

# Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Update

August 2021

YCC delegates and mentors,

The Namekagon River served as the perfect outdoor classroom for our YCC Summer Program. We got our feet wet (literally) with an electro fish shocking demonstration, macroinvertebrate survey, mentored fishing instruction, introduction to fly tying and lure making, paddling the Namekagon and much more! YCC delegates, mentors, YCC committee members, DNR staff, Trout Unlimited volunteers, and instructors all came together for a successful program.

The weekend was filled with opportunities to learn new skills, engage with experts, meet new friends, participate in hands on learning activities, dive into career exploration, and to spend time fishing. The engagement, enthusiasm and overall enjoyment was evident throughout the weekend.

We are looking forward to the next time we can all get together for another YCC group adventure!

~Kyle Zenz, YCC Coordinator

## Outdoor Adventures!



Miles, YCC delegate from Monroe Co. spent time with his mentor, Maurice Amundson at the Touch of the Wild Trailer during the Centerpoint archery tournament in Sparta.



Cameron, YCC delegate from Dodge Co. helped at the Poynette Game Farm, sorting pheasant chicks with his mentor, Harold Drake.



Liam, YCC delegate from Marathon Co. participated in a Trout Unlimited habitat restoration project.



### Wisconsin Youth Conservation Contacts

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Welcome

## NEW YCC DELEGATES

We are excited to welcome new delegates to the YCC:

Ariana, Sawyer County

Ari, Jackson County



## YCC delegate updates



Madison, YCC delegate from La Crosse Co completed a solo hike in the Tushar Mountains, Utah.



Kyle, YCC delegate from Dane Co. helped sort pheasant chicks at the Poynette Game Farm.



Gabby, YCC delegate from Jefferson Co. competed in Nationals for Scholastic Clay Target Program and she earned the JV Handicap National Champion! CONGRATS!



Gabby, & Gavin, YCC delegates from Jefferson Co. represented WI for the Scholastic Clay Target Program National Competition in Ohio.



Caleb, YCC delegate from St. Croix County climbed inside the giant Musky at the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum in Hayward.

## Wishing our 2021 graduates the best on their future path:

- Madison Schaffer, Bayfield County, mentored by Rob Lombard
- Ezekiel Rominske, Price County, mentored by Mike Wade
- Chance Lee, Sawyer County, mentored by Frank Pratt
- Layne Olson, Sawyer County, mentored by Larry Damman
- Claire Morgan, Vernon County, mentored by Tim Morgan
- Sylvan Yang, Sheboygan County, mentored by Tashina Peplinski
- Ethan Brehmer, Washington County, mentored by Tashina Peplinski
- Samantha Hammiller, Racine County, mentored by Trent Tonn
- Evan Richmond, Racine County, mentored by Trent Tonn
- Zachary Yiannias, Waukesha County, mentored by Jeff Hintz



## NATURAL RESOURCE FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN - FALL FIELD TRIPS

New field trips have been added for August through October including Tiffany Bottoms Train Ride, Banding Ducks Hands-On, Paddle Horicon Marsh, Geology of the Baraboo Hills, and more! Browse trip descriptions: <https://www.wisconservation.org/> (search Autumn Field Trips) All YCC delegates are members of the Natural Resource Foundation. Please contact Kyle for the proper code to register for trips online.

Natural Resources  
**FOUNDATION**  
of Wisconsin

## DANE COUNTY YCC DELEGATES CONDUCT ENDANGERED BUTTERFLY SURVEY

This summer, Dane County YCC delegates Reja Von Klopp and Allison Rausch, along with their WCC mentor Mary Ellen O'Brien, conducted a Karner blue butterfly survey as a citizen science project for the Wisconsin DNR. Karner blue butterflies are on the federal endangered species list, but thanks to DNR's habitat conservation plan, Wisconsin has the world's largest population.



Karner Blue Butterfly, showing orange crescents on fore and hind wings

Karners are very tiny with a wingspan of about one inch (size of a nickel). The only way they can be identified for certain is by looking at their underside where a row of orange crescents is present on both the hind and fore wings.

