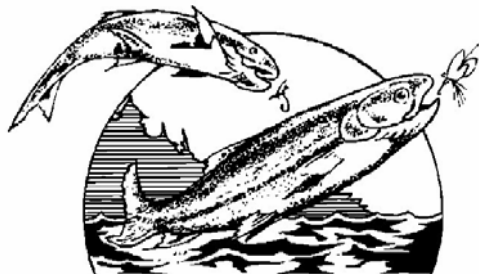
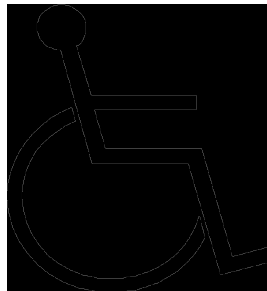
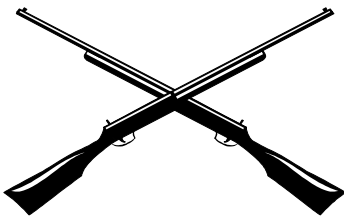


Challenge The Outdoors, Inc  
W4276 Cty Rd G  
Black Creek, WI 54106

[www.challengetheoutdoors.org](http://www.challengetheoutdoors.org)

## **Challenge The Outdoors, Inc.**



March, 2004

*“Dedicated to Serving the Recreational Needs and Desires  
of the Physically Challenged Sportsman”*

**MARCH 2004****Challenge The Outdoors, Inc.**

A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO SERVING THE RECREATIONAL  
DESIRES OF THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED SPORTSPERSON

## **President's Perspective, Larry Laehn, President**

President's Perspective

March, 2004

A recent editorial by Tim Gilmer in *New Mobility* points out that “our disabled bodies, because of the compensatory way we must use them, age more quickly than non-disabled bodies.” Depending on one’s perspective, that is good news or not-so-good news!

As I was leaving a client’s business recently during a snowstorm, I slipped and fell in an empty parking lot. Yesterday, in my late twenties, I braced myself on my palms and knees, stood up and walked to my vehicle. Today, in my late forties and continuing to battle with MD, I crawled to a car and pulled myself upright. My first feelings and thoughts were this is not-so-good news. Yet, there is good news too!

The good news is that my disabled body helps me grow older and die more gracefully than others may be able to do. My mind remains sharp, for that I am grateful. My body allows me to walk more often than it forces me to use a wheelchair, for that I am grateful. And I can still hug my family, hunt, fish and ride my trike next summer, for that I am grateful. Find something to be grateful for each day!

Larry Laehn

## **6th Annual Sporting Clay Benefit** **Saturday, April 3, 2004      BY: Larry Zander**

We all thought that last year’s shoot would be a bust because of the awful road conditions the night before and early morning. But, we found that it takes more than the improbable to stop dedicated outdoorsmen and supporters of CTO, Inc. Over 200 men, women and youngsters came out and once again, we experienced a very successful day.

This year, let us do ALL WE CAN to beat last year’s attendance and raffle ticket sales. Let us also pray for good weather conditions the day of the shoot. You’ve already seen the fantastic raffle prizes offered this year. 9 fine rifles and shot guns—superb rod and reel—a great Coleman four person tent just to name a few of the many items we have.

Show your raffle tickets to your family, friends, neighbors and people you do business with. They will be impressed as I am. And Remember!! Support the people who help support us. When you are in their place of business let them know who you are and that you are “THANKFUL” for their generosity. When you have sold the tickets that we sent you and “you’ll need” more, just call **Jean Chapman at 920-833-6374 or Larry Zander at 920-525-3637.**

**MEMBERS!! Your help is needed the day of the shoot.** If you can help in any way for any portion of the day please contact **Larry Zander at 920-525-5637.** We look forward to hearing from you. **THANK YOU!!**

### [2004 Spring Wild Turkey Hunt Taking Shape](#)

On **Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> & Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup>**, the weekend of the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the Spring Wild Turkey Hunt, and possibly Friday May 14<sup>th</sup>, the Little Wolf Gobblers and CTO will be sponsoring their 2<sup>nd</sup> Spring Wild Turkey hunt for physically challenged sports persons. Here's a quick recap of what we know about the hunt so far and what to expect in the coming months leading up to the hunt.

