



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT- Jeffrey Potter, Director of Communications
jeffrey.potter@wisconsin.gov and (608) 261-4392

Wisconsin's Bat Ecologist Puts His Money Where His Bats Are With New Endowment

(Madison, WI) Some people are dog people, some people are cat people, but Dave Redell is a bat person. As a bat ecologist with the Department of Natural Resources, he routinely monitors cave populations of nearly 150,000 bats. Now, as bats face old stereotypes and new threats, Redell, and his wife Lisa Wilson, have established an endowment to provide for the long term protection of bats in Wisconsin.

“Now more than ever we are faced with impending threats to bats in Wisconsin and much of North America, a new disease - White Nose Syndrome - is probably the most disconcerting,” Redell said. White Nose Syndrome has reportedly killed more than a million bats on the east coast in the past three years. Little is known about the disease, but it appears to be having a rapid and devastating effect – killing up to 90% or more of bats in some colonies.

While Redell spends as much time as possible conducting inventory, monitoring & research in the field, he also spends a good part of his day working to raise money for the bat program. “I prefer to be in the field conducting research and monitoring the bats, but writing proposals to raise money for the program is part of the job,” Redell noted. “Hopefully this fund will take some of the financial pressure off scientists and ensure that they can use their talents for bat conservation in the field instead of fundraising,” he concluded.

“This gift is extraordinary not just because of Dave and Lisa’s generosity in tough economic times,” said Charlie Luthin, executive director of the Natural Resources Foundation. “It’s also special because, as a state employee, Dave is going that extra mile with a personal gift to the public protection of bats,” Luthin concluded. The Foundation offers individuals, non-profits and businesses the opportunity to create permanent endowed conservation funds for a region of the state, a special public site, or favorite species of wildlife, conservation program or organization.

There are approximately 1,100 bat species on the planet - nearly twenty-percent of the world’s mammal species - at least seven species of bat are commonly found in Wisconsin. One of the state’s largest hibernating colonies is found near Horicon Marsh at Neda Mine State Natural Area. Redell became an expert on the colony while working on his Master’s degree at the University of Wisconsin. The site’s proximity to major wind-energy projects has also made it an ideal place to study the impacts of wind-turbines on bats.

“I hope that the fund will help researchers like Dave learn how we can use greener energy, like wind turbines, without having a negative impact on Wisconsin’s bat population,” Lisa Wilson, Redell’s

wife and co-creator of the fund, said. The couple hopes that their fund will encourage others to take an interest in these misunderstood mammals.

“My hope is that more people will understand the benefit of bats and be inspired to get involved,” Redell said. “The critical mass will come when enough people take notice of the impending threats and take steps to ensure that bats are protected in Wisconsin,” he concluded.

The Wisconsin Bat Conservation Endowment Fund is administered by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. Contributions to the fund are tax-deductible and can be made by sending a check to the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, Attn: Wisconsin Bat Conservation Endowment Fund, PO Box 2317, Madison, WI 53701 or by donating online at www.wisconservation.org.

ED NOTE: Dave Redell is leading a public field trip to learn about the bats of Neda Mines on Friday August 21st, 6pm – 10pm. Limited spots are available for members of the media. Please contact Jeffrey Potter, director of communications, for more information about the trip: 608-261-4392. Royalty-free photos of Wisconsin’s bats are also available to illustrate this story.

###

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Madison, Wisconsin. For more than twenty years, the Foundation has worked with citizens, businesses, non-profit organizations and the Department of Natural Resources to promote the protection and enjoyment of Wisconsin’s public lands, waters and wildlife. Learn more and donate online at www.wisconservation.org.