



July 14, 2023
Vol. 17, No. 12

The Real McCoy®

Published for Fort McCoy, Wis. — Proudly Serving America's Army Since 1909

Thousands of troops train at Fort McCoy during 87th Training Division's WAREX 87-23-01

Thousands of troops trained at Fort McCoy in June during the 87th Training Division's Warrior Exercise (WAREX) 87-23-01.

The exercise took place at Fort McCoy from June 8-22.

According to their mission statement, the 87th Training Division designs, develops, and executes "live, virtual, and constructive training exercises and conducts mission command and staff training as directed, in support of the 84th Training Command, Army Reserve Headquarters, and combatant commands in a Total Army, joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational environment to enhance U.S. Army readiness and lethality."

Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) officials said troops were completing training operations for the exercise in training areas on both North Post and South Post at the installation.

Among the units at the exercise were the 4th Expeditionary Sustainment Command. In a Facebook post by the unit, they stated, "The Warrior Exercise is a large-scale training exercise with tactical training scenarios designed to replicate real-world missions. The 87th Training Division supports the exercise by developing scenarios, providing subject-matter experts to teach classes, and offering observer-coach/trainers to advise throughout the exercise."

The 377th Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) also had troops participating in the training. In a separate Facebook post, they described more about the exercise.

"(There were) 377th TSC Soldiers from nearly 30 units (who) traveled to Fort McCoy to tackle two weeks of focused training at Warrior Exercise 2023," the post states. "WAREX is a large-scale exercise hosted by the 87th Training Division aimed at squad-level proficiency in a variety of Warrior Tasks for combat readiness. More than 1,300 U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers from across the country are (See [WAREX](#), Page 4)



Inset photos by Amanda Clark, large photo by Kevin Clark. Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office

(All photos) Training operations are shown June 12 and 14 at Fort McCoy for the 87th Training Division's Warrior Exercise 87-23-01. The exercise took place at Fort McCoy from June 8-22. Thousands of troops participated in the training.

Post holds successful family-fun event with 'Lil Firecracker Fest 2023'; more than 300 attend

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy held its 2023 Lil Firecracker Fest on July 8 at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area in the Pine View Recreation Area and more than 500 people attended during its four hours of operations.

The fest opened at 10 a.m., and right away there were nearly 50 people there ready to have fun, officials with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) said. And as the event went on, more and more people arrived and departed as they partook in the many different things to do at the event.

The event included food, games, bounce houses, a large water slide on the ski hill, a climbing wall, a visit by Brutus the MiniPig, a display with wild turtles with Endangered Species Biologist Jessup Weichelt, paintball target practice, a miniature horse, and more.

DFMWR Business and Recreation Division Chief Karla M. Rynes said the event was very successful.

"The Outdoor Recreation team did a magnificent job putting the event together and executing the event," Rynes said. "All of the guests who I spoke with said they were having a great time and that they loved that we put on this type of an event for the families."

"We had lots of people from the campground, the surrounding communities and even some past employees who worked at Pine View Campground eight to 10 years ago and remember working a similar event that we called (See [FIRECRACKER](#), Page 3)



Community members attend Lil Firecracker Fest 2023 on July 8 at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area at Fort McCoy.

94 cadets graduate Wisconsin Challenge Academy's 50th class

BY TOM BECKMAN
Wisconsin National Guard

BARABOO, Wis. — In an emotional and optimistic ceremony attended by family and friends, 94 cadets graduated from the residential phase of the Wisconsin Challenge Academy during a June 21 ceremony at Baraboo High School.

The Wisconsin Challenge Academy began in 1998. This ceremony marked the conclusion of the program's 50th class.

Located at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Challenge Academy is a National Guard-sponsored alternative education program designed to help young adults at risk of not graduating high school to redirect their lives by developing the values, skills, education, and self-discipline needed to successfully transition to adulthood. There is no

cost to participate.

The Challenge Academy program has two phases. The first phase is in residence at Fort McCoy for 22 weeks and immerses participants in a quasi-military setting. The second phase lasts 12 months and begins upon graduation. Mentors paired with cadets during the residential phase help guide the cadets as they follow a post-residential action plan designed to accomplish education, employment, and life goals.

"You should be incredibly proud of all you've accomplished in the last 22 weeks," said Joni Mathews, Wisconsin Challenge Academy director. "You demonstrated dedication, discipline, and courage to develop skills that built your character and will help you reach your full potential in life."

"Remember — your character guides your thoughts," Mathews continued.

"Your thoughts guide your choices. And your choices guide your actions."

Several cadets were recognized during the ceremony for their achievements over the past few months: Overall Physical Fitness, Devin Skenandore-James of Keshana, Wisconsin; Most Improved Physical Fitness, Marissa Silbaugh of Janesville, Wisconsin; Most Responsible Follower, Lane Villareal of Kenosha, Wisconsin; Best Supply Assistant, Estrella Martinez Rand of Green Bay, Wisconsin; Best Battle Buddy, Maickol Torres Torres of Madison, Wisconsin; Academic Resilience, Sincerie Hayes of Beloit, Wisconsin; Best Archer, John Brooks of Watertown, Wisconsin; and Distinguished Honor Graduate, Allius White Eagle of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin.

During the past 22 weeks, cadets col- (See [CHALLENGE](#), Page 3)



Photo by Tom Beckman/Wisconsin National Guard

Ninety-five students from across Wisconsin who were at risk of not graduating high school graduated from the 22-week residential phase of the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy program June 21 during a ceremony at Baraboo High School.

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EDITORIAL/NEWS

Fort McCoy Garrison commander: To be wrong

BY COL. STEPHEN T. MESSENGER
Commander, Fort McCoy Garrison

Kathryn Schulz, in her 2011 Ted Talk, asks us what it feels like to be wrong. Not knowingly incorrect, but obviously wrong.

She says it feels great!

When you don't know you're wrong but think you're right, you feel pretty good about yourself.

I find myself in that position a number of times. usually multiple times day.

I was packing the back of the car in preparation for a trip recently and found myself among a group of family spectators who all thought they knew a better way to pack than I did. Now, I've loaded this exact car hundreds of times with similar items, and I was feeling pretty smug.

But the dreaded moment came when the hatch didn't quite close, and all my onlookers gave me the "I told you so" glance followed by a flurry of more suggestions. I went from feeling great to terrible.

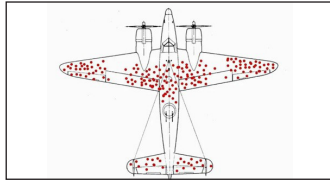
It's easy to be wrong. Human nature wants to be right all the time, but odds are we're going to mess something up. and soon. It's important to gather all the data, have a trusted network that can help us see through our biases, and find better ways to solve problems.