This year's hunt has 10 physically challenged hunters signed up to participate in it. This is five more than last year! Tom Mijal is the hunt coordinator for the Little Wolf Gobblers. He has done an outstanding job getting landowners permission for the hunters and lining up 10 LWG members to be guides/mentors. There is a pre-hunt get together scheduled for either April 24 or 25 at Kevin Wickman's hunting lodge near Marion. Kevin has been very gracious in allowing us to use his lodge as our headquarters for the hunt again this year. At the pre-hunt get together all the participants will get together to get acquainted with each other, plan the group and individual hunt strategies, sight-in/pattern their guns, and generally make sure each individual hunters needs are met so their hunt is as safe and successful as possible.

CTO is looking for volunteers to help out during the hunt. A couple of areas where we need some help is preparing and serving food and transporting hunters in the field during the hunt, an ATV with a trailer would be extremely helpful. If you have always wanted to give turkey hunting a try but weren't quite sure how to this is a great opportunity for you to get some valuable hands on experience. If you would like to volunteer in one or both of these areas please contact **Mark Baehr @ (920) 766-9218 or email @ [baehrm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:baehrm@sbcglobal.net) or Harland Chapman @ (920) 833-6274 or email @ [chapjean1@yahoo.com](mailto:chapjean1@yahoo.com)**

Thanks to our friends at the Little Wolf Gobblers even more physically challenged people are getting the opportunity to participate in a Spring turkey hunt and we are all looking forward to it with great anticipation. We will no doubt have some great stories and experiences to share due to their generosity. Stay tuned for more on the Spring Wild Turkey hunt in coming Newsletters.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Fox Valley Wheelchair Wash & Health Fair**

**When:** Saturday May 1<sup>st</sup> From 8 a.m. till Noon.

**Where:** Fox Valley Technical College, 1825 N. Bluemound Drive, Appleton, WI. Follow signs to Entrance 9.

This event is being sponsored by Options For Independent Living, Walgreen's Health Initiative, Affinity Health Care, and Fox Valley Technical College.

Here's what you can expect to do and see there:

- **Get your wheelchair cleaned and inspected**
- **See new wheelchair equipment and technologies**
- **Participate in a variety of activities**
- **Speak to & Visit with a variety of Health Care professionals**
- **Visit a variety of informational booths sponsored by local organizations**
- **Win a Door prize and register for a special grand prize drawing**
- **Get a Brunch Buffet put on by FVTC Culinary Arts Students**

**There is no fee for any of this but you must register by April 26.** Register by calling Affinity Health Care @ (920) 738-2230 and if you need directions or have other questions they will be able to help you. If it's been awhile since your wheelchair has had a good cleaning and inspection this may be just what you've been looking for.

CTO is looking to sponsor a booth at this event because it offers us a great way to reach out and inform the public about our organization. If you would be interested in volunteering an hour or 2 to speak to those attending the event please give **Mark Baehr a call at: (920) 766-9218 or email him @ [baehrm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:baehrm@sbcglobal.net).**

## CTO Taking the Show on the Road

With the idea of providing another great opportunity for our physically challenged members the Board of Directors has given the green light to take our pontoon boat to the UW Oshkosh Fishing Has No Boundaries event. The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh has become the first university in the country to team up with Fishing Has No Boundaries® Inc. to bring the fun of fishing to people with disabilities. The May 29-30, 2004 event will begin at Menominee Park on Lake Winnebago. It will be open to all people with mental and physical disabilities. It's coming to Oshkosh thanks to the efforts of UW Oshkosh health & physical education professor Robert Weber, who expects many of his adapted physical education students will want to assist as volunteers. Up to 150 local volunteers, along with financial support, boats and more will be needed. The event starts at 8 a.m. Saturday and goes to 4 p.m. on Sunday it runs from 8 a.m. till noon. Lunch and dinner are served on Saturday and lunch and awards ceremony is held on Sunday. All bait is supplied and along with some tackle and other gear too.

