Spring 2014:
Another Late Morel Season

Well, it was like a replay of last spring: winter ended with mild temperatures and ample moisture…things were looking very good for a bumper crop of morels. This newsletter editor was making audacious claims that this was going to be yet another banner year for morels. And then for the second year in a row, winter decided to stick around. For weeks. The Upper Midwest remained too cold for morels to emerge. Finally, a couple weeks later than usual, the morels did finally arrive…and they turned up in decent numbers, especially if you were willing to put in the leg-time to look for them.

On a related note, the spring forays at New Fane in Kettle Moraine, North, and at Blackhawk, west of Madison, were both very successful for the morel-seekers.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:
• JOIN US AT THE ANNUAL WMS SUMMER PICNIC
• WHAT’S COMING LATER IN 2014…A FULL CALENDAR OF EVENTS
• JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL NORTHWOODS FORAY…AND BRING WILD MUSHROOMS FOR IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION!
Well, after a cold spring, the weather seems to have finally warmed up and summer is here at last. The past few months have been busy ones for the WMS with a number of activities taking place. In early May, we enjoyed a great lecture by Dan Winkler on Tibet—its culture and its mushrooms. Then, on an absolutely beautiful mid-May weekend, we hosted a couple of spring forays. What stood out about both of these forays were the beautiful large *Gyromitra brunnea* that were collected. I’ve been aware of the *Gyromitra* genus for a long time as “false morels,” but I’ve never actually seen many specimens of *Gyromitra*. So, it was certainly a treat to see these fine handsome specimens. Thanks to Britt Bunyard and Andrew Khitsun for helping out the WMS by leading these forays. Finally, at the end of May, there was a mushroom dinner at Lazy Susan Restaurant in Bay View, which I’m told went very well. Thank you to Steve Shapson for organizing this dinner, and we look forward to more dinners.

Not too long ago, I read an article entitled “Mathematics and the Good Life” by Stephen Pollard. That would seem like a strange thing to read for most people, but as I’m a math teacher in real life, it makes sense for me to read it. The article was philosophical in nature and talked about what characterized good experiences in life. It listed five properties of good or worthwhile experiences, based loosely on the ideas of educational philosopher John Dewey: [these are all with my rough paraphrasing!]

1. Such experiences offer ample opportunities for problem-solving.
2. Such experiences can successfully be recreated by others.
3. Such experiences promote growth and a greater capacity for richer experiences in the future.
4. Such experiences are compatible with other forms of human growth.
5. Such experiences fit easily into a varied, balanced, and integrated life.

The thrust of the article was of course on how mathematics fits with these qualities, but I think the study of mushrooms and mushroom collecting shares many of these characteristics. With the need for mushroom identification, mycology clearly offers ample opportunities for problem solving. As to the potential for recreating experiences, once a mushroom has been described and named, there is no limit on the number of people that can fruitfully find and identify that particular mushroom. Concerning point #3, mycological pursuits definitely promote growth and richer future experiences, since the more one learns about mushrooms, the more enjoyable a walk in the woods or even one’s own neighborhood can become, and the more one can teach others about the world of fungi. As to points #4 and #5, mushroom hunting and study certainly can easily fit into a balanced life with a wide breadth of interests, and they can be well-integrated with many other interests such as nature, the outdoors, science, conservation, food, cooking, art, photography, culture, etc. to form a coherent focus.

As you can see from looking at the events calendar, the WMS has several great events coming up in the next few months: the Annual Picnic and business meeting, the 6th Annual Northwoods Foray, and the 7th annual Midsummer Foray. Then, in early September, the fall foray season starts, with six weekends in a row of activity. Also in September, Mushroom Madness at the Polish Center of Wisconsin will return after a hiatus last year. If you think about it, the WMS is a pretty casual group that is easy to be involved with, at whatever level of involvement you want to have. I hope you will find something to partake in and enjoy and that you will have “good experiences” that can contribute to your “good life.”

Colleen Vachuska
2014 Summer EVENTS CALENDAR

Don’t forget: the annual picnic is just around the corner!

Saturday, June 28……… Annual Business Meeting and Picnic, Bunyard Farm
We will meet 4:00 pm at the Bunyard Farm, Germantown. See WMS website for details and directions. Questions, Bill Blank at (414) 476-1592; or our host Britt Bunyard (262) 677-0876. Always great food and company...A great time!

July 17-20 (Thur-Sun).....Annual Northwoods Foray Bigger and better every year! You won’t want to miss out this year. Details and registration, see spring newsletter.

Saturday, July 26…………..A Midsummer’s Foray
Foray leader: John Steinke. Meet at 9:45 am sharp at South Kettle Moraine Ranger Station and drive to the foray location. Bring a lunch. Directions at WMS website.