The Columbia University Statistical Research



Group in World War II conducted a study on bullet holes in returning bombers from Europe. They observed the majority of the pockmarked areas were located in the wings and fuselage, not the engine.

The military planners believed that if you armored the areas taking hits, the planes would become more survivable, albeit weighed down with additional armor resulting in a slower, and less maneuverable, shorter-range aircraft.



Just like me packing a car-completely wrong. Abraham Wald, one of the members of the group, inserted himself in the conversation. He realized they were missing one important set of data — the planes that never made it home.

While the bombers that returned routinely had bullet holes everywhere except the engines, the ones that were shot down most likely experienced damage to the motors and crashed because of it. The armor in fact needed to protect the engines.

This failure is known as survivorship bias. It's where only the on-hand data is observed, and the rest is dismissed.

It was again seen in the military when planners observed an increase in head injuries from the newly commissioned World War I Brodie helmets. This was alarming, leading man military leaders to be-

lieve the helmet didn't work.

However, they failed to consider that those not wearing the protection were killed and the Brodie helmet was actually saving lives.



Before you think you're right, you need to ask yourself:

What data is missing?

Are my assumptions valid?

Are there people around with more experience that I should listen to?

Have I considered follow-on effects?

Am I able to admit that I could be wrong and listen to others to see a different point of view?

It feels great to be wrong and not know it. The challenge is to be open to new ideas and fresh perspectives. This comes by gathering additional data, leveraging experienced partners, and thinking through problems. Only then will we have the best chance of getting to the right answer.

After all, while feeling obliviously wrong feels great, it feels even better to be knowingly right.

Be great today!

Installation personnel support special STEMKAMP event at Wisconsin school

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger was among several Fort McCoy people to support the week-long Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Kamp, or STEMKAMP, at Sparta Meadowview Middle School in Sparta Wis., in mid-June.

The event, according to <https://stemkamp.net>, "is a 5-day summer camp that offers hands-on STEM experiences for third through eighth grade students at military-connected schools."

From 2021-2023, the website stated they were offering the camp in 10 locations each summer. Sparta was one of them.

Through the five days of the camp, children participated in a wide range of activities at the school. On the last day, June 16, Messenger gave a speech to camp attendees and staff and served as a panelist for a special question and answer session.

Also on June 16 at the school, Stephanie Condon, who's been at Fort McCoy helping improve hiring practices and processes with the Fort McCoy Hiring Process Action Team during a career-broadening assignment for four months, set up a display to discuss STEM careers at Fort McCoy.

And, Fort McCoy School Liaison Officer Becky Walley with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation worked with the school to help make the event take place.

Messenger, in his speech to the group, highlighted the importance of STEM in everyday thinking.

"I use STEM everywhere I go and in everything I do," Messenger said. "We have so many skill sets at Fort McCoy who use STEM every day, too. ... And in the Army, we always use STEM — no matter what trade you are in."

Overall, dozens of military children from Fort McCoy participated in the STEMKAMP.

According to the STEMKAMP website, the "Department of Defense STEM provides learning opportunities from elementary school through graduate school to inspire and cultivate a diverse pool of exceptional STEM talent. DOD programs connect STEM education in the classroom to the excitement, skills, and challenges that come with safeguarding our country. Through the DOD's National Defense Education Program, the DOD awarded Goshen Education Consulting, Inc., a \$2.8 million grant to implement 10 STEMKAMP's across the United States from 2021-2023."

Fort McCoy was established in 1909 and its motto is to be the "Total Force Training Center."

Located in the heart of the upper Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only U.S. Army installation in Wisconsin.

The installation has provided support and facilities for the field and classroom training of more than 100,000 military personnel from all services nearly every year since 1984.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on the Defense Visual Information Distribution System at <https://www.dvidshub.net/fmpao>, on Facebook by searching "ftmccoy," and on Twitter by searching "usagmccoy."

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(Above) Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger is shown as part of a panel at the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Kamp, or STEMKAMP, on June 16 at Sparta Meadowview Middle School in Sparta Wis. (Below) Stephanie Condon, who was at Fort McCoy supporting the installation's new Hiring Process Action Team, talks with people about STEM careers in the Army during the event.



'BEHIND THE TRIAD' WITH THE GARRISON COMMANDER

OFFICIAL MAIL
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Behind the Triad
Fort McCoy, WI.

"Behind the Triad" is an award-winning series of videos hosted by Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger that highlights the hard-working, behind-the-scenes employees around the installation who help make Fort McCoy the outstanding installation it is today.

In this episode of Behind the Triad available at <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/888297/behind-triad-mailroom>, Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger works in the Official Mail Distribution Center with Mail Clerk Tracy Achin. He assists with addressing a package, sorting incoming mail, and delivering mail on the installation. The Official Mail Distribution Center, part of the Fort McCoy Directorate of Human Resources, services garrison and tenant activities with official mail (letters and parcels) with delivery and outbound mail services. The center also services single Soldiers who are living on Fort McCoy with incoming personal mail, personal parcels, and mail boxes. The center has an outgoing white mailbox outside its building for personal mail but it must be stamped.

Watch for new episodes on Fort McCoy's YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUF0_BwU3d2p5j1rThTE_kw. Or, find it at the Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office Defense Video and Imagery Distribution Service page at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/FMMVIB>.



COL Stephen T. Messenger
Garrison Commander



Tracy Achin
Mail Clerk - DHR



package, address it & print

NEWS

FIRECRACKER from Page 1

Family Fun Days,” Rynes said.

DFMWR Recreational Specialist Alex Karis with Outdoor Recreation added, “It was great event with good teamwork. A lot more people came than we were anticipating but the staff did a good job to rally around each other and make it very successful. There were a lot of happy folks and we are definitely looking to expand upon it in the future.”

Weather during the event also was nearly ideal as was sunny and in the 80s.

“It worked out great,” Rynes said.

The event was not only open to the Fort McCoy community but to the general public as well.

Learn more about Fort McCoy DFMWR and Pine View Recreation Area by visiting <https://mccoy.armymwr.com>.

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(Above and below) Community members attend Lil Firecracker Fest 2023 on July 8 at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area at Fort McCoy. The event, open to the public, included food, games, bounce houses, a large water slide on the ski hill, a climbing wall, a visit by Brutus the MiniPig, a display with wild turtles with Endangered Species Biologist Jessup Weichelt, paintball target practice, a miniature horse, and more. More than 300 people attended.



CHALLENGE from Page 1

lectively marched more than 21,000 miles and completed nearly 5,000 hours of community service while individually earning seven college course credits.