To get an application, ask questions, or to find out how & where you can volunteer for this event contact **Dr. Weber** at: (920) 424-1389, by email @ [weberr@uwosh.edu](mailto:weberr@uwosh.edu), or write to: Fishing Has No Boundaries, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Department of Physical Education & Health Promotions, 800 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh, WI 54901-8622. You can also visit their website @ [www.fhnbinc.org](http://www.fhnbinc.org) There is a \$50 fee for disabled participants with a \$30 deposit required and the \$20 balance due May 29<sup>th</sup> at registration. Sponsorships for this event and other FHNB events are available from CTO and to request one please contact **Bob Mayer** @ (920) 469-2021 or email **Bob** @ [crossbowkids@sbcglobal.net](mailto:crossbowkids@sbcglobal.net)

Our pontoon boat can accommodate 4 or 5 anglers comfortably. If there are more than 4 or 5 members attending we can draw names for the open spaces and there will be plenty of other boats available for those who don't get a space on ours. If you are planning on attending please contact **Mark Baehr** @ (920)766-9218 or by email @ [baehrm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:baehrm@sbcglobal.net) We are really looking forward to attending this newest FHNB event and hope you do to!!

## Trout Fishing

By: **Larry Zander**

If the weather permits, take some time and come out to fish trout. There are at least a hundred big ones that are fat and sassy. I've already ordered about 400 more for delivery the second week of April. At that time there should be no fishing until sometime in June. It will give time to grow them bigger. This year we've added 25% Brook Trout, my favorite in the salmonoid family. Well, actually the brookie is in the char family. Call them whatever you want but, no one can deny their beauty and table fare. **Call Larry Zander at 920-525-5637** to check on the fishing conditions when you plan on going.

## PLEASE COME!!

Our Challenge the Outdoors, Inc. Board of Directors meeting will be held at the River Rail in Shiocton on Mar 16, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. These board meetings have always been open to the General Membership. It has, however, been brought to our attention that not everyone knew when and where. This will no longer be the case. All news letters will have the dates, time and place for CTO Board meetings. We welcome your presence and input. Tremendous growth is being formulated.

Mar 16, 2004—River Rail  
State Rd 76, Shiocton

Apr 20, 2004—Muehl Public Library  
Main Street, Seymour

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2004

**John Martinson—Rio, WI**  
**Michael Little—Milwaukee**  
**Steve Garvey—Green Bay**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark Baehr and Challenge The Outdoors for a fun filled week of adventure, new friends, and wonderful memories. Because I happened to run into Mark at a local sporting goods store, our conversation led to a topic about an event that would be held in Green Bay for blind and disabled participants to play ice hockey and cross country ski. I could not believe that this event was less than 2 weeks away. The next day I went to the Ski For Light (SFL) website and requested information. Jeff Pagels phoned and said if I could come up with the funding for my meals for the week long event that I would be matched with a guide. I did not know what to do but I knew that I had to make this happen. I was so excited!

Prior to my spinal cord injury in 1988, I looked forward to spending time in the mountains and connecting with nature. I sought to escape the hustle and bustle of city life and all of its trappings. At the age of 22, my world changed dramatically. No longer could I have the freedom to come and go as I pleased. Winter brought on challenges of trying to get my wheelchair through the deep snow. Without a cleared path I was stranded and forced to watch my friends go skiing and skating without me. Health concerns plagued my access to be involved with the things I once loved.

As a child growing up in Montana, I lived at the local ski hill and the outdoor ice rinks in my hometown. My girlfriends and I went skiing every weekend and ice skated during the week. Being outside gave me a sense of freedom and a connecting bond with the outdoors. I loved being in the mountains, taking in all of the sights and smells. In college I even enrolled in a weekly ski class, the instructor and I would ski in the back country, floating on deep powder. It was so invigorating! All of these memories resurfaced at the notion that I may be reunited with a long lost love of my life before my injury.

Ski For Light gave me back the things I had dreamed about for 15 years. I am forever grateful for their determination to bring winter sports back to the blind and disabled. Having SFL members cheering each other on and giving helpful advice about techniques to maneuver on the ice and snow saved hours of frustration. My guide Ted is a very special fellow who made my week long experience at SFL a fun and exhilarating. Ted helped me to propel through the ski tracks with ease. Without him I would have floundered terribly.

Ted and fellow MIP guide Tim, loved to play practical jokes. Jeff Pagels and Marie Houston and the various committees made this a well organized event that was fun filled with good food, dancing and nightly entertainment. I looked forward to each day, never knowing what would happen next. It was a fabulous fun week! I had the time of my life.

