers panoramic views of farmlands, forests and wetlands and features numerous bridge crossings over rivers and streams. So, bring your walking shoes, bicycle, or even your horse (Shawano County) to enjoy the beauty of Wisconsin.

How are you getting out and celebrating DNR@50 and the fall colors this weekend? Whether you’re headed to Mountain Bay State Trail or anywhere else, show us what you’re finding out there!

As we continue to celebrate DNR@50, the Mackenzie Friends also are celebrating a milestone — 40 years of support for the Mackenzie Center near Poyette. Their annual Fall Festival is among the many ways the center has provided programming to educate about Wisconsin’s natural resources.

Its history dates to the 1940s, when Conservation Department Director Harley Mackenzie oversaw the land purchase that also included the State Game Farm, still nearby. The education center was named for Mackenzie in 1971 and includes, including the main lodge, were built in 1973. It is now part of the Wisconsin State Park System.

Want to check out what the Mackenzie Center has to offer? They’re all set for another Fall Festival on Saturday 10/13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with a wildlife exhibit, archery, hiking, hayrides and plenty of other outdoor fun.

We can’t honor DNR@50 without a tip of the cap to the Spill Law — 40 years old this year (1983) — and the Groundwater Protection Act — 30 years old (1983).

Today’s photo from 1986 shows Bill McSumnash and the DNR’s Bureau of Water Quality leasing a stream near Mayville in Dodge County. Both laws have played a major role in protecting our state’s incredible natural resources. You can read more about the Spill Law in the Fall Issue of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine — https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/magazines/2021/fall.html — and learn about the Brownfields Study Group, another valuable DNR partnership started in 1988 that helped shape Wisconsin cleanup efforts for 30 years.

Norman Center Fassett served as chairman of the Natural Areas Committee from 1945 to 1950. While chairman, Fassett selected Fairly’s Glen as the first scientific area in Wisconsin. Fairly’s Glen is a spectacular gorge deeply cut into the sandstone conglomerate of the south end of the Baraboo Hills.

The exposed Cambrian strata provide excellent opportunities for geological interpretation. The walls of the glen — a Scottish word for a narrow, rocky ravine — are sandstone with embedded pebbles and boulders of quartzite. The moss-covered walls support a flora more typical of northern Wisconsin with yellow birch, mountain maple, and red elder and several rare plant species.

Horse tour, Pine State College students look over a sign commemorating Norman Center Fassett in Fairly’s Glen. Baraboo, Sauk County (Wis.), June 1950.

Find more info and directions to Fairly’s Glen State Natural Area here: https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/2021/0930/sna1
Late fall is a great time to drive through Kettle Moraine State Forest, where you'll catch some lingering fall color and examples of glacially formed topography.

This 1938 photo taken by F.W. Wilson shows the iconic kame near Dundee in Fond du Lac County. It was featured on the cover of a special insert to Wisconsin Natural Resources, printed in 1986 when the Kettle Moraine turned 50 years old.

Celebrate DNR@50, this fall, with a trip to Kettle Moraine!

Camping, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling... through DNR’s 50 years and even earlier, those activities plus many more have attracted visitors to Wisconsin’s beautiful state parks.

While visitors are gearing up for winter sports, we know campers are always looking ahead to the next camping season. Soon there will be a new and improved way to reserve your site.

Camps USA is coming in December as the new state campsite reservation system. If you already have a reservation, it will transfer to the new system automatically — just make sure your contact information is updated in the current Reserve America system.

And, if you’d like to make a new reservation, check in at http://rnparks.net on Dec. 17, the day the new Camps USA system debuts to get started.

Happy camping!😊

As we wrap up our year-long celebration of DNR@50, we look at the technological advances that have helped us manage our state’s amazing natural resources.

Before we had easy access to computers and smartphones with us all the time, much of our day-to-day work was done by hand. This 1988 photo by Dean Teedt is a great example of the way things have changed—DNR staff tracked deer registration numbers via labels that were attached to their licenses.
Let it snow! Winter is here in several areas of the state and recreational activities abound, as this 1969 photo of Natural Resources Board members on a snowmobile trail tour near Woodruff attests (photo by DNR staffer Staber Reese). Check out our DNR@50 story on the NR Board in the WI Natural Resources magazine winter issue, out next week.