



*South Twin Lake Conservation Society*

P.O. Box 203  
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**Silverwood Leaves Summer 2005**



The beauty of seasons at South Twin Lake; as predictable as change.

## BUT THAT'S JUST ME

By Anne Baden

Recently I was reading about a mysterious forest flower. Sighted just frequently enough to keep it from disappearing from the urban legend scene; it blooms apparently at it's own discretion, never for more than a day, and then disappears back into obscurity until some wide-eyed wanderer comes upon another, even more beautiful ( from a ghostly transparent white to golden yellow with a purple aura) than previously recorded. The ghost flower is never found when searched for, it is only come upon by accident. Sightings go back as far as the sixteenth century English forests and of course it has never been photographed. Thus it fulfills all the prerequisites of a mythological being; like Bigfoot, UFOs, the Loch Ness monster, and most religions, satisfying the need for mystery and wonder, existing only in the memories of those few believers who have "seen," and offering us all the chance to have that once in a lifetime experience.

And let me hasten to admit that I believe in it all. It is hard-wired into my psyche right beside the need to overindulge my pets and to resist learning how to fully operate my cell phone. Life to me is more beautiful when there is mystery. It is why walking through the woods is more edgy than say walking through Wal-Mart. You never know what you

are going to find. It is why as Thoreau said, "In wildness is the preservation of the world." Wilderness guards the secrets of creation and the secrets of the human heart—those we seek out with anticipation and those we hope stay hidden behind the trees.

On my last visit to South Twin Lake I discovered a beautiful vein of pink quartz running through a boulder at the north end. The boulder had been covered with muck and moss from the lake bottom until my "discovery." Seeing pink quartz that had been covered for maybe centuries, maybe never seen by human eyes before –Oh the power of wonderment was running wild! It was like finding dinosaur tracks in the red rock landscape of Utah or finding an obsidian arrowhead in my garden – these are my talismans, these are the moments when I see the ghost flower and feel the mystery of life.

But that's just me. My new email address is [silverwode@msn.com](mailto:silverwode@msn.com). Let me know if you've heard any good mysteries lately.

Anne

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**Dan Renzoni and Ed Baden discuss the subtleties of BBQ at the STLCS annual meeting which always includes good friends, good weather (whether or not it rains) and good food.**

## Wisconsin's Own Ghost Flower



First “discovered” relatively recently in 1928, Fasset’s Locoweed is a rare plant that few have seen and can be found only in Wisconsin. It is listed by the federal government as threatened and by Wisconsin as endangered.

Fasset’s Locoweed is known to grow in only three counties: Bayfield, Waushara and Portage. It grows 4 to 12” tall with pea-shaped (it is a legume) flowers that are purplish-pink in gravelly and sandy lakeshore habitat. The plants bloom for about a month in May/June and are often seen as a soft pink border that follows the curves of land-locked lakes. Nearly all the lakes with locoweed populations are less than 36 acres in size and are generally shallow. The distribution of the plant and its habitat may be due to the glacial history of Wisconsin.

As with most endangered species, the loss of Fasset’s Locoweed’s specific habitat accounts for its increasing rarity. High-impact shoreline activities and development are eating into this rare plant’s isolated world.

If you think you know of a Fasset’s Locoweed population, you can contact Darcy Kind with the DNR’s Landowner Contact Program at (608) 267-9789. This program helps private landowners act as guardians of rare plants and sensitive habitats. The Landowner Contact Program website is : [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/landowner](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/landowner).

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## Historic Designation of the Nelson Cabin

Last April, Bob Hennes and Dawn Meier along with historic designation representatives of the U.S. Forest Service visited South Twin Lake to consider the cabin and surrounding area for possible listing in the National Forest Heritage Program. The STLCS board has decided to pursue this as a way to continue our work at South Twin Lake after the transfer of ownership in 2008. If accepted it would mean preservation of the cabin itself, and hopefully the lake and its ecosystem; as well as provide a framework for STLCS to continue it’s work maintaining the building and the area in partnership with the Forest Service.



## Spring at South Twin Lake

By Sally Nelson

Spring has just now given her work over to summer. The trees are fully leafed, but in a green still soft, and bright and fresh. The water is too cold for Janet to take her morning swim, but far enough past thawing to “rinse off” in. All the migratory birds have arrived, claimed territory, and settled in to raising families. And no hike is complete (or possible) without the stink of mosquito dope, unless you venture out swaddled in netting.