Karner caterpillars only feed on wild lupine, a perennial plant in the pea family that grows primarily in the sandy, open savanna habitats in central Wisconsin. Karners lay two batches of eggs each year. Eggs from

the previous summer hatch in spring when the lupine is coming up. The second hatch occurs in July, and that's the population that gets surveyed.

The first step was to locate areas where lupine is present and where other conditions such as availability of nectar plants (prairie type habitat) are also present for the adults. Two sites at the White River Marsh state wildlife area in Green Lake County were selected and staked. During the reconnaissance and staking trip in June, only a few Karners were observed.

During the two official survey trips in July, a total of about 50 Karners were observed at the two sites. Except for the amount of wild lupine coverage, there were no major differences in the two sites, and the Karner count was similar for each. As Allie described it: "It was so exciting to see the tiny Karners in their natural habitat, especially since there were more than expected. It's nice to see that the Karner population is improving."



Karner Blue Butterfly

In addition to the Karner counts, the citizen science project involved on-line training, a Karner identification quiz, a virtual field survey, and filling out data sheets to record weather conditions, GPS coordinates, percent lupine, and other vegetative cover. The results of the survey were also logged into the national iNaturalist database.

*Article and photos  
by Mary Ellen O'Brien*



YCC delegate Reja Von Klopp measuring survey area



YCC delegate Allison Rausch Staking survey area



Wild Lupine  
Critical to survival of Karner caterpillars



Karner survey area  
Showing abundance of nectar plants for adults

# YCC Summer Program



Ten YCC delegates participated in the 2021 YCC Summer Program in Hayward, on the Namekagon. Over the weekend, the group learned about trout ecology, river macroinvertebrates, fishing techniques, fly tying, local history of the area, and so much more!



The DNR led a electro fish shocking demonstration. It was a perfect opportunity to learn about fish abundance and species variation in the river. The YCC delegates were fascinated to witness techniques that fish biologists use to determine fish population in the river.



Destiny, showing a small sample of fish species in the river



Avery holding an adult brown trout



Ari & Tommy holding a White sucker



Olivia releasing a Shorthead Redhorse



Grant holding a Shorthead Redhorse



Frank, in his element!



Surveying the macroinvertebrate population of the river



Sarah & Ava looking for aquatic insects



Caleb and his dad, Keith enjoying a rainy day paddle on the Namekagon



Learning to fish with a tenkara-style rod with Jeff Butler



Paddling group



Logan (center) teaching lure making



YCC delegates showing their newly designed lures and flies



The passion and patience for tying flies continued until the very last minute of the weekend!

## YCC Delegates attend trapping camp

YCC delegates who attended the 2021 Trapping Camp are eligible for a \$100 scholarship from the Friends of the WI Conservation Congress. All delegates were asked to write about what they gained from the experience. Olivia from Calumet Co. shares her story:

I completed my trapper's education in spring 2021, so I really didn't have too much knowledge about trapping, but this camp definitely has helped. The first day we spent quite a bit of time in the classroom learning the different kinds of traps and what they all catch and also the rules and regulations and how to trap successfully. Most importantly, we learned the ethics and responsibilities that trappers have. We also had time to go out to some land and ask for permission to trap. We all got to set out a foot-hold trap and a dog proof trap. With this we learned how to set them correctly and tricks to try and trap the animal you are going after.

The second day we checked the traps we set yesterday. Some of the others in the group had some luck, so it was awesome to be able to use our new knowledge and see it work right in front of us. After we had checked all the traps we came back to camp and the local warden talked to us about trapping in general. He brought up regulations and laws we might not fully understand, along with new rules or laws that might've changed from the past years. He also talked to us again about how important the responsibilities of a trapper are, making sure we understand how lucky we are to have the opportunities to trap. Then using the catches from today, we got a lesson on how to skin furbearers. There is definitely a learning curve on how to do this, but it's a skill you need if you're going to trap. We also learned how to identify animal tracks, scat, and any other marking an animal leaves behind.