“The Academy taught us to think before we act as we move through life,” White Eagle told his fellow cadets during the ceremony. “Think and then do. The Academy taught us the importance of discipline, integrity, courage and commitment so that we are equipped to make the right choices in life — that we choose the harder right rather than the easier wrong.”

Keynote speaker Ryan Lonergan, an advocate for veterans nationwide, urged cadets to embrace their new experience.

“You enrolled in a program that is bigger than yourself,” Lonergan said. “For 22 weeks, you were immersed in a program that taught you skills about life. As you move forward, it’s important to surround yourself with people that will challenge you, inspire you and help you continue to grow as a person.”

The Wisconsin Challenge Academy conducts two classes per year — January to June, and July to December. The curriculum, developed by the National Guard Bureau, is based on the experiential learning model and consists of eight core components — academic excellence, physical training, job skills, service to community, health and hygiene, responsible citizenship, leadership/followership, and life coping skills. Character development is integrated and emphasized throughout the curriculum.

The Wisconsin Challenge Academy is currently accepting applications for its 51st class, which begins July 19.

The Challenge Academy is a Fort McCoy tenant organization. Learn more about the academy by visiting its website, <https://challengeacademy.org>.



Distinguished Honor Graduate Allius White Eagle addresses fellow Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy cadets during the June 21 graduation ceremony at Baraboo High School.



Ninety-five students from across Wisconsin who were at risk of not graduating high school graduated from the 22-week residential phase of the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy program June 21 during a ceremony at Baraboo High School.



Joni Mathews, director of the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy, addresses 95 cadets from across Wisconsin during the June 21 graduation ceremony at Baraboo High School.



Cadets in the Wisconsin Challenge Academy participate in training April 3 on the cantonment area at Fort McCoy. These same cadets graduated June 21 in a ceremony at Baraboo High School.

NEWS

WAREX

from Page 1

participating in WAREX.”

The troops training in WAREX were just among the tens of thousands in the Army Reserve who were training in June across the United States.

Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command, Lt. Gen. Jody J. Daniels, states on the Army Reserve website, <https://www.usar.army.mil>, in a “Letter from the Chief of Army Reserve” the importance of what Soldiers in the Army Reserve mean to America.

“It is my pleasure to present the latest edition of ‘Army Reserve at a Glance,’ a concise overview of our presence, posture, and resident capabilities. On behalf of the Soldiers and civilians of the Army Reserve — and the families and employers who support us — thank you for your continued commitment to this exceptional force of Citizen Soldiers.

“Meeting the challenges of a complex global security environment requires military and civilian leaders who understand the intricacies of the environment in which we operate, and are committed to our country, its people and its ideals. In cities and communities across the nation, these leaders are the men and women of the Army Reserve.

“As we work to improve tactical and strategic readiness and pursue comprehensive modernization to support the Army’s greater effort to become the multi-domain operations-capable force of the future, your continued commitment could not be more vital.

“Shaping the force of the future requires the support of both military and community leaders. We are asking for your support in encouraging communities, cities, campuses, congressional districts — and the employers located therein — to see themselves as partners in national security; sharing their best talent with us.

“Thank you for all that you do. With your support, we are building and sustaining crucial partnerships that enable healthy dual civilian-military career progression, and strong, supportive communities. Ready Now! Shaping Tomorrow.”

Learn more about the Army Reserve by visiting <https://www.usar.army.mil>.

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Photos above and below by Scott T. Sturkol

(All photos this page) Training operations are shown in June at Fort McCoy for the 87th Training Division’s Warrior Exercise 87-23-01. The exercise took place at Fort McCoy from June 8-22. Thousands of troops participated in the training.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol



Photo by 4th Expeditionary Sustainment Command



Photo by 4th Expeditionary Sustainment Command



Photo by Kevin Clark/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office



Photo by Kevin Clark/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office

NEWS

Field Day: Invasive species working group holds 2023 event at McCoy

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURJKOL
Public Affairs Staff

For yet another year, the Monroe County (Wis.) Invasive Species Working Group held their annual 2023 Field Day on June 15 at Pine View Campground at Fort McCoy.

More than four dozen people participated in the event that included numerous briefings about invasive species and how to control them, and updates from landowners currently fighting invasive species on their lands, and more.

Event coordinators included personnel with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch (NRB), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and others. The group is a cooperative effort led by Monroe County Land Conservation, WDNR Forestry, Fort McCoy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies.

NRB Chief Tim Wilder, Biologists Jessup Weichelt and Kevin Luepke also with the NRB, all participated in the event.

Luepke said the field day has proven to be a great event in sharing information on how to lessen the spread of invasive plant species in the county, and more. This event included goats as an option.

"With the field day, demonstrations and information is passed along to the general public that attends in regard to managing invasive plants," Luepke said. "One of the members of the group runs an invasive brush management company and utilizes goats to do the work. The group was interested in showing off this method at the field day. 'This is actually a method that we have discussed within the NRB but have yet to try and use,' Luepke said. 'This opportunity allowed the public to see this method as well as allowing the NRB to see this method up close and personal and help determine if this is a route we could incorporate into the management of invasive shrubs in the training areas at Fort McCoy.'"

Invasive species can be terrestrial, aquatic, or wetland invasives, according to the WDNR.

"One of the reasons that invasive species are able to succeed is that they often leave their predators and competitors behind in their native ecosystems," states the WDNR webpage on invasive species, <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Invasives/what.html>. "Without these natural checks and balances, they are able to reproduce rapidly and out-compete native species."

"Invasive species can alter ecological relationships among native species and can affect ecosystem function, economic value of ecosystems, and human health," the website states.

Some common types of invasive species in Wisconsin include common barberry and black locust trees, garden yellow and purple loosestrife, and leafy spurge plants, and more.

Wilder said in past articles that being a part of this working group is good for the post, and more.

"Fort McCoy is an active participant in the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group for many good reasons," Wilder said. "The more folks we can get involved in managing and controlling invasive species in the county, the better chance we have for success here on Fort McCoy. Government agencies — whether they are local, state, or federal — cannot do this alone. Getting private landowners involved is critical to success."

For more information about the group, visit <https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/departments/land-conservation/invasive-species-work-group>.

Fort McCoy biologists go diving to curb invasive plant species

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURJKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Watershed Management Biologists Steve Rood and Derek Maki with Colorado State University who work in partnership with Fort McCoy's Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch (NRB) decided to dive into their work, literally, on June 15 to lessen the impact of invasive plant species in Fort McCoy lakes.