The work of spring had only begun when I visited South Twin for the first time this year, arriving in late March to do a little cabin-freshening in advance of my parents’ arrival. Snow lay deep in the woods and deep, in places, on the driveway, so I hiked the mile in, though in shirtsleeves the last bit, hot from the heavy slogging and the unusual sixty-degree-approaching warmth. I paused when I reached the north end of the lake, spotting a crew of large birds feeding on a carcass out on the ice. Bald Eagles, it turned out, two mature and two young, who lifted up as I approached. I had spotted the foursome the previous summer as I paid a visit to the beaver pond east of the lake. I was gazing into the water, pondering the water lilies when I saw the reflection of a large bird, soaring. I looked up and spotted the first eagle, which was joined by another, and another, and then a fourth. Two of them had the white heads and tails of adult birds, the others still plain brown. For a long while they circled overhead, slowly drifting off to the east and out of sight.

Now here they were again. One or another of them had been seen alone on a number of occasions, but evidently it takes a good piece of carrion to bring the whole family together. I ventured out onto the slush and standing water to see what the centerpiece of their feast might be, and found a young coyote, fairly well eviscerated. (Coyotes have a winter-time

association in my childhood memories of the lake, their howls late at night being the veto over an already reluctant decision to venture through the snowdrifts to the outhouse.) I continued on my way to the cabin, but returned a bit later with a shovel to pry Coyote loose and carry him to the shore, where I laid him out carefully, and with apologies should any of my kind be responsible for his death.

I spent just a few days there, but the ice and snow had arrived at the tipping point, the stage at which a couple of days reaching sixty meant their (seemingly) sudden dissolution into water. So, while I waded through snow on my way in, I walked out on mostly bare ground. And though I walked out to the middle of the lake on my first day there, on the last day, I would have had to leap several feet of open water as slushy, sodden ice began to pull from the shoreline.

A couple of weeks later I had another weekend off and my folks were back in residence at the cabin, so I came up again. Now there was no snow to be found and the ice had gone out from the lake entirely. Indeed, very much to our surprise, Mom and I came across some small patches of hepaticas happily blooming by the roadside. We would have expected to wait another couple of weeks to see these earliest of spring wildflowers – around May Day – building on our experience of years past, all the way back to when I was little and she took me for walks in the woods when all the trees were still bare and there was hardly the hint of green anywhere. Hepaticas, spring beauties, trilliums – I could still show you the places we discovered to be the best for finding these little treasures. And thirty-five years later, the sense of joy and delight is much the same – and enhanced by all the years of shared pleasure in their advent.

I visit the place where I laid Coyote. Some other creature had come along and worked him over for meat, wrenching his head nearly loose. I leave him as he lays.

Another two weeks and I was back again ( we're to May 1<sup>st</sup>, now). This time, a light green mist could be discerned in the trees around the lake, the white birch unfolding their tiny new leaves in spite of the cool turn the weather had taken. The loud-mouthed little frogs known as spring peepers were asserting themselves in the evenings, shrieking territorial declarations, undying love – whatever it is, it must evidently be stated loudly and persistently. It distresses Carl that he can't hear this clamor without his hearing aid.

A jostling gang of songbirds had come to patronize the feeders set out for them: yellow finches, purple finches, orioles, hummingbirds, rose-breasted grosbeaks, evening grosbeaks, nuthatches, mourning doves, chickadees, red-winged blackbirds – I hate to make a list out of concern of who I might be forgetting. A bluebird was spotted, though as a carnivore, he didn't have a spot reserved at the Nelson Bird Café. ( a flock of turkey vultures nests near my brother's place. My sister-in-law has suggested building a feeder for them on top of the barn, a wood platform onto which could be winched the occasional road kill. Thus far, Bruce has been cool to the idea.) Breakfast can be considerably extended by watching the birds at theirs. (And watching the frustrated cat this side of the porch screen. . . .)

May 15<sup>th</sup>, and I'm back again for the Peeper Party, the sixth such annual event. It's cold, though, and the peepers are pouting. Still, it's a pleasant gathering of people. A "gathering" is pretty much how I've been relating the coming event to my co-workers in Milwaukee. "Peeper Party" just sounds too weird apart from the particular context. I venture into the swamp and managed, balancing on slimy logs, to grasp a bouquet of marsh marigolds for the table, soon to be filled with contributions of home-baked bread, soup, sliced cheese, fresh fruit, and sweets. An hour of mindful silence preceded the happy commotion of old friends visiting, coffee brewing, and the satisfying lunch followed by the ritual of processing out to "Peeper Point," a bit of high ground edging the marshy area between the lake and the

beaver pond. A spot where normally the peepers would be peeping in high volume, but they're cold and decline the performance. Never mind, the human chatter continues on amiably around the bonfire.

Politics, economics, the present status of relatives and acquaintances. Peep, peep, peep.

Coyote is disintegrating, his flesh returning to the earth, the particles of his being feeding the life of others. He no longer seems like the creature he once was. He is not.

The very end of May, and there is certainly a summery feeling in the air. The trees are leafed out in full green canopy. The grass is thick and Carl has given it its first mowing (excepting where the purple violets are especially beautiful). The restless pair of Canada geese who spent an awful lot of time honking back and forth between the lake and the pond have settled, at last, on the pond. The loons often stay overnight on the lake, hooting in the moonlight. Do they know that they are enchanting? Clouds of tiny black flies and mosquitoes rise up from the warming, softened earth with a steady hum. Beetles and worms busily return Coyote's flesh to life again.