Saturday, September 6……..Sami Saad Foray at Mauthe Lake
Foray leaders: Peter and Colleen Vachuska

Saturday, September 13.............Devil’s Lake / Wollersheim Foray
Foray leader: Britt Bunyard. Last year was the First Annual—and we had great success!

Sunday, September 14.........Mushroom Madness at the Polish Center in Franklin.
Come learn mushroom ID tips from the experts—bring any wild mushrooms along.

Saturday, September 20.........Glacier Hills Foray
Foray leader: Susan Selle

Saturday, September 27..........Foray at Bigfoot State Park
Foray leader: Dave Menke.

Sunday, September 28..........Annual Foray at Coral Woods (with the Illinois Myco Assoc)
Foray leader: Bob and Judy Kaplan and the IMA.

Saturday, October 4.............Fred Hainer/Tula Erskine Foray at Point Beach
Foray leader: Chuck Soden. Bring a picnic!

Saturday, October 11...............South Kettle Moraine Foray
Foray leader: Al Bunde

Door Peninsula Wild Mushrooms Class Offered
September 14-19 2014
Charlotte Lukes, an expert on wild mushrooms, announces Wild Mushrooms of Door County class will be held at Lawrence University’s northern campus, Bjorklunden, near Baileys Harbor. The web site is www.lawrence.edu/s/bjorklunden/bjorkseminars. At the site, click 2014 Seminars to download the brochure with information on all Lawrence seminars. Fees are: Sunday-Friday; $790 double; $1,055 single; $385 commuter
Blackhawk Ridge Foray, May 18, 2014

Little known even to Madisonians, Blackhawk Unit of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway (aka Blackhawk Ridge) is comprised of more than 800 acres of mostly wooded hills. The crowd on May 18 was between 25 and 35 people. The challenge of this particular spot is a steep ascent to the top of the ridge (where picnic shelters, tables, bathrooms etc. are located). Most people were interested in morels at this time of year, of course. Because very few forayers were familiar with the area, not everybody found the shelter we gathered at about noon (only one was available – the other one was occupied by youth camp). People who made it to the top and crossed over to the southern slope found some morels. They said the location was right – southern exposure, dead elms; but the specimens were few and far between and fairly small: probably just beginning to emerge. I’ve heard from at least two different people that they’d seen a man with full bag of morels descending down the hill: it wasn’t clear if he was part of the group, since most of the forayers were new and didn’t know each other.

I crossed to the southern slope too and found a bunch of beautiful Discina (Gyromitra) brunnea (pictured, courtesy Peter Vachuska), up to seven inches tall. Other specimens found were:

- Morels (probably Morchella esculenta – “normal ones” with light-colored ridges)
- Trichaptum biforme
- Fomes fomentarius
- Ganoderma applanatum
- Polyporus squamosus
- Polyporus alveolaris
- Stereum ostrea
- Trametes elegans (or Trametes gibbosa – this European species is claimed to be widespread in the US, and no one yet offered me any tips on how to distinguish the two)

Andrew Khitsun
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Madison, WI 53717
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Spring Foray at New Fane, Kettle Moraine (North Unit) May 17, 2014

Britt Bunyard

When you announce a spring foray (read “morel hunt”) on the calendar, and when you’ve had about six months of terrible winter, and when it’s the most perfect sunny spring day in Wisconsin, you expect a huge turnout. Still, I was taken aback to pull into a parking lot filled to capacity! The WMS had not previously forayed as a club (to my knowledge anyway) at the New Fane area of the North Kettle Moraine State Park. It did not suppress the turnout as 80-100 people attended, many brand new members, and several members came up from the Racine area and even as far away as Illinois. Although mid May would normally be well into the heart of morel season, we were running very late and so the morels were really just getting started. In the pre-foray discussion, it was pointed out that you’d need to check full sun and south-facing areas for best results.

A show of hands suggested that a large percentage had never picked a wild morel before. But by day’s end, most had bagged their very first one; indeed, most forayers did come back with morels; some had pretty decent sacks full. But the real excitement for this forayer was a very nice mix of spring wild mushrooms, including a few edibles besides morels.