The two biologists, who are typically conducting fish surveys and other habitat work, did something different. They donned diving gear and went on the hunt in West Sandy Lake on Fort McCoy's South Post to look for invasive plants in the lake.

"We were scuba diving to remove the aquatic invasive plants — Eurasian watermilfoil and curly-leaf pondweed," Rood said. "We have been managing these species in West Sandy Lake since 2011 and have been successfully able to keep the population under control with relatively minimal effort."

Rood and Maki, both dive certified, are well skilled in looking for the plants. They are among many people who have been part of a diving program started by longtime Fisheries Biologist John Noble with the NRB decades ago.

"When we started doing the diving so many years ago, we found that it was an effective way to control the invasive plant species," Noble said. "I did a lot of dives myself when it started, and it really makes a difference."

Rood said the June 15 dive was only one of several.

"We typically do three dives at West Sandy each year to locate and remove these species," he said.

Rood also said to keep the invasive plants under control helps keep the waterways healthy.

"If these species are left unmanaged, they out-compete the native vegetation and can result in extremely dense vegetation, which in turn can negatively affect the fish population in the lake and recreational activities on that water body," Rood said.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's online information about Eurasian watermilfoil at <https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/aquatic/plants/eurasian-watermilfoil>, it's one of the worst invasive plant species for a waterway.

"Deceptively delicate and fragile in appearance, the Eurasian watermilfoil forms thick mats in shallow areas of a lake, quickly growing and spreading to block sunlight, killing off native aquatic plants that fish and other underwater species rely on for food and shelter," the website states.

"In North America, the plant threatens the diversity and abundance of native plants as well as the ecological balance of lakes and ponds, which in turn adversely affects recreational opportunities. If left unchecked, invasive watermilfoil will spread through a lake, or even to other lakes by transmission."

Through the years of the diving program to remove the invasive plants at McCoy, Noble said it's kept the invasive plants from spreading and has allowed Fort McCoy's lakes to stay filled with native species.

"It's been a great program, and I'm thankful for everyone who's helped support it over the years," Noble said.

Learn more about invasive plant species by visiting <https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov>.

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(Above and below) Attendees to the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group Field Day listen to an instructor discuss the best ways to decrease invasive species June 15 during the event at Pine View Campground at Fort McCoy.



ro.e.wi.us/departments/land-conservation/invasive-species-work-group.

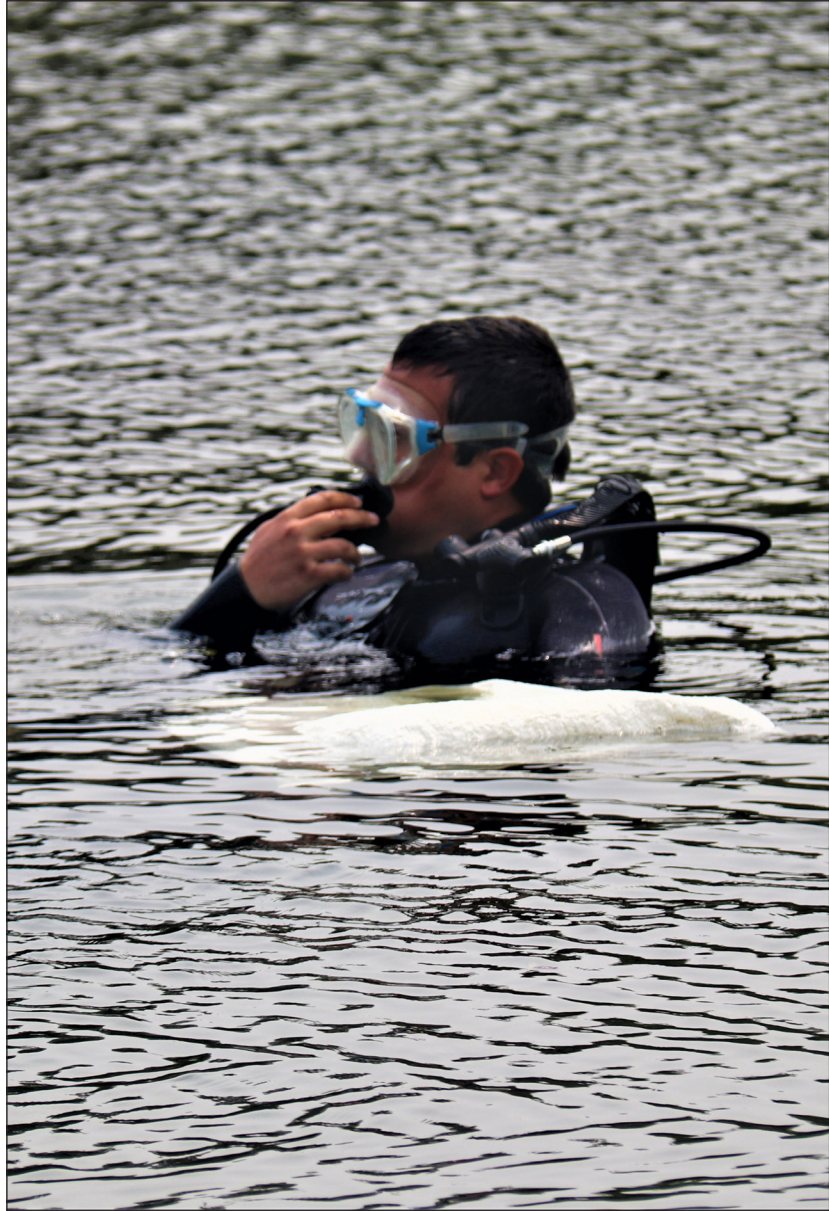
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(Above and below) Watershed Management Biologists Derek Maki and Steve Rood with Colorado State University who work in partnership with Fort McCoy's Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch conduct diving June 15 at West Sandy Lake on South Post to clear the lake of the invasive plant species Eurasian watermilfoil and curly-leaf pondweed.



