



## Trail Updates Online

Trails Open Daily, Dawn to Dusk.

Donations Appreciated.



## Season of Free Programming

The North Lakeland Discovery Center is pleased to announce a season of free programming! As a gift to the community from a generous underwriter, all community programs listed in the December through April program guide are free to members and the general public.

We encourage you to bring along family and friends and share the wonder of the Northwoods! This is a unique and limited opportunity to try for free the variety of programs the Discovery Center offers.

Be sure to register early, these free programs are sure to fill up fast! Check out our online event calendar and register online to reserve your spots today.

**INSPIRE ♦ DISCOVER ♦ CONNECT**

NON-PROFIT  
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Manitowish Waters, WI  
PERMIT #12

**North Lakeland Discovery Center**  
P.O. Box 237  
215 County Road W  
Manitowish Waters, WI 54545

## NLDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## OUR MISSION

To enrich lives and inspire an ethic of care for Wisconsin's Northwoods, through the facilitation of connections among nature, people and community.

Property managed under an agreement with the WDNR.

### Open

Trails: Daily, Dawn to Dusk  
 Office: Mon-Sat, 8:30am-4:30pm

### Phone

715.543.2085/877.543.2085

### Email

Contact@DiscoveryCenter.net

# Director's Message

Discovery Center Staff recently visited Frank Kovac at the Kovac Planetarium in Monico, Wisconsin. At the same time, Staff were amidst development sessions emphasizing teamwork and goal-setting. One of the words introduced during one session was BHAG (pronounced BEE-hag).

According to Wikipedia, a BHAG (**Big Hairy Audacious Goal**) is a "strategic... statement... created to focus an organization on a single medium-long term organization-wide goal which is audacious, likely to be externally questionable, but not internally regarded as impossible. It is "an audacious 10-to-30-year goal to progress towards an envisioned future. A true BHAG is clear and compelling, serves as [a] unifying focal point of effort, and acts as a clear catalyst for team spirit."[1]

When President Kennedy stated the USA would have a man on the moon by decade's end, Americans witnessed a BHAG. When one janitor at NASA was asked what his job was, he stated "To put a man on the moon."

I don't believe Frank Kovac is familiar with the term, BHAG. But that didn't stop him. He had a vision to build a mechanical globe planetarium, and over a ten year span, he did just that. He was never aware one existed elsewhere in the world (his is the fourth ever built and one of three still standing). He followed no blueprints or manuals – only star charts and his heart. He took his BHAG and made it happen.

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(1) Collins and Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, 1994



As a not-for-profit organization, we rely on the generous donations of members and the community to help fulfill our mission. Every item received enables us to put more resources towards enriching lives and inspiring an ethic of care for Wisconsin's Northwoods. For a full list and how to donate, please visit our website.

1. Economy Work Car for regional errands/program use
2. Binoculars, Microscopes
3. Red flashlights for night-time walks and programs
4. Battery powered "camping" lanterns
5. Boxes of facial tissue
6. Nook care donations, for food, care, medicine, vet visits
7. EE Program supplies (beaver fur hat, pair of swimming flippers)
8. Field Guides for the library
9. Craft supplies
10. Kitchen supplies (Alto Shamm, pots, pans, and serving items)

# Education Programs Receive Xcel Energy Grant

The Discovery Center was recently awarded a \$1,500 grant by Xcel Energy to use towards the Naturalist in the Classroom (NITC) Program. Our unique NITC program brings the wonder of the natural world to the students, right in their school. In addition to instilling an appreciation for our unique Northwoods' environment, many of our programs are designed to enhance environmental education in the curriculum.

School budgets reserve less and less funds for these types of activities for students, so we are offering scholarships to local schools in need of funding for these types of programs. We are hoping to reach over 500 local students with our programs through the support of this grant.

***We would like to thank Xcel Energy for their support of our programs and furthering our mission.***



# Collaborative Project Helps Northwoods Loons

Anne Kretschmann, Water Specialist/AIS Coordinator



In early fall, adult loons leave the waters of the Northwoods bound for warmer winter waters. Many congregate at layover areas in Lake Michigan along their flight to the Gulf of Mexico and southern Atlantic seaboard. Unfortunately, during this year's fall migration, there was a substantial die-off of loons and other waterfowl in Lake Michigan. Scientists believe invasive species like zebra mussels, quagga mussels, and round gobies are at the root of the problem. They create an oxygen-depleted environment at the lake bottom where Type-E

(avian) botulism bacteria flourishes. The bacteria can more easily enter the food chain, poisoning fish and leading to die-offs of birds that feed on fish. While this die-off of loons is discouraging, there are efforts here in the Northwoods that are having a positive effect on the loon population.