On the last day the group took a trip back out to the land to collect the traps we had put out on the first day. We even got to see a live beaver we caught and were able to release it. We then built our own weasel trap boxes and sifters to bring home.

I am so happy I went to this camp. You learn so much more with more hands on opportunities and FTW focuses so much more on making sure kids are doing the right things and being responsible. I recommend this camp for kids who would like to learn more about trapping!



Grant, from Manitowoc Co., Olivia from Calumet Co., and Gabby from Jefferson Co. all attended a Future Trappers of Wisconsin camp in Eagle River.

## International Adventures!



Gavin pictured with a Wahoo fish

Gavin, YCC delegate from Washington County participated in an amazing adventure! The goal of the trip was to educate students about ecology and biodiversity of the different ecosystems. The cloud forest, the Amazon, and then the Galápagos Islands. Over the course of 20 days he studied and traveled around Ecuador learning about culture and aspects of ecology.



Cloud Forest. Gavin pictured in the front row, second from



Marine iguanas endemic to the Galapagos



Cloud Forest



Amazon Forest

# YCC Upcoming Opportunities

## AUGUST

- 6-8- YCC summer program. Hayward, WI. Learn about the Namekagon River, aquatic surveys, trout fishing, watershed ecology, and more!
- 10th - Natural Resource Board meeting <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/NRB/agenda.html>
- 28th - Waterfowl Hunters Expo, Oshkosh. Opportunities to volunteer at the Expo and at the Touch of the Wild trailers. <https://waterfowlhuntersexpo.com/>

## SEPTEMBER

- 8th- YCC virtual gathering. Learn about YCC opportunities. Zoom link will be shared by email.
- 18th - Archery deer season opens
- 18th - Fall turkey season opens
- 18th-19th - Youth duck hunt, 15 years and younger

## OCTOBER

- 9th & 10th - Youth deer hunt, 15 years and younger
- 16th - Tentative - YCC Oversight Committee Meeting

## OPPORTUNITY TO VOLUNTEER AT STATE NATURAL AREAS

Help care for some of our state's most pristine public lands, [State Natural Areas](#) (SNA). Encourage native plants and animals to thrive by cutting brush, controlling invasive species, collecting seeds, monitoring rare species and preparing fire breaks.



Throughout the year there are opportunities across the state to volunteer your time and labor to help State Natural Areas. Check out the workday table: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Lands/NaturalAreas/volunteer.html>

Please call the contact listed on the website to ask about work conditions and volunteer requirements. You may need to attend the work day with a parent/guardian or mentor. Make sure to tell the coordinator that you are part of the YCC!

Upcoming opportunities exist in the following counties: Adams, Pepin, Iowa, Walworth, Columbia, Kenosha, Green, & Dane.

## YCC VIRTUAL GATHERING - Learn about upcoming YCC opportunities



**Wednesday, September 8th 7:30-8:30pm**

As a delegate of the YCC, you have many opportunities to learn about all aspects of conservation. Our goal is to help YCC delegates connect with conservation leaders in their communities, increase their knowledge about natural resources, and learn new skills related to hunting, fishing and trapping.

Each YCC delegate will be choosing an individual focus opportunity for the upcoming year. Join the discussion to learn more about what this means, and how you can tailor your individual focus opportunity to your personal interests and goals.

Watch your email for a zoom link.

## CITIZEN SCIENCE

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is asking the public to participate in Operation Deer Watch, an annual citizen-science survey that collects information on Wisconsin's white-tailed deer and gives residents an engaging opportunity to assist with deer herd management efforts.

Participants can report their deer sightings through an easy-to-use online form. The data collected provide insights into the reproductive status of Wisconsin's deer herd and help shape deer management for the state. Now through Sept. 30, participants are asked to record all bucks, does and fawns seen during the day.

**Read more:** <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/47631>

**Watch the video:**

<https://dnrmedia.wi.gov/main/Play/54c4b4e08be148cebd32f07aaa8bbu8id>