ABOUT POST



Photo by Tonya Townsell

SOHAC meeting

Incoming Installation Safety Manager Ed De Leon speaks to Fort McCoy Garrison and tenant representatives during the Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council (SOHAC) at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy on July 11. The Fort McCoy SOHAC meets quarterly to discuss safety issues that could potentially affect the installation community. It also provides garrison staff and tenants a chance to inform leadership of any safety concerns they have.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Dirt movers

Contractors move dirt from a borrow pit July 11 next to the cantonment area fence at Fort McCoy. The location has also been a spot for an ongoing troop project on post for the past two years. The dirt movement was to an ongoing construction project on the installation.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Brigade headquarters construction

The construction area for a future transient training brigade headquarters in the 1600 block on the cantonment area is shown July 11 at Fort McCoy. A contract, totaling \$11,964,432.87, was awarded June 9, 2022, to L.S. Black Constructors to build the fiscal year 2022 Transient Training Brigade Headquarters project at Fort McCoy. Construction operations began in August 2022. Location of construction is just across the street from where the same contractor has been building two new transient training troop barracks buildings in the same block.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Fitness center construction

Workers with R.J. Jurowski Construction Inc. of Whitehall, Wis., work on the renovation construction project of the Rumpel Fitness Center on July 11 at Fort McCoy. The project began Nov. 1, 2022, and is expected to be completed in fall 2023. The project includes the exterior receiving new siding, roofing, and sidewalks as well as a storage addition. The interior is receiving a full layout redesign that includes locker rooms, cardio/stretching/equipment areas, and offices. There will also be fresh paint throughout, a new entryway and vestibule, and a new redesigned pool, Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works officials said.



Photo by Kevin Clark/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office



Photo by Amanda Clark/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office



Photo by Kevin Clark/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office

Audacious Warrior 2023

Members from more than 15 units throughout the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard came together at Volk Field, Wis., and Fort McCoy for Audacious Warrior 2023. They are shown training in scenarios on June 2 (top left), June 5 (above), and June 8 (left). Originally starting off as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) exercise, this year's training encompassed EOD, security forces, and emergency management. For all those involved, the hands-on training allowed them to experience more realistic scenarios while completing a variety of requirements at a much higher ops tempo.

FEATURE

World War II-era post cards donated to Fort McCoy; will go to History Center

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

In June 2023, the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office received a letter from Steven Knight of Clever, Mo., who mailed two World War II-era post cards he found to the installation.

The post cards, which are from 1944, include a post card showing the Fort McCoy Garrison Headquarters building, which in 1944 was the division headquarters. And in the second post card, it shows a set of three buildings that were the military police headquarters in 1944.

Each card was created by Moen Photo Service in La Crosse, Wis., in the 1940s.

Knight noted in a card sent with the post cards, “While shopping in a flea market in Springfield, Mo., I was looking at old vintage post cards, and I hate to see anything of the past lost. I thought you folks might like to have them.”

A woman named Ethel actually mailed one of the post cards (the military police headquarters card) on July 27, 1944, to an address on Whipple Street in Chicago. She was possibly writing to her parents.

On the card she wrote, “Dear Folks, just a line to say we are enjoying our vacation a lot. Wish you could be with us. Edward is having the time of his life. Really never stops running. Hope you are okay and will be seeing you when we get in. Love Ethel.”

When the post cards were made, the buildings depicted were part of the “New Camp” at then Camp McCoy.

According to Fort McCoy’s history, on Aug. 30, 1942, Camp McCoy hosted an open house for public inspection of the “new” Camp McCoy. According to Provost Marshal, Capt. Hans Biegel, the crowd was nearly 50,000 visitors for the historic day.

Fort McCoy was established in 1909 in the location many know today as South Post. It originated as the Sparta Maneuver Tract, which included Camp Emory Upton and Camp Robinson. This area was renamed by the War Department to Camp McCoy in 1926 after the passing of the area’s visionary — Maj. Gen. Robert Bruce McCoy.

In February 1942, the War Department announced the building of a cantonment area, referred to as the “New Camp,” which is still Fort McCoy’s cantonment area today.

The new camp site was all countryside consisting of scrub oak, jack pine, and wild grass in early 1942, history shows. More than 1,500 buildings were constructed by more than 8,000 workers, which took nine months to complete at a cost of \$30 million (approximately \$545 million today). The triangular share of the cantonment area, or the “triad,” was designed to allow troop units to live and train efficiently under one headquarters.

“The most memorable part of the whole operation was the wonderful cooperation of everybody in the surrounding communities,” said Lt. Col. D.C. Lamoreaux, the area construction engineer in 1942 in a local news article. “They (the community) contributed a tremendous amount to the success of the camp.”

Similarly, an article in the Aug. 28, 1942, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper also discussed the opening of the “New Camp McCoy” as it was announced by then-Camp Commander Col. George M. MacMullin.

“Huge is not the name for it,” the article states. “The camp is larger than many of the cities within the territory, and plans for training, according to Col. MacMullin, will bring in more Soldiers than there are civilians in several of the nearby communities.”

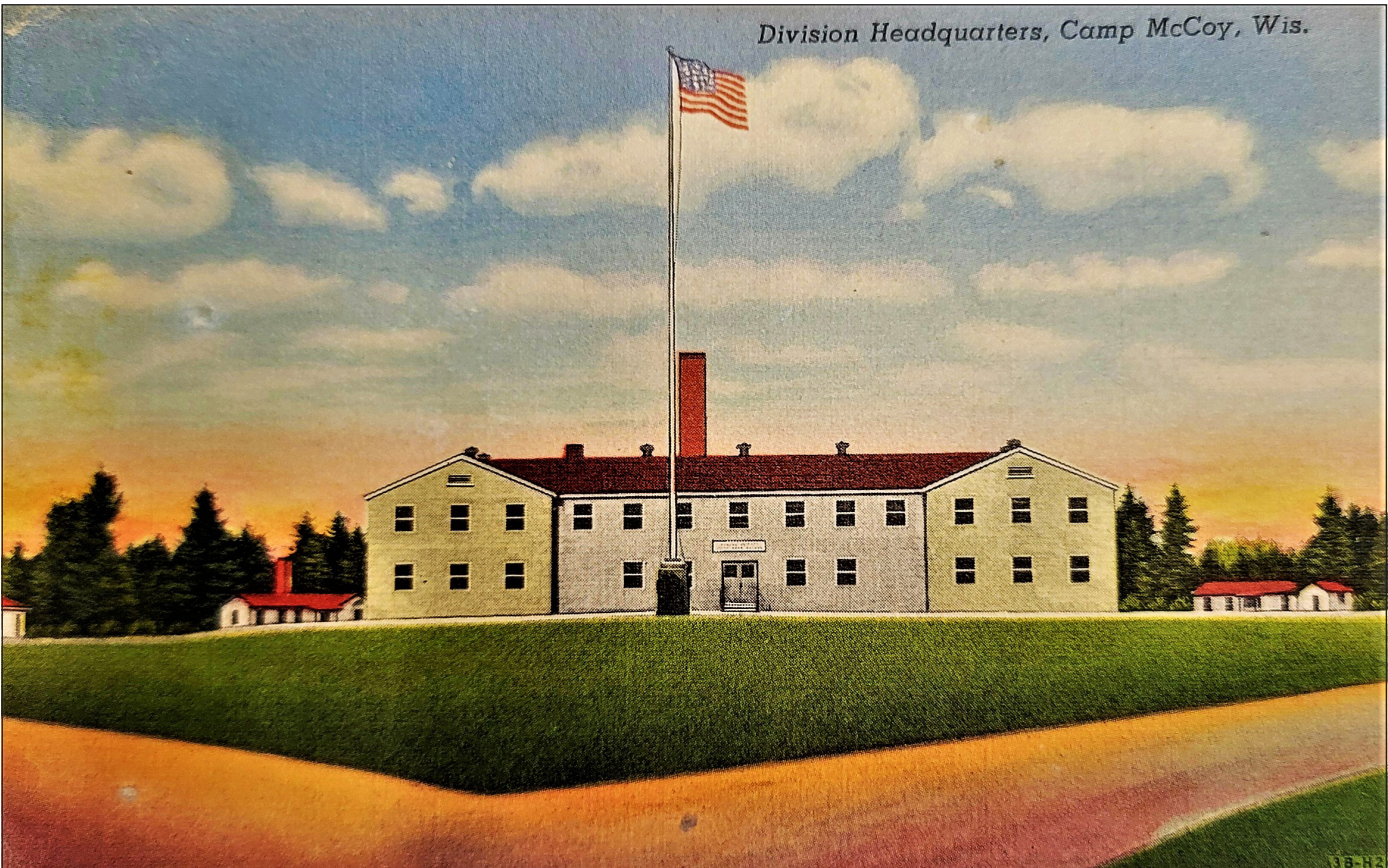
The Real McCoy article also discussed the actual construction of the cantonment area.