Good News and Bad

The 108<sup>th</sup> Congress ended with a welcome holiday gift for Wisconsin. Close to 35,000 acres in Wisconsin's Apostle Islands National Lakeshore was added to the National Wilderness Preservation System in honor of Senator Gaylord Nelson, the founder of Earth Day. The new designation is the Senator Gaylord A. Nelson Wilderness.

But the rest of the 192 million acres of national forests and grasslands may not have been so lucky. The Bush administration is issuing new rules for management of national lands that dismantle decades-old protections for wildlife and wipe out requirements that ensured the public a voice in the use of our public lands. "This is one more big gift for the administration's friends in the logging, bulldozing and drilling industries," says NRDC

Senior Attorney Neil Lawrence. The NRDC expects to go to court to challenge these rule changes.

Across the country wilderness groups are campaigning congress for protection. In 2005 Northern California's Lost Coast and Washington's Wild Sky forests are slated for consideration. Legislation is also anticipated for Southwestern Virginia's wild forests. West Virginia's Monongahela forest, Oregon's Mt Hood and Columbia Gorge, and Arizona's Tumlacacor Mountains.

All these groups benefit from public input to congress people and from donations. Some links are:

- Action.leaveitwild.org
- Nrdc.org
- Wistrails.com
- Epa.gov

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**Damage to 566A by 4 wheel drive vehicles.**

## ANNUAL MEETING; SOUTH TWIN LAKE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

September 26, 2004 Held at South Twin Lake Cabin

Present: Board Members: Dan Renzoni, Tom Rasmussen, Carl Nelson, Anne Baden, Peg Pearson. Members: Janet Nelson, Jane and Megan Dennis, John and Mavis Wood, Bob and Judy Weaver, Jim and Adair Lewis, Nils Pearson.

After introductions, we set out the agenda. We met on the porch of the cabin on a beautiful autumn day.

Treasurer's report:

**Balance**--\$1,693.66

**Expenses** -- \$557.52

Property and equipment expenses -- \$464.52

WI licensing and regulations ----- \$55.00

P.O. box rental ----- \$38.00

**Income**-- \$986.39

Memberships----- \$975

Interest ----- \$11.39

1. Discussion of reversion of the cabin and 2 acres at South Twin Lake to the Forest Service in 2008. We discussed how the Society can be involved in preserving the cabin after the Forest Service takes ownership. The result of long discussion was the following statement which was approved by those present.
  - a. The officers of the Society will move ahead with the preservation of the living area. The officers will be responsible for maintaining the property and handling the finances involved. The Society should also pursue the possibility of an extension of the Nelson's contract with the Forest Service.
  - b. Other things mentioned follow: consider using the preservation designation and use the cabin as a retreat and wilderness center, involve the local business community in the planning, develop the idea of the area as a place of peace and quiet, the pristine pure lake and the low impact recreational use aspect of the property.
  - c. Next steps will be: Anne Baden will contact Mark Bruhy at the Rhinelander office of the Forest Service to pursue preservation of the cabin; Tom Rasmussen will contact Bob Hennes at the local Forest Service office about the same thing; Tom and Dan Renzoni will pursue getting on the nomination list for preservation status; The Society and the officers will have a continuing dialogue with the Forest Service and pursue all options.
2. Update on kiosk for South Twin Lake. Dawn Meier of the local Forest Service office has delivered a kiosk, with three compartments, which needs to be installed on the road near the boat access. Carl Nelson read the pamphlet he is developing to go into the kiosk, a welcome and map with locations, a map of the area, other conservation publications and paper and pen for comments.
3. The final discussion was about recruitment of new members. The following decisions were made: for all current members to think of the possible new members, to hold a work day in 2005 where each of the current members would bring along a new person to work for the day and we would offer memberships to them. When and if the cabin becomes available for rental by the community we would offer reduced rates for STLCS members and we would advertise this in the paper and on the radio.

1. The following motion was approved: The officers agreed to spend money to investigate the leaking roof of the cabin. We may do a temporary repair with the thought to replace the roof eventually.
2. Elections were held. Dan Renzoni will continue as President. Tom Rasmussen will serve as Vice-President. Peg Pearson will continue as Secretary-Treasurer.

Minutes recorded by Peg Pearson 9/26/04

THIS YEAR'S MEETING IS SUNDAY, SEPT. 25 AT SOUTH TWIN LAKE. EVERYONE IS INVITED



**All books donated to the Society have been placed in the Westboro library with a bookplate in each identifying them as from the Society. Mary Aschenbrenner is the Westboro librarian, and is an honorary member of STLCS**