

## **Partner groups team up with DNR to adopt two wildlife areas in southern Wisconsin**

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MADISON - The Adopt a Wildlife Area program uses strong partnerships to improve Wisconsin's outdoors, and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Natural Heritage Land Trust, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have joined forces to manage two wildlife areas in Jefferson and Dane counties.

Adopt a Wildlife Area has provided a positive impact to the environment while giving people of all ages and interests an opportunity to participate in hands-on conservation work. Moving forward, these partner groups and the department will work to improve the landscape for all types of users - including the wildlife that call these properties home.

### **Rome Pond Wildlife Area - Jefferson County**

The Waukesha County and Twin Rivers chapters of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association became involved in the [Adopt a Wildlife Area program](#) in 2016 with an interest in preserving and improving the great wetland habitat [Rome Pond](#) has to offer. Association members worked closely with department staff to develop objectives this spring. With safety in mind, they removed manmade obstacles and obstructions, disassembled leftover waterfowl hunting structures, identified and marked hazards that cannot be removed.



Ron Churchill, Tom Pagel and Don Guenther from the Waukesha County and Twin Rivers chapters of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association work with DNR staff to manage wetlands within Rome Pond Wildlife Area.

Photo Credit: DNR

"Partnering with the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association at Rome Pond Wildlife Area is going to be a huge benefit, not only for the department and wildlife in this area, but for all members of the public who enjoy spending time at Rome Pond," said Sam Jonas, Jefferson County wildlife biologist. "I'm excited to see this program flourish so other organizations and individuals adopt wildlife areas throughout the state - it's a win-win for everyone involved."





DNR wildlife biologist Sam Jonas and Mike Alaimo, Waukesha co chapter chair for WWA pose next to a sign identifying Rome Pond as a co-managed wildlife area.

Photo Credit: DNR

#### **Patrick Marsh Wildlife Area - Dane County**

Patrick Marsh Wildlife Area was adopted by The Natural Heritage Land Trust in 2015. Through this partnership, the trust has committed to assisting the department with oak savanna and prairie habitat restoration and management, in addition to recreational facility maintenance.



Rotarian Bill Wambach and NHLT employee Tony Abate installing interpretive sign.  
Photo Credit: Angie Banks

Adopt a Wildlife Area activities at Patrick Marsh will provide for enhanced nesting habitat for waterfowl and grassland and savanna birds, as well as increased diversity of prairie forbs for important pollinators like monarch butterflies and rusty-patched bumblebees. These efforts will complement 80 acres of restored prairie and savanna adjacent to the wildlife area.

"Located on Sun Prairie's door step, Patrick Marsh is lucky to have strong community support and so many enthusiastic visitors," said Natural Heritage Land Trust Executive Director Jim Welsh. "The wildlife viewing platform, an improved trail system, and new signage we installed came to fruition through collaboration with Sun Prairie Rotary, Patrick Marsh Conservancy, Patrick Marsh Middle School, and DNR. We are looking forward to accomplishing more great things at Patrick Marsh."

Recreational and habitat enhancements at this wildlife area have resulted in high recreational usage by thousands of consumptive and non-consumptive users over the past five years. A light trail system through

the area and a high-quality overlook make this area highly attractive to hikers, birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts of all sorts. Habitat improvements have also led to increased waterfowl hunting opportunities within portions of the property open to hunting.

"Department staff and the citizens of Wisconsin are extremely grateful for the time, effort and funding these partner groups have contributed to Patrick Marsh," said Andy Paulios, DNR wildlife biologist for Dane County. "This level of investment has allowed for an incredible transformation, and we're excited to do even more over the next three years, including a wonderful new overlook on the west shore of the marsh."

### **Adopt a Wildlife Area**

Wisconsin [State Fisheries Areas](#), [Wildlife Areas](#), [Flowages](#), [Wild Rivers and Riverways](#) provide critical fish and wildlife habitat along with outstanding nature based recreation. Adopt a Wildlife Area Participants receive a first-hand look at how the department uses management goals to maintain thousands of acres of property throughout Wisconsin and play a key role in enhancing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for others to enjoy.

"The Department would like to express our sincere thanks to WWA and NHLT for adopting these Wildlife Areas," said Tim Lizotte, Adopt a Wildlife Area program coordinator. "Their commitment exemplifies the strong partnership between WWA, NHLT, and the department in conserving and improving wildlife habitat along with improving public recreational opportunities."

Key adoption activities include habitat enhancements, invasive species control, nest box construction, trail and facility maintenance, and more. All safety and maintenance equipment, training, and certification is provided by the department.

Those interested in adopting a State Fish or Wildlife Area can participate individually, or as part of a group - please submit an [application \[PDF\]](#) at the nearest [DNR office location](#).

To learn more about adopting a Wisconsin Wildlife Area, visit the department website, [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), and search keyword "[volunteer](#)."

The Official Internet site for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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