The "Woods and Waters" project is one such effort. The Discovery Center has collaborated with county and WDNR staff for over ten years to successfully increase chick production and survival on area lakes. With the help of middle-school students from Mercer and Hurley, loon platforms are constructed and placed on lakes historically known to have ideal conditions for loon reproduction. The students learn about other factors influencing loons as well, such as water quality, shoreline vegetation structure, aquatic plants and invertebrates. By taking measurements at several different times during the breeding season, students determine what the limiting factors are to loon production on a particular lake.

This program has been tremendously successful, not only in helping the Northwoods loon population, but also in providing opportunities for our students to engage in hands-on research and learning about our beautiful Northwoods resources. We appreciate your continued support in making this project possible.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
 You can track local loon movements and migrations online. Visit [http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory\\_birds/loons/migrations.html](http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory_birds/loons/migrations.html) to find out how!



## Get Up and Get Out at the Center This Winter

As the temperatures drop and the snow begins to fall, we are more tempted to curl up on the couch than to run out the door and enjoy the weather.

However, this time of year is the most important time to get out and get active. Being active during the winter months has shown beneficial to both physical and mental health.

At the Discovery Center we have put together a winter/spring program lineup that encourages and facilitates outdoor experiences. You may choose to join us for one of our offsite explorations or enjoy the trails right here on your own.

Our cross country skiing and snowshoeing trails are open seven days a week, from dawn to dusk. We have snowshoe rentals available, free for members and only \$5/pair for non members. They can be picked up during our winter office hours, Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. The use of all our trails are free; donations are appreciated to help offset grooming and maintenance costs.

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Ways to enjoy winter with the Discovery Center:

\* Glide along on our 12 miles of classically groomed **cross-country ski trails**

\*Pack snow on our 2 miles of **snowshoe trails**; exploring on your own, at night on one of our moonlit snowshoe hikes, or on a staff-led educational excursion

\* **Family Play Days** December 28th and 29th as part of Marvel in Manitowish

\* Get involved with a **research and monitoring project**

Whether it's skis or snowshoes you strap on to your feet, we look forward to seeing you at the Discovery Center this winter!



## Use Your Login to Make Registration Easier!

Like many of your favorite websites, the Discovery Center's website allows you to create a login for access to your account information. You can register for upcoming events, review or renew your membership, manage your addresses, and more.

Creating a login is easy! Simply go to our homepage ([www.DiscoveryCenter.net](http://www.DiscoveryCenter.net)) and click on the "Login" link on the upper right hand side of the page, directly under the contact information. From there you can create an account. There is also help in case you forget your password.

## Nibbles 'n Knowledge Winter-Spring Line Up

We have a full winter season planned of our popular Nibbles 'n Knowledge programs. Each is an evening of delicious nibbles and an opportunity to expand your knowledge. Cash bar and complimentary appetizers are served from 5-6 pm and an edifying program from 6-7 pm.

**\*\*Please note that advance registration by the day prior is required and that these programs will be held at the main lodge of Camp Jorn. \*\***

January 10th  
First Annual Trivia Night



Test your nature knowledge at our first ever Nibbles 'n Knowledge Trivia Night, featuring trivia questions on nature, the Northwoods, and the Discovery Center. Prizes will be awarded to individuals and teams in a variety of categories.

March 14th  
Big Cats of Wisconsin



This month we welcome Eric Anderson, Professor of Wildlife Ecology at the UW-Stevens Point. His topic, "Big Cats: Fact, Fiction and Future" will educate on the rumors, sightings and mistaken identity of the big cats of Wisconsin.

