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BATS, BIRDS, AND SHOCKING FISH **Natural Resources Foundation Announces 2009 Summer Field Trip Season**

(Madison, WI) Did you ever want to meet Batman? No, not the fictional superhero of movies and comic books – the *real* “bat man” of Wisconsin, Dave Redell. Like the superhero, Redell has legions of fans and cool gadgets to help him in his work, but unlike Batman, Redell leads field trips for the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, a non-profit conservation group based in Madison.

Redell is a bat ecologist and research scientist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR.) His field trip to Neda Mines in Dodge County is just one of more than seventy guided field trips offered by the Foundation between April and October this year. Neda Mines are Wisconsin’s largest bat hibernacula where more than 140,000 bats hibernate in a maze of abandoned iron mine tunnels. Redell’s trip, which invites members of the public to use ultrasound bat detectors and infrared video cameras to learn about bat behavior, is typical of the experiential nature of the trips.

“Our trips give participants an opportunity to be a field ecologist for a day,” noted Christine Tanzer, field trip coordinator for the Foundation. “Wisconsin is home to some incredible wilderness areas. In these tough economic times, it’s nice to know that you really don’t have to go far for an outdoor adventure,” said Tanzer. This is the fifteenth year that the Foundation has offered summer field trips. Thousands of residents and tourists have attended Foundation trips and, according to Tanzer, “the program has been successful because we keep prices low and provide experiences you can’t find anywhere else in Wisconsin.”

Bird banding, canoeing, biking, fly-fishing, wolf-tracking, and monarch migration surveys are just some of the experiences available. Trips are offered statewide, with one of the more unusual being hosted in the Coulee Region of southwestern Wisconsin. Dave Vetrano, fisheries team supervisor with the DNR in La Crosse, demonstrates how ecologists electro-shock streams to survey aquatic life. After a quick shock, a variety of trout and other fish rise to the surface to be counted before they swim away unharmed.

Public registration begins on April 1st for the trips, which run from the end of April through October. Trips are filled on a first come, first served basis. Space is limited and some trips fill very quickly, so Tanzer recommends early registration. A complete list of trips – and registration - is available on the Foundation’s Web site, www.wisconservation.org. Follow the link on the home page.

Editor's Note: High quality field trip photos are available for media use. Contact Jeffrey Potter, Director of Communications, at 608-261-4392 for more information.

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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-profits and the government to promote the protection and enjoyment of Wisconsin's public lands, waters and wildlife. Learn more and donate online at www.wisconservation.org.