Edibles included spring Agrocybe sp., mica caps (Coprinellus [Coprinus] micaceus—although not necessarily palatable, they are edible), the ubiquitous pheasant’s back / dryad’s saddle, Polyporus squamosus. Of course morels are not just edible, not just palatable, but irresistible! And we found two species; the half-free morel (indicator of the very beginning of the season, usually), Morchella punctipes (=M. semilibera) and the yellow morel, M. esculentoides / americana (=M. esculenta). But we had somewhat of a morel family reunion, as many close relatives of morels were also found: the devil’s urn, scarlet cups, verpas, and three different species of Gyromitra were brought in (see list for scientific names, if you keep track of stuff like that). And not everything in the woods is safe to consume—even in spring! A nice collection of the deadly galerina (Galerina marginalis) also was found.
New Fane Species List
Agrocybe sp.
Coprinellus (Coprinus) micaceus
Galerina marginalis
Gyromitra brunnea …fairly uncommon, exciting find (pictured below)
Gyromitra perlatum (=Discina perlatum)
Gyromitra korfii
Morchella punctipes (=M. semilibera)
Morchella esculentoides (=M. esculenta)
Mycena sp.
Polyporus (Favolus) alveolaris
Polyporus squamosus
Polyporus varius (=P. elegans)
Sarcoscypha dudleyi
Urnula craterium
Verpa conica

And some oldy-moldies…
Apiosporina morbosa (from previous year)
Chlorociboria aeruginascens (ditto)
Ganoderma applanatum (previous year)
Polyporus (Royoporus) badius (ditto)
Schizophyllum commune (previous year)
Trametes versicolor (previous year)
ATTENTION WMS MEMBERS: We Have a New Treasurer! (and your dues are due!)
Wisconsin Mycological Society annual membership dues are collected in December and January. If you have not yet paid, please mail in your dues. Prompt payment of dues helps us better plan Society events.

Unless you have a change in address, email, etc., or if you want to send comments, you do not need to fill out another application form.
To renew membership, just send a check (with your name) made out to WMS for $20.

Mail your check to:
Peg Oberbeck
WMS Secretary/Treasurer
6707 Maple Terrace
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Mushroom Dinner at Lazy Susan

The Spring Mushroom Dinner, under the auspices of the Wisconsin Mycological Society, was another in a string of what have been wonderful, seasonal meals featuring mushrooms.

The spring 2014 event occurred on Sunday, May 25th at the newly-opened Lazy Susan restaurant, nestled in the heart of the Bay View (Milwaukee) restaurant district. Chef/Owner Amanda “AJ” Dixon presented a meal that featured fresh, locally-sourced ingredients, which are one of the hallmarks of great spring dining. She was joined by Enjoli Duval of Purple Feet Distributing, LLC of Pewaukee who matched each course with a carefully-selected wine.

Before each course, AJ would describe the food preparation and the sourcing of the ingredients, while Enjoli would describe why she chose each particular wine and any personal experiences she had had with that particular winery.

The menu featured morels and shiitake mushrooms, along with other wild and domestic local mushrooms. Highlights included the appetizer of Faux Banh Mi Toasts, using as a base for the house-pickled vegetables a shiitake mushroom pâté (paired with a wine from Portugal), spring pasta with peas, morels, ramps and house-made guanciale (paired with a wine from the Willamette Valley in Oregon), and Rushing Waters trout with morel mushroom sauce, asparagus, sweet potato spaetzle, and wilted wild watercress (paired with a wine from Sonoma California). I’ve always been somewhat skeptical of farm-raised fish, but the Rushing Waters trout, sourced from Palmyra, made a believer out of me.

Thanks go out to Steve Shapson for working with Lazy Susan to create a memorable dining experience that really made us all appreciate the bounty of spring and the culinary skills of AJ Dixon. I personally can’t wait for the next Mushroom Dinner!

-Debra Sadow Koenig
On the founding of Kettle Moraine State Park

Thanks to member Jim Maurer for sharing this blast from the past!

November 28, 1940

Honorable Julius P. Heil
Governor of Wisconsin
Capitol

Dear Governor Heil:

Pursuant to our conversation of yesterday, I felt you would be interested in the objectives and methods of procedure in connection with the acquisition of land and the development of the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

Previous to the time the legislature supplied funds for the creation of this area, there had been continuous requests, particularly from Milwaukee and vicinity, that the state should have a relatively large recreational forest tributary to the counties in southeastern Wisconsin. Being sensitive to this, we arranged to have bills presented to the legislature that would be helpful in providing funds for this much needed service, and our procedure has been commended by the greater portion of our public, which has included individuals, groups, associations and the press. The nature of this area that is to be acquired and known as the Kettle Moraine forest will be very similar in character to what has been acquired by New York in the Adirondacks and Catskill preserves, the city of Boston in the Blue Hills and the city of Chicago in the Cook County Forest Preserve.

The picture of this Kettle Moraine region shows that it is a comparatively narrow stretch of rough and broken terrain running about ninety miles in length from Walworth county on its southern border to Sheboygan county on the north and generally characterized by rough gravel hills, swamps, small lakes and woodlands. A considerable amount of this land has been farmed for many years but because of improper agricultural practices, much erosion has occurred with the result that the top soil from many of the gravel hills and slopes has been washed away and as a whole it cannot be considered to be good farm land at this time and consequently is the type of property that the conservation department is primarily interested in this locality.