“Actual building and grading operations for the erection of the hundreds of buildings began March 20, 1942, although the original survey by a corps of engineers was made in July 1941. Authorization for construction was given by the War Department on Feb. 9, 1942.”

The article also states, “Each of the new buildings is of the most modern military design for comfort and welfare of the Soldiers. All are equipped with the latest of scientific appliances. The first Soldiers to move into the new area were the Camp McCoy Military Police. Hundreds of mechanics of every type and description were employed to grade and construct the hundreds of buildings, warehouses, recreation centers, chapels, and other necessary buildings. A few months ago, this new camp site was a countryside consisting of beautiful hills and valleys studded with scrub oak, jack pine, and wild grass. Today it is one of the finest military camps in the world.”

By 1944, as shown in the post cards, it was the norm at Camp McCoy and remains so today as Fort McCoy.

The post cards will join other similar post cards already on display at the Fort McCoy History Center in the installation’s historic Commemorative Area. The Commemorative Area consists of five World



(Above and below) Photos of World War II-era post cards are shown of Fort McCoy. The post cards from 1944 and show the “New Camp” at then-Camp McCoy. The post card was donated to the installation by Steven Knight of Clever, Mo. The post card was originally created in La Crosse, Wis.



War II-era buildings set aside to help tell Fort McCoy’s unique story. These facilities are representative of the types found in the cantonment area when it was constructed in 1942. Three of the buildings — an administrative facility, a dining facility, and a barracks — are set up to depict Soldier life during the 1940s.

Display items include a World War II chapel, bunk beds, footlockers, mannequins, and potbelly stoves. Another building highlights four different modern military training venues, and a separate facility

shows various training aids.

The area also has the Equipment Park. Veterans Memorial Plaza is a tribute to all the men and women who have served the nation during each era of Fort McCoy’s history.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on the Defense Visual Information Distribution System at <https://www.dvidshub.net/fmpao>, on Facebook by searching “ftmccoy,” and on Twitter by searching “usagmccoy.”

National Picnic Month: Fort McCoy’s Equipment Park offers excellent summer stop to view Army history, picnic

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

July 2023 will be another observance of National Picnic Month across the United States, and Fort McCoy’s Equipment Park in the installation’s historic Commemorative Area has picnic tables.

The Equipment Park was established in the mid-1990s to complement the Commemorative Area’s historical representation, said former Fort McCoy Public Affairs Officer Linda Fournier, who was responsible for the Commemorative Area from 1992 to 2015.

What began as an initial outdoor display of five pieces of equipment (“macro-artifacts”) increased over time to what is today a display of 70 different items of equipment and vehicles.

“All of the items on display in the Equipment Park specifically were selected in keeping with our Commemorative Area mission statement: to present pieces of military equipment that are representative of what was used here on Fort McCoy,” Fournier said in 2015.

Public Affairs Officer Tonya Townsell with the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office who now leads the public interaction with the Commemorative Area and Equipment Park, said the park offers a great spot for picnicking.

“The Equipment Park is always open for those who have Fort McCoy access, and there are picnic tables available to use on the outer edges of the park for people to use,” Townsell said. “We also have days where the park is open to the public. People can find out those hours by following the Fort McCoy Facebook page.”

According to daysoftheyear.com, there’s a lot of things people can do to enjoy a picnic.

“Summer picnics are a great way to enjoy the outdoors and each other’s company,” the web site states. “When the weather gets warmer and the rains of spring have abated, the outdoors are beckoning all those adventurous families who are out to have fun in the sun. Local parks have finally come out from under the pall of cloud gray skies, and picnics can begin in earnest. Sausage rolls and fried chicken, fresh fruit and lemonade — these are the hallmarks of a great meal out of doors. National Picnic Month encourages you to get out and celebrate the warm summer days and find your love and wonder of the outdoors again while enjoying some great food.”

Then maybe people can enjoy the outdoors at the Equipment Park. It is an outdoor display of historic and present-day equipment representative of the types used on the installation. It has everything represented from a Sherman tank of World War II to a High-Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle that was used in more recent years. The area also includes helicopters, howitzers, trucks, trailers, and more.

The park is traditionally open between May and September. For more information, contact the Fort



(Above) Visitors check out Fort McCoy’s Equipment Park during the Armed Forces Day Open House on May 20 at Fort McCoy. (Below) A scene of Equipment Park is shown June 9 at Fort McCoy. Equipment Park is inside the installation’s historic Commemorative Area. The Equipment Park is an outdoor display of historic and present-day equipment representative of the types used on the installation.



McCoy Public Affairs Office.

Fort McCoy’s motto is to be the “Total Force Training Center.” Located in the heart of the upper Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only U.S. Army installation in Wisconsin.

The installation has provided support and facil-

ities for the field and classroom training of more than 100,000 military personnel from all services nearly every year since 1984.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on the Defense Visual Information Distribution System at <https://www.dvidshub.net/fmpao>, on Facebook by searching “ftmccoy,” and on Twitter by searching “usagmccoy.”

Also try downloading the Digital Garrison app to your smartphone and set “Fort McCoy” or another installation as your preferred base.