Things worked out. Green Bay and the surrounding areas received 9 inches of snow. I am raising monies and I have a lot of candy bars yet to sell, and memories to last a life time. I cannot tell you how a chance encounter will enable me to play ice skate hockey and ski with my two young sons. I met the most amazing people from all over the world who had stories to share and inspire.

Ski For Light was the most amazing and humbling experience. After 15 years of not being on skates or skis, my week at the International SFL was very emotional. I did not expect to have all those old memories resurface. The people were awesome! How else can one explain all those people in one room for the same cause - FUN? I still can't get over that this event was right here and I was able to attend. Everything they said was true; once you attend you're hooked. Year after year guides and participants keep coming back, and you really are like a family. I feel blessed to have been given the opportunity to attend. I was selected to share my experience as a first year participant at the final dinner, and my family attended, so it was extra special. I am looking forward to next year in Colorado! Thank you, Challenge The Outdoors!

Sincerely,

[Gina Hackel, CTO Member](#)

## CTO 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Shawano Lake Fishery & Picnic

### Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004

It's the beginning of March and cabin fever is nearing its end, well hopefully soon anyway. Planning for our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Shawano Lake Fishery & Picnic is getting under way as well. We hope to match and likely will surpass last years event totals that saw 55 participants of which 15 were physically challenged. Over the past five years this event has steadily grown in to something very special. The biggest reason for it's success has been due to the many boat owners who have been so generous with their continued support and the many others who prepare and serve the food, set up and clean up the day of the event, and the many others behind the scenes doing whatever it takes to get things done. Once again our heartfelt thanks and gratitude go out to all these folks for all that they do.

This year's event will again take place in Cecil on the east shore of Shawano Lake. Starting at 8 a.m. we'll begin loading the boats for what we hope is another great fishing outing, Ma Nature will have a big say on that of course. Bluegill & Pumpkinseed will be our main targets and whatever else bites will be a bonus. Lunch will be served at noon and anglers will be able to hit the water again in the afternoon. Of special note is that the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in June has been designated as a **FREE FISHING WEEKEND** in Wisconsin so you will not have to purchase a fishing license if this is to be your only fishing outing of the year. All bait, food, refreshments, some terminal tackle and equipment will be supplied by CTO at no cost to all participants. You are welcome to bring your own equipment as well as a lawn chair, sunscreen, and proper weather related clothing, i.e. rain gear. This is a Rain or Shine event so please come prepared. We will have a large tent for all to get out of the sun or rain if necessary. If you need transportation or are in need of some adaptive equipment, i.e. an electric fishing reel or rod-holding device, to enable yourself to actively participate in this event please contact our Special Events Disabilities Coordinator, **Bob Mayer @ (920) 469-2021**.

**With a few months remaining before the event you have plenty of time to fill out the registration form and return it, but why wait???? fill it out and send it in today!!! We ask that you please fill it out and return it no later than May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004.** Even if you're not interested in fishing we encourage all our members and friends to come and enjoy the picnic. There will be a map with directions and an event schedule in our May Newsletter. You may also check our website for a map, directions, and registration application for the Fishery & Picnic. Last but not least, we are always looking for more people to get involved in this and for that matter all our events. Right now we are looking for volunteers to help out with; serving and preparing food, setting up and cleaning up, first mates to help on the boats, fish cleaners, and boat owners (both pontoon and regular fishing boats) willing to provide the use of their boat for either half or the whole day. To volunteer or to get answers to your questions contact either **Harland Chapman @ (920) 833-6274**, or **Mark Baehr @ (920) 766-9218**. We know you will find this event a rewarding and enjoyable experience and we hope to hear from you soon. **THINK SPRING!!**

### STURGEON GUARD 2004

As spring rapidly approaches the Winnebago Chain of Lakes Lake Sturgeon are once again making their annual spawning run up the Wolf River and its' major tributaries. Our Department of Natural Resources Wardens, along with a dedicated group of volunteers, will be keeping an eye on the over 50 spawning sites along the banks of these rivers.