February 7th  
Wolves of Isle Royale



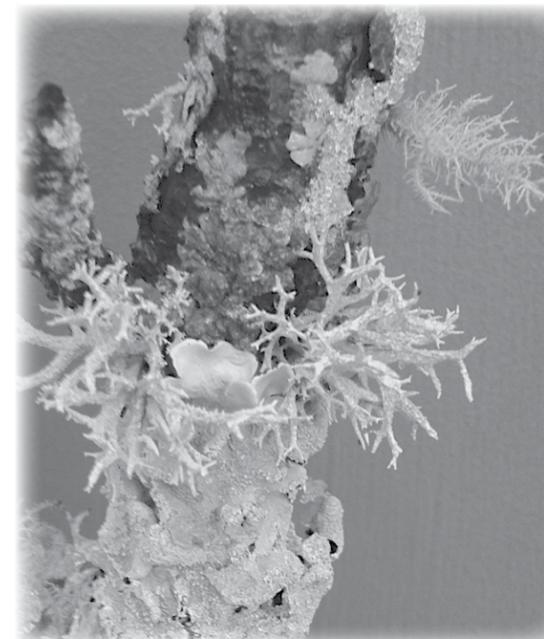
The Timber Wolf Alliance leads a program on the wolf-moose/predator-prey relationship on the Lake Superior island, Isle Royale. Following disease, low reproduction and a 2011 over-winter tragedy, wolf populations are the lowest they've ever been at 9 individuals and they are at risk of extirpation.

April 11th  
The Night Sky



The wonder of the starry night comes alive with Frank Kovac, creator of the Kovac Planetarium near Monico, WI. He discusses the infinitely interesting topic of astronomy and how it relates to our location in the universe.

## Lookin' For Lichen Study



Lichens are a fascinating component of our Northwoods ecosystems. Comprised of part algae and part fungus, they can be found on virtually any relatively undisturbed surface you can find in nature.

This winter, the Discovery Center will launch the pilot year of a long-term study on the distribution of Northwoods lichen. While recent studies have significantly improved our understanding of lichens, there are many questions that remain. Perhaps most significant are the effects climate change could have on lichen populations. This study will provide critical baseline information on our Northwoods lichen population as well as track changes over time.

Engaging citizen scientists is a major focus at the Center and we have created monthly "Lookin' for Lichen" training programs to provide interested participants with basic lichen biology and study protocol so they can then complete in their own backyard. By the end of next year we hope to have a number of "Lichen Trackers" trained in the protocol, conducting surveys a few times a year.

For more information on the study or training programs, contact study coordinator, Katie Simonsen.

# Wolf Hunt Based on Carrying Capacity?

*Rad Watkins, TWA Director of Education and Communications*

Mid-October of this year marked the beginning of the recent hotly debated Wisconsin wolf hunt. The season was originally scheduled to continue through February, however, early hunter success in meeting the quota of 116 wolf kills will likely bring the season to an end, perhaps as soon as December.

Steeped in controversy, the hunt has highlighted the need for clear criteria in establishing population goals and the management tools used to maintain them.

In most cases wildlife populations are allowed to reach their carrying capacity before management tools, like hunting, are used. In the case of Wisconsin wolves, however, this has not happened. Current estimates put Wisconsin's wolf carrying capacity at around 900, and the recent winter minimum wolf count (before this hunt) estimated the population at 850.

Part of the problem in Wisconsin is that the Wolf Management Plan, written in 1999, is out of date. That plan stated that when the wolf population reached 350 animals, management tools could be implemented. This number does not represent a target number of wolves but rather a trigger when tools like hunting, trapping, or government removal of problem wolves could be used.



Many are confused and think that plan calls for a state-wide population of only 350 wolves due to environmental carrying capacity. However, the WDNR is now careful to point out that the wolf has reached its **social** carrying capacity; a much less scientific and more highly subjective term.

We will continue to monitor the reports from Wisconsin's recent wolf hunts and attempt to review the results in the light of the best scientific information we have available to us.

For more information on the Timber Wolf Alliance  
visit <http://www.TimberWolfAlliance.org>

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There were seven of us visiting the Kovac Planetarium that day. Seven of us left inspired, envisioning what BHAGs were possible for us personally as well as professionally for the Center. Staff are asking the question: what Big Hairy Audacious Goal will we achieve?

As we take steps to answer that BIG question, we also assure a focus on our current mission. Our pledge to you is to continue efforts at achieving a mission that matters to you, our natural world, and to our future generations. Our mission is to inspire the lives of young and old alike through the facilitation of meaningful connections among nature, community and you. Thank you for your continued support to make this possible.

Happy Holidays. May they be safe, happy & beautiful.

*- Sarah Johnson, Director*