

eNEWSLETTER



Informational e-newsletter for the friends of the Douglas County Wildlife Management Area

November 2003

Conservation and Stewardship – A Brief History of the Bird Sanctuary Property

1925: The Northern States Amateur Field Trial Association (NSAFTA) which was organized in Appleton, MN in 1922 conducts its first dog trial at the Bird Sanctuary.

1935: Douglas County establishes the 'Bird Sanctuary'. Land clearing was conducted by the Works Project Administration (WPA).

September 22, 1935: The 'Bird Sanctuary and Club-House' are dedicated.

1937: NSAFTA holds the first United State Chicken Champion dog trial, which has been held annually since then. (This trial began when prairie chickens, which were frequently called 'chickens', were present on the property; hence the term chicken in the name refers to prairie chickens which are no longer present in this area.)

1946: Representatives of field trial organizations, the press, the US Forest Service, and the Conservation Department met and recommended establishment of at least two areas in central and northern Wisconsin for research and experimental work on sharp-tailed grouse, prairie chicken and bobwhite quail. They further recommended continuation of controlled burning, thinning of cover, spring planting for fall bird feeding, and predator control at the Douglas County Bird Sanctuary.

November 8, 1947: A public hearing was held in Superior on the Conservation Commission's proposal of withdrawing Douglas County forest crop lands to be leased to the state for a grouse study area.

November 14, 1947: The Conservation Commission approved establishment of the Douglas County Grouse Management Area.

1948: A 50-year lease and agreement was signed between Douglas County and the State of Wisconsin (Conservation Commission) for 2,480 acres of land now under forest crop for 10 cents/acre/year.

August 17, 1953: A new 50-year lease agreement was made between Douglas County and the Wisconsin Conservation Commission for 2,760 acres at 20 cents/acre/year. The purpose of the new lease was to give the WCD greater latitude in management and to allow the Townships to receive one-half of the lease payments.

1966/67: Douglas County withdrew 197 acres of County Forest to lease to the State. The lease was amended to 2,957 acres and rate increased to 40 cents/acre/year.

1972: The lease was amended to add 40 additional acres; leased lands total 2,997 acres.

1985: The lease was amended to increase the lease rate to 60 cents/acre/year.

August 18, 2003: A new 25-year lease is negotiated between Douglas County and the Wisconsin DNR. The lease rate is increased to \$5.00/acre/year.

Visit our website: www.fotbs.org

History and Status of the Bird Sanctuary Wolf Pack

By Greg Kessler, Department of Natural Resources

The Bird Sanctuary pack originated from a young female wolf (#266) that initially was a member of the Crotte Creek pack. She was trapped on August 7, 1996 and fitted with a radio telemetry collar. Wolf 266 was a yearling at the time of her capture and stayed with the Crotte Creek Pack until December of 1997 at which time she dispersed eastward. She was seen with another wolf on December 29, 1997 near the area currently known as the Bird Sanctuary Pack. Winter track surveys that year indicated breeding activity and summer howling surveys indicated she produced 4 pups...another wolf pack was born!

Wolf 266 produced 2 more litters of pups, 5 in 1999 and 4 in 2000. Then in late summer and early fall of 2000 she began exhibiting erratic movement patterns that appeared something may be wrong. The pilots located her collar on mortality mode on October 30, 2000 and she was confirmed dead on November 1st. She was found one mile west of Jackson Box trail, slightly northwest of her normal home range area. She appeared to have died of injuries from other wolves. During her 4 years "on the air", she provided over 351 locations taken approximately once or twice weekly as part of the Highway 53 Wolf Study.

It was two years after the death of wolf 266 before another wolf in this pack was trapped and collared. During this period monitoring was completed by volunteer trackers that provided estimates of 4 wolves during

midwinter of 2001 and 3-5 in winter of 2002. Despite producing litters every year, the Sanctuary pack size fluctuates widely throughout the year and ultimately settles into 3-6 wolves by mid-winter. Like all Wisconsin wolves, the Sanctuary Pack is subject to natural controls that limit pack size through dispersal and mortality from vehicles, other wolves, disease, and gunshot.

Wolf 266 was replaced by alpha female 447, which was trapped on June 21, 2002. Wolf 447 was trapped near the car-kill deer drop off site. This pack appears to be taking advantage of the easy meals provided by the frequent deliveries of venison. Annual home range for this pack appears to be about 35 square miles based on minimal area estimates from 31 weekly locations. This includes the area from Highway 53 just (north of Gordon to just south of Solon Springs) and extending westward to Jackson Box Trail/West Mail Road. The vast majority of the time is spent north of the flowage with an occasional excursion southward to the Person Lake-WhiteFish Lake area.

Wolf 447 was lactating at the time of capture and appears to have raised 2-3 pups successfully that year, with a total of 5 members in her pack during the winter of 2002-2003. Her movements were very constricted during April-May 2003 so it is likely she produced another litter of pups but no howling surveys have been conducted to verify this.

YES, I would like to help.

Please visit our website for information, or write to:
Friends of the Bird Sanctuary, P.O. Box 116, Gordon, WI 54838

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