The Sturgeon Guard is scheduled from April 15th through May 5th each year with water temperature being the deciding factor on the peak spawn. There are two twelve-hour shifts daily, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. with two people assigned per spawning site per shift. Each year hundreds of people sign up but all are not called to guard, as the spawning period occurs only within a 7-10 day period of time. They have a hard time filling the night shifts, especially during the week, so if you are able to work a night shift they would appreciate that greatly. Otherwise, day shift volunteers are welcomed and appreciated as well.

When filling out the sign-up sheets, please write clearly and fill in as much of the information as possible. Please include in you sign-up sheet how you learned about the Sturgeon Guard program, and whether you belong to an organization such as Sturgeon for Tomorrow, a school group, hunting or fishing club, etc. Sometime in late March shift assignments will be sent out, including directions on how to get to Fish Camp and other helpful information. The DNR also keeps a list of flexible people who can be available within 2-6 hours to guard in case of shortages or special circumstances. **To get an application contact the Sturgeon Guard Coordinator by e-mail @ [sturgeon@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:sturgeon@dnr.state.wi.us) or by phone @ (920) 303-5444.**

**CHALLENGE THE OUTDOORS, Inc.**

**\*\*\*Fishery Registration Application\*\*\***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Wheelchair user? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Incase of an emergency call, Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Medical or Special Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Helper (if a helper is attending): \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Helper: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Guests: \_\_\_\_\_

If Helper/Guests desire to accompany participant on boat, is it : Necessary \_\_\_ or Would like to \_\_\_

\* Available space on boats will determine whether helper/guests will be able to accompany participants.  
\*

Mail Registration Application to: **Challenge The Outdoors, Inc.**  
**W4276 Cty Rd G**  
**Black Creek, WI 54106**

Entry or Release of all claim: In consideration of the acceptance of my entry in the “ CHALLENGE THE OUTDOORS, Inc. Fishery event, I release CHALLENGE THE OUTDOORS, Inc. and all volunteers who are connected with this event, from any liability or claims of injury to body or property or illness that I sustain during my participation in this event, I understand that this applies to myself, my personal helper, heirs and assigns. I represent that I am capable of participation and acknowledge that this release is being relied upon by the above organization in permitting me to participate. I also grant full permission to any or all foregoing to use any photographs, recordings, or any other records of this event for any legitimate purpose.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Adaptive Sportsmen, Inc. Opening up the Great Outdoors to more Physically Challenged Sports Persons**

Over the past several years there has been an incredible out pouring of support by the Outdoor Sporting & Recreational community of Wisconsin for the Physically Challenged Sports Persons of Wisconsin. Their effort and support have allowed many Physically Challenged people to harvest their 1<sup>st</sup> deer with a bow & gun, go turkey hunting, fishing, take part in archery events, and to participate in a variety of other outdoor recreational activities that would have otherwise been impossible.

Many individuals have suggested even more can be done to open up the great outdoors to physically challenged people and doing just that has become the goal of the newly formed Adaptive Sportsmen, Inc. Adaptive Sportsmen, Inc. is a Not for Profit 501 (c) (3) foundation organized in Wisconsin. Their mission is to provide recreational opportunities for physically challenged people. They are looking for physically challenged and able-bodied sports persons who would like to become members and take part in their sponsored hunting and recreational opportunities. The following is a list of Adaptive Sportsmen, Inc. events and contact information.

March 12-21.... Milwaukee Sport Show.... Contact Mary Mitchell (414) 541-4505

April 2-4.... Deer & Turkey Expo in Madison.... Contact John Mitchell (414) 541-4505

May 6.... Adaptive Sportsmen Banquet.... Contact Rick Schaefer (262) 966-7058

June 3-6.... ATV Ride in Northern WI. .... Contact Al Neu (414) 617-4870

June 19.... 3D Archery Tournament in Mayville.... Contact Jeff Miller (920) 485-2387

August 14-15....3D Archery Tournament in Verona...Contact Les Werner (608) 845-8296

Oct. 1-3.... Archery Deer Hunt Baraboo..... Contact John Mitchell (414) 541-4505

Oct. 8-10 or 15-17.... Archery Deer Hunt Clintonville.... Contact Larry Drake (715) 535- 2697

You can also see and learn more about Adaptive Sportsmen, Inc. at their website: [www.adaptivesportsman.org](http://www.adaptivesportsman.org) or by writing to them at: Adaptive Sportsmen Inc., 8727 W Coldspring Rd, Greenfield, WI 53228. We here at CTO wish all those involved with Adaptive Sportsmen, Inc. all the best and look forward to sharing their successes along with ours as we know the Physically Challenged people we both serve will have many great new opportunities to enjoy our shared great outdoors and that's what really counts.