I might also say that it is highly necessary that something be done in the way of restoring these hills adjacent to the valley of the Milwaukee river and other streams in this locality to a semblance of their former selves by way of forest
Hon. Julius P. Heil - November 23, 1940

planting and turning back some of the areas that have been used for agriculture into a wild state to prevent further erosion by wind and water and serious floods that may occur and cause great damage to property in and adjacent to this valley.

The legislature of 1937 authorized the conservation department to proceed with the acquisition of properties with certain counties concerned and near this area and appropriated $75,000 annually for the forestry funds for acquisition and administration activities for such a program. These funds were derived from the 2/10 mill tax that we received for forestry purposes through amendment to the constitution and legislative action. Of the sum total raised, Milwaukee county contributes approximately one-fifth and other highly valued areas such as Sheboygan and Fond du Lac counties similar portions, with the result, of course, that they should have attention to a considerable extent with some kind of service in at least a forest recreational way in their respective localities.

Following the enactment of the law relating to this undertaking, the conservation commission gave consideration during several of its meetings to the entire proposition and finally ordered the work to proceed. After a study of the areas in the listed counties most suitable for a forestry project, three purchase units were approved by the commission. The northern purchase unit is located largely in Fond du Lac and Sheboygan counties, the southern purchase unit in Waukesha and Jefferson counties, the White River unit in Walworth and Racine counties, and the Point Beach unit in Manitowoc county. Land purchase and development have gone forward particularly in the northern, southern and Point Beach units.

One of the items to which the commission naturally gave consideration was the question of land values. With a view of establishing a uniformity of values and procedure among the different owners concerned, the schedule herewith attached was approved by the commission and this has been applied in the case of each option subsequently taken. Our procedure is to have a land appraiser—a regular departmental employee—go over each parcel of land concerned to ascertain the physical facts of the property, improved or unimproved as the case may be. After this appraisal is made, the state forest supervisor takes the information so obtained as the basis of the option. Prior to submission for the consideration of the conservation commission, each option is studied in terms of the relation between the appraisal as made and the optioned price, and only those transactions are presented wherein it is our opinion that a better price cannot be obtained. The procedure followed by the department is the same as that used by the U. S. Forest Service in the purchase of millions of acres of forest land in all parts of the country.
Naturally we like to get properties blocked in to the best advantage because simultaneously with the land purchase program we are undertaking the development work (with WPA aid) and have established recreational areas at Mauthe lake in Fond du Lac county and in the town of Greenbush in Sheboygan county for both winter and summer use, and have opened up and made available the entire Point Beach Forest tract in Manitowoc county. Over 30,000 people visited these recreational areas this year, which was the first year they were opened for public use. As we view this program, we stand at its beginning, and while we even now have a rather heavy use of these areas by the people, they will not come into their full fruition for at least ten to twenty-five years, but it would seem to be sensible to provide for the heavily populated part of the state a type of wildwood forest and outdoor recreation, and that is what the Kettle Moraine development is designed to do.

As you appreciate, differences of opinion can easily arise as to what property is worth; still it would appear that the schedule of values as adopted by the conservation commission could not be considered as high. In practically every case of land purchased, the price paid was less than the assessed value. The general impression that we often get in connection with these purchases is that we are paying too little rather than too much, and in this connection I recall your statement that you had been informed that we were paying too much for land in these purchase units. I would appreciate it if you could advise me as to the basis of this information as I would like to confer with those who made such report. I'm sure you fully appreciate that there will always be individuals who complain about prices paid or received in land transactions, but invariably they are very poorly informed when they are called on for proof of their statement.

There is also attached hereto sketches showing where these principal purchase units are located.

I shall be most pleased to confer with you at your convenience if you feel it necessary to discuss this question or any other questions relating to the conservation program in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,

H. W. MacKenzie
Conservation Director
Basis for Appraisals
Land Purchases
Forests of Southeastern Wisconsin

Non-arable lands $10.00 per acre
Very poor arable lands 20.00 per acre
Poor arable lands 30.00 per acre
Fair arable lands 40.00 per acre
Good arable lands 50.00 per acre

Forest land 5.00 per acre
Swamp land 5.00 per acre

Forest Reproduction
Value of reproduction added to basic land value as applied to forest lands.
Reproduction valued at ---- 2.50 per acre
                          5.00 per acre
                          7.50 per acre
depending upon composition, size classes and stocking.

Stumpage Values
Oak 10.50 per M.
Basswood 10.50 per M.
Hard Maple 7.50 per M.
Soft Maple 3.75 per M.
   Elm 3.75 per M.
Posts .05 per each
Fuelwood 1.00 per cord

Value of Improvements
Wells
Dug 50.00
Drilled 100.00 to 150.00

Buildings
Assessed valuation and salvage value considered
If building is to be left standing and put to state use, value of such use is considered.