COMMUNITY

Fort McCoy biologist leaves lasting legacy on installation's fisheries program

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Fisheries Biologist John Noble with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch officially retired from government civil service on June 29 with 32 years on the job.

When he started at Fort McCoy in 1991, Noble took a fledgling fisheries program and over three decades turned it into something that has made Fort McCoy one of best-managed fishery programs in the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense.

Through the support of others, Noble said Fort McCoy's natural resources program is one of the best anywhere and it's because of the people he has worked with in the past and now. During his time, Noble has helped the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch earn awards from Installation Management Command, Secretary of the Army, the Department of Defense, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and more.

"I started here on Nov. 4, 1991," Noble said. "Before here I worked for three years at the National Fisheries Research Center in Gainesville, Fla. ... Back in the day, we were a small operation. We had rotary phones — anybody remember rotary phones? And we had one computer. Things have changed quite a bit since then."

Noble said before he started, there was some fisheries work done at Fort McCoy in the 1970s and 1980s by biologists before him, but it began to pick up more once he was on the job.

"So, given my background, it was pretty much up to me to decide where to go (with the program)," Noble said.

Early on, Noble with support from fellow NRB teammates and others, helped establish a fish shocking program that continues to this day that helps determine the numbers and types of fish in 17 sites at Fort McCoy.

"It took a lot of time and effort to acquire shocking equipment," Noble said. "Money was a commodity that wasn't readily available, so it took a relatively long period of time to get what we needed."

Noble said piece by piece they worked to build a capability to do fisheries work with shocking equipment that was efficient enough to do the work they needed to do. The eventually got a barge, then a backpack shocker, then an electric fishing boat.

"Then we got into a more regimented process," Noble said. "That's how it started. We still shock the same 17 sites that we did since 1995. We adapted to a protocol that was created by John Lyons and Lee Wang and Paul Cannell, and we use that protocol to this day. So we standardized from the start and in that way we have had great trend analysis and great results as far as what our fisheries has done through decades of watershed management."

Through his decades of work, Noble has also been known for building great relationships with people and agencies to get things accomplished. One of those relationships Noble has continued to nurture has been with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

Over the last three decades at Fort McCoy, the WDNR has supported numerous stream restoration efforts on the installation largely because Noble worked with them to make it happen.

"I talk about brush bundling...we still brush bundle today," Noble said. "The (WDNR) crews are doing some great work with opening up the canopy and getting sunlight to vegetation. So, you get the stream banks vegetated and you get some growth of vernacular aquatic plants."

Noble mentioned people like Mike Leonard and Gary Larson as well who helped complete stream restoration work over the years who really made a difference.

"It's proven to really benefit the whole watershed," Noble said.

Noble said Fort McCoy is blessed to have lakes as well. With West Sandy Lake, Sandy Lake, and Big Sandy Lake, for example — all are lakes that were formed in the 1960s when the Department of Transportation needed borrow pits for interstate construction. They ended up becoming recreational areas for Fort McCoy.

Fort McCoy also has other lakes and ponds on post as well with Sparta Pond, Swamp Pond, Suukjak Sep Lake, Lost Lake, and North Flowage. All these areas Noble has helped manage to make sure fishing and recreational opportunities remained available at all those locations. And he credits it to teamwork.

"This is big interest for us in recreational fishing and also provides nice picnic areas too," Noble said. "It's hard to comprehend where we came from, and it takes many people. The success of this program has been through a great team."

"Also, when you look at the number of people who have supported our natural resources program, and truly helped us, it was incredible," Noble said. "Because the financial aspect back then ... we had such a small budget, and it was truly tough. Working with our partners was essential. We benefited from ... stamp money a few years and other partners contributions. Even Fish and Wildlife Service came up with \$5,000 for recreational money that we put in the creek. I mean it goes on and on and on. And that's not to mention endless volunteer hours from Trout Unlimited, the Fort McCoy Rod and Gun Club, and anglers and hunters from the community who would come out and support us here. It's rather remarkable."

And, thanks to all of Noble's work, Fort McCoy has some of the best trout streams in Wisconsin, statistics show. Annual stream surveys at Fort McCoy have been consistently showing that the installation has had some of the best naturally reproducing trout habitat in the state and that has been because of the work over the last three decades.

"We're in the eastern, northeastern portion of Monroe County ... and a lot of the headwater streams originate here," Noble said. "So, we're starting with good water quality and forested watersheds. And there's not a lot of development. And these streams are supported by groundwater springs. There are sandy streams, but the brook trout and brown trout can find a niche and naturally reproduce. Tarr Creek is the pulse of the brown fishery. And further upstream in Tarr Creek, in the Tarr Valley, it's all brook trout. There's overlap in places, too, and then we will get a natural hybrid and a tiger trout, and I think anglers might find it interesting to catch a tiger trout."

Noble again said everything he accomplished really was as part of a greater team within the NRB. He said he really enjoyed everyone he worked with there.

"You know, we don't look like we fit the bill, but we knew how to support each other," Noble said of his team at NRB over the years. "We understood who each person was. The strengths and weaknesses. It was about give and take. I mean, you look at Dave Beckmann. Technically strong in researching manuscripts and know the science side of wildlife management. ... And Tim Wilder, I mean, you can't find a better person on the planet. ... And Jim Kirkman, same way, I mean passionate to this day. ... And Charles (Mentzel) out in the field working hard, and Mark McCarty who was a great leader. ... Kim (Mello) who was passionate and dedicated. ... We worked hard for every nickel."

Noble said there were many others he worked with who made a huge difference in the fisheries program and the natural resources program during his career at Fort McCoy, including many people with the Colorado State University Center for Environmental Lands who work in partnership with the NRB.

"We did some fantastic work," Noble said. "And again, it's a village of people doing great things."

At his retirement ceremony June 29, Noble received a Civilian Service Commendation Medal presented to him from Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger.

As part of the justification for the award, following are just a few of the career accomplishments of Noble featured in the award package.

— "Since November 2000, Noble has been instrumental in the stocking of over 375,000 rainbow trout within Fort McCoy's lakes and impoundments. The vast majority of these fish were purchased through an Interagency Agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. At a minimum, a 40 percent cost savings was achieved by obtaining trout through this agreement versus purchasing from a private hatchery."