### **Fox Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited Fishing Outing - April 24, 2004**

On Saturday, April 24, 2004, the Fox Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited will be sponsoring their annual Trout fishing outing for challenged anglers. Contact Fox Valley TU by calling **Tom @ (920) 725-6277** or **Tony @ (920) 725-5925**. The anglers will meet at a North Side Appleton school on the 24th and form a caravan to Maine Creek Game Farm. The Maine Creek Game Farm is located several miles north of Shiocton and is about a 20 minute drive from Appleton. Ask for directions if you wish to drive directly to the Game Farm.

At the Game Farm, the TU volunteers will instruct the anglers and help them fish from a wheelchair accessible pier and shore. The anglers get to fish a pond that is stocked with Brook, Brown, and Rainbow Trout. Anglers are encourage to bring their favorite fishing rod and equipment. Some fishing equipment will be available for those who need it. A lawn chair is also recommended, as is a cooler to place your fish in. This is a rain or shine event and participants should dress accordingly. A free dinner will be served afterwards.

**GOOD LUCK!!**

## **NEWS YOU CAN USE!!**

In 2004 CTO will again be accepting requests from our physically challenged members for grants or sponsorships that will allow them to attend outdoor recreational events sponsored by other organizations. In the past members have received grants and sponsorships to attend events sponsored by; Fishing Has No Boundaries, Inc., Twist of Fate, Inc., and Ski For Light, Inc. For members to be considered for the grant or sponsorship we are requiring that they be active and in good standing with our organization. Being active could mean; helping with our fundraisers, putting up fliers, handing out brochures at an informational booth, serving on a committee, etc. Requests will be considered on a case by case and a first come first served basis. To be considered for a grant or sponsorship and to learn of volunteer opportunities please contact; **Bob Mayer (920) 469-2021** or by email: [crossbowkids@sbcglobal.net](mailto:crossbowkids@sbcglobal.net) or contact **Mark Baehr (920) 766-9218** or by email: [baehr68@aol.com](mailto:baehr68@aol.com) We hope to hear from you soon!

## **Pheasant Hunting Opportunity**

CTO, Inc received a letter from the Minnesota Broken Wing Connection offering individuals with physical disabilities the chance to rediscover or discover outdoor opportunities available to them. This is accomplished through an event called the "Minnesota Broken Wing Connection Pheasant Hunt Individual". Individuals experience pheasant hunting in a whole different way with the use of specially designed rigs, the help of family and friends, and sharing in the "CAN DO" spirit.

Each year individuals are invited on a weekend of upland bird hunting, trap shooting, archery, and other related activities. The event is held in Pine River, MN the weekend after Labor Day. All costs for lodging, meals and the event are covered by the organization for the hunter and one companion. The only cost to the hunter and companion is their transportation to Pine River. The event starts on Friday with check-in and runs through Sunday around noon.

Qualified applicants from the United States and Canada are accepted. To qualify for the event, the applicant must show a physical condition that limits their ability to hunt pheasants. Past hunter limitations have included quadriplegia, paraplegia, amputees, paralysis, blindness, motor skill deficiencies and various heart and lung conditions. Male or female with ages ranging from 13 to 81 years of age.

Applicants are drawn in late June or early July and are contacted at that time. If your application is not drawn, don't give up hope, it will be put in for the next year. If you are interested in pursuing this opportunity please contact **Jean Chapman at 920-833-6274** or e-mail at [chapjean1@yahoo.com](mailto:chapjean1@yahoo.com) to receive an application. The contacts for Minnesota Broken Wing Connection are **Verna Gertgen at 320-796-5710** or **Doug Bermel at 763-420-2847** if you have any questions or would like to know more about the organization.

## Tri-River Wildlife Area Triangle “A Spring Treasure Trove for Nature Lovers”

**By: Mark Baehr**

It's been a long cold winter, aren't they all, and what better way to ring in spring than by taking the family out for a day trip to take in the sights and sounds of Mother Nature. And with the spring treasure trove of opportunities the Tri River Wildlife Area Triangle has to offer it's just about the ideal area to make that trip to this spring.

