

LOCAL VOICES

Cherishing where we hunt, fish, hike and bike

On July 4, 1999, a huge thunderstorm tore through the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and across the southern shore of Lake Superior in Wisconsin. My friend Terrie and I were kayaking in Lost Creek Bog, an estuary where the Lost Creeks (Lost Creek 1,2,3) empty into the big lake west of Cornucopia. Seeing the dark line of the storm front rolling east, we knew we couldn't get off the water in time.

We grabbed the shrubby branches of sweet gale and hand-over-hand hauled ourselves in our boats into the boggy edge and leaned over the cockpit to lower our profiles, not wanting to be the tallest point in a lightning storm. My boat bobbed on the rough water and the cinnamon smell of the sweet gale wafted around us—there might have been some pleas to a higher power at that point. The tremendous energy of the storm that leveled 2.5 million trees in the Boundary Waters luckily had lost some of its force by the time it hit the south shore. The wind raked my wet hair as the storm front headed inland. As soon as it passed, we made for the pullout, feeling sheepish to have been caught in such a storm.

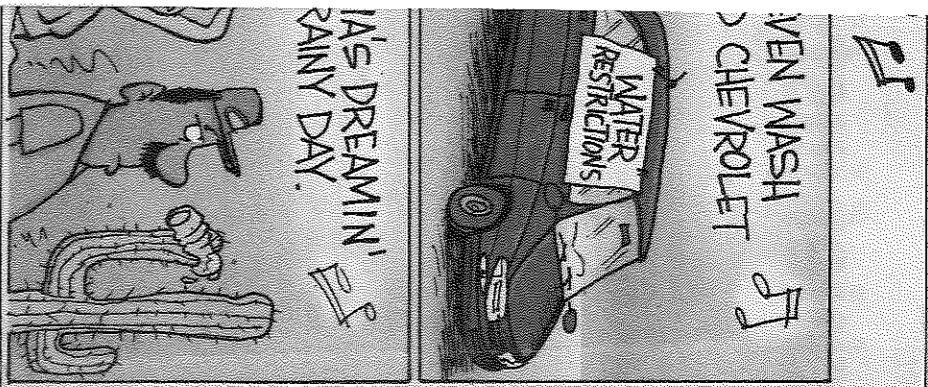
No matter what kind of outdoors enthusiast you are—a hiker or biker, a hunter or angler, a kayaker or birder, an ATV rider or skier—Wisconsin's public lands and waters provide endless opportunities for each of us to connect with nature in a profound way. These experiences instill in us an appreciation for our state's woods, wildlife and waters and a commitment to ensuring that the legacy of enjoying our natural areas continues for generations to come.

Last year's hunting, fishing, sports and conservation patron licenses have just expired and for the next few months, hunters and anglers renewing their licenses have a unique opportunity to help protect the places they most enjoy. When they buy their hunting or fishing license, they'll be asked whether they'd like to donate \$2 to the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund and if they cherish Wisconsin as much as I do, I hope their response will be "yes."

The Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund will help cover costs for critical habitat management throughout the state. Setting land aside so it won't be developed is the first step in protecting it, but making sure those lands and waters stay healthy requires careful management, including controlled burns, invasive species control, trail maintenance and biodiversity projects. The Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund is managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to help support management of state-owned lands such as Lost Creek Bog State Natural Area, Bark Bay Slough and the Port Wing Boreal Forest.

We already know that hunters and anglers are a generous bunch. In 2014, the fund's first year, more than 25,000 license buyers gave to the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund through DNR's Automated License Issuance System when they were asked to give \$2. These are individuals who are proud of what this state offers, proud of what may be a family tradition of enjoying time together outdoors, and proud to protect what they cherish.

This spring I encourage outdoors enthusiasts of all types to follow suit, either by giving to the fund through DNR's license registration process or by making a donation to the fund on <http://CherishWisconsin.org/>. We hope you'll join us in celebrating this great opportunity to support the management of the unique public lands we all love.



etball

arenas and how they were invariably filled with spectators. I wondered if the coliseum in ancient Rome used to fill for its prehistoric ball courts at Cozumel, Mexico, did they fill with spectators, too?

My fascination with these basketball games was more with their purpose in our modern world than with the details of their execution. I wondered why they drew thousands of spectators and why they have become so important to so many of us. And I wondered if it really is true, as some thinkers say, that sporting contests can be understood as metaphors for warfare.

Well, this spring I was reminded that basketball is no longer the game it was back in the 1960s, and that in our universities and colleges it is taken very seriously. The UW-Madison is an alma mater of mine, but I have never felt any real allegiance to its many sports teams. Maybe that's changing too. Maybe the point in this is that I can rekindle old, lost interests and find fulfillment in them. I enjoy spending time with an adult son watching a Badger game, especially if they win. We have much to talk about again, much to enjoy in each other's company, and that son knows his way around a kitchen. He serves good food, and keeps the refreshments coming.