It is the waters of the Wolf, Embarrass, and Shioc, that make up the Tri-Rivers of the Wildlife Area Triangle. Their waters are the life-blood that floods the wooded river bottoms, marshes and fields that in turn become the attraction to the wide variety of wildlife that visit this area each spring. The Wildlife Area Triangle is formed by drawing three lines from Black Creek: one north to Navarino, one south to Stephenville, and one west to New London. This year water levels are expected to be higher and that usually means great things for wildlife viewing enthusiasts. One of the 1<sup>st</sup> visitors to this area are Tundra Swans, so many at times the fields look as though they are snow covered. Along with the Swans are flocks with thousands of geese, ducks, Sandhill cranes, and many other varieties of birds all take brief rests here from their spring migrations north to their summer breeding grounds. A great spot to get out to view and listen to them is the DNR Wildlife viewing area on Van Patten Rd. located on the north side of Hwy 54 a few miles west of Black Creek. There is a raised wheelchair accessible wildlife viewing platform here. In the evening the area marshes air fill with the mating calls of the Spring Peepers, Chorus Frogs, American Toads, and other varieties of frogs creating a virtual nature made symphony.

Another spring visitor to this area, that draws a huge amount of interest, is the Winnebago Chain of Lakes Lake Sturgeon. Each Spring, usually between mid April to mid-May, as the river water warms to near 50 degrees, 1000's of the Lake Sturgeon begin to seek out rip-rap & rubble river banks along the Wolf River and its larger tributaries from New London to Shawano. Here, they complete their spawning run of up to 100 miles or more. The Sturgeon, some over 6' in length and nearly 200 lbs. put on a great show. During their spawning ritual, the larger female Sturgeon, usually escorted by several smaller males, hugs the bank and deposits her eggs on the rip-rap and the escorting males release their milt to fertilize her eggs. This is all done within clear view of curious on lookers and is often a frenzied affair, as the sturgeon roll and splash in groups up and down the bank. There are over 50 sites known of where they spawn on the rip-rap and rubble along the river banks but two offer visitors outstanding opportunities to view their ritual up close. The 1<sup>st</sup> is just west of Shiocton off Hwy 54 where the Wolf River takes a sharp bend, known locally as Bamboo bend. The other is the Wolf River Sturgeon Trail, located just west of New London along Hwy X. This 3000' paved trail runs parallel to the Wolf River where newly placed rip-rap has renovated one of the prime sturgeon viewing & spawning sites on the entire river system. Wheelchair users are now able to get up close to view the sturgeon spawning as well as having great access to the river for fishing along the length of the trail. If you're lucky you may be able to see the DNR Fisheries crew measuring and stripping the eggs and milt from these prehistoric fish.

There are Nature centers in the area as well. The Navarino Nature Center located west of Navarino, the Mosquito Hill Nature Center just east of New London on Hwy S, Fallen Timbers off Hwy 54 on PP between Seymour & Black Creek, Bubolz Nature Preserve on Cty Rd A in Grand Chute. They have great hiking trails and excellent interpretive displays. These are just a few of the many wildlife viewing and recreational opportunities in the Tri-River Wildlife Area Triangle. I'll leave the rest for you and your family to discover. Don't forget to take your binoculars, camera, and tape recorder along to record some of the sights and sounds of spring. **P.S. Think Spring!!**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 16, 2004	Board of Directors Meeting River Rail, Shiocton 6:30 p.m.
April 3, 2004	6th Annual Sporting Clay Fundraiser J&H Game Farm, Navarino
April 20, 2004	Board of Directors Meeting Muehl Public Library, Seymour 6:30 p.m.
April 24, 2004	FV Chapter Trout Unlimited Fishing
May 14-16, 2004	FHNB—Hayward, WI
May 29-30, 2004	FHNB—Oshkosh, WI
June 5, 2004	Shawano Lake Fishery See article Page 6
June 4-6, 2004	FHNB—Eagle River, WI
July 10-11, 2004	FHNB—Madison, WI
September 11-12, 2004	FHNB—Fond du Lac, WI
September 21-22, 2004	FHNB—Chippewa Valley, WI

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