— "As Fort McCoy's fishery biologist, Noble implemented annual biomonitoring assessments to evaluate fish abundance and habitat quality. In addition, he established a water quality monitoring program



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

John Noble, fisheries biologist with the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch, holds a rainbow trout stocked in Suukjak Sep Lake near Pine View Campground on April 25, 2017, at Fort McCoy.

to, in part, determine levels of turbidity and suspended solids in Fort McCoy waters. In combination, these annual monitoring programs provided a snapshot in time of the current health of the aquatic ecosystem, identified trends overtime, denoted areas in need of habitat improvement, and provided a metrics to determine if habitat management work being accomplished was improving the resource. This sound watershed management approach greatly improved the health of the installation's aquatic ecosystem and resulted in natural fish recruitment within Fort McCoy's streams reaching an all-time high in 2022 with an average of 59 pounds of trout/acre, 65 percent higher than the previous 23-year average."

— "In 2004, Noble was approached by representatives of ESPN's Outdoor Games to see if they could hold a trout fishing competition on Fort McCoy's streams. They had heard rumors that Fort McCoy's streams had abundant trout in them. Noble was able to provide them with the survey data that documented the average number of trout per mile within Silver Creek. The end result was that eight professional fishermen fished Silver Creek and ESPN filmed the competition that aired nationwide."

— "Noble has been the Natural Resources Branch's point man for the Cooperative Ecosystems Study Unit agreement. This agreement, administered through the US Army Corps of Engineers, is the main mechanisms the Natural Resources Branch has used over the past 16 years to obtain support to complete natural resources field work. Noble worked tirelessly with other Natural Resource Branch program managers to ensure statements of work included all necessary tasks and deliverables, with our budget analyst to ensure necessary funding was available and obligated by target dates, and with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure administrative requirements were met and agreements were established by required deadlines."

— "Noble was constantly looking for ways to improve the recreational experience anglers had while fishing on the installation. Many of the fishing piers at Fort McCoy lakes were in poor shape and did not allow easy access by individuals with disabilities. In 2014, upon identifying the need, Noble submitted the necessary work orders to have six new handicap accessible piers installed to improve angling and watchable wildlife opportunities for Soldiers, families and general public with disabilities."

— "A dam was placed on Silver Creek in 1956 creating an impoundment. By the early 1980s sediment had collected behind the dam creating a shallow water wetland rather than an open body of water. The dam itself began to fail early in the 2000s. Under an Inter-Agency Agreement between the Army, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Noble led the effort to remove the failing West Silver Wetland dam and, in the process, completed over a third of a mile of stream habitat enhancement on Silver Creek."

The Inter-Agency Agreement also facilitated Fort McCoy receiving a \$40,000 grant for the dam removal and saved Fort McCoy an esti-

mated \$350,000 in part by utilizing Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources equipment operators to complete the work rather than private contractors."

— "Using an Army, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Inter-Agency Agreement, Noble established an eight-way partnership involving the Habelman Cranberry Marsh, Colorado State University, U.S. Geological Survey, Fort McCoy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, volunteers, and local school groups to complete fish barrier removal and stream habitat improvement on the installation. The collaborative effort focused on Stillwell Creek, which is listed as a 303(d) impaired water due to flow problems in its highly degraded channel."

"Collectively, the partners improved nearly 2,000 feet of stream habitat in 2014. Due to the outstanding success of this project, the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Secretary Cathy Stepp made a visit to Fort McCoy to meet with the garrison commander and tour the stream restoration project site. The work demonstrated the Army's commitment to the conservation of Wisconsin's water resources and was recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources within presentations at the Driftless Area Symposium and American Fisheries Society."

— "In 2015, a contract firm removed the Alderwood Lake dam that was located on the La Crosse River. The project included the reroute of a road that was within an active range's surface danger zone and the establishment of a low water crossing. The project also involved the mitigation of 6.5 acres of wetlands. Due to a design flaw in the contract itself, the contracting firm was not able to complete the work necessary to allow the stream channel to revert to its original depth."

In 2017, through an Inter-Agency Agreement, Noble spearheaded the coordination needed to have Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources equipment operators removed hardpan and stream substrates that allowed the stream to head cut and revert to its natural depth, directly benefiting the low-water crossing. As a result of the stream channel improvements, permit standards were met and habitat for brook trout was greatly enhanced. The project ultimately benefited the military mission by eliminating surface danger zone concerns, improving traffic movement, adding a low water crossing and eliminating weight limitations on an aging dam structure over the La Crosse River. This collaborative effort helped Fort McCoy achieve wetland mitigation permit compliance in the third year of a five-year permit term."

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on the Defense Visual Information Distribution System at <https://www.dvidshub.net/fmpao>, on Facebook by searching "ftmccoy," and on Twitter by searching "usagmccoy."

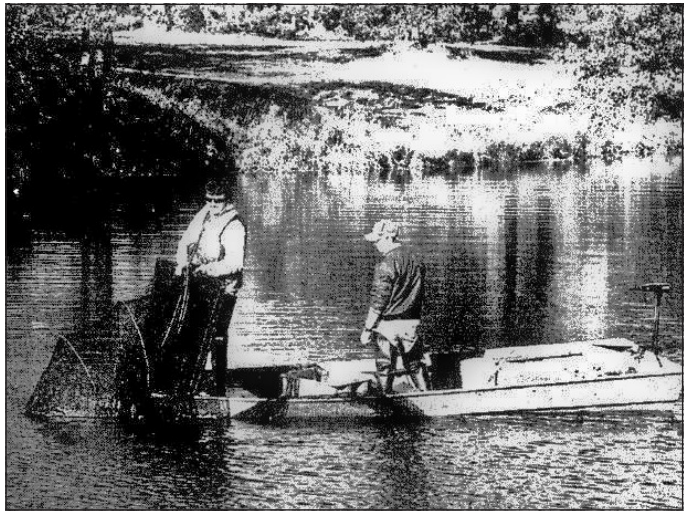
(The Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch contributed to this article.)



Fort McCoy Fisheries Biologist John Noble gives an explanation of the Fort McCoy fisheries program to students in in June 2001 news clipping from The Real McCoy newspaper.



Fort McCoy Fisheries Biologist John Noble is shown in this news clipping from December 1999 in The Real McCoy newspaper where Noble was receiving appreciation from the city of Tomah, Wis., because he was part of a team who helped stock Lake Tomah with more than 9,300 bluegills.



Fort McCoy Fisheries Biologist John Noble and Fisheries Technician Shawn Giblin are shown netting bluegills at Swamp Pond in November 1999 in this news clipping from The Real McCoy newspaper.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Environment, Safety and Occupational Health) Eugene Collins (left) talks with audience members Aug. 31, 2016, during the presentation of the Army's "Best Natural Resources Conservation Team" award to the Natural Resources Branch of the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division. Among the awardees is Fisheries Biologist John Noble to the left.

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THIS TRAINING WILL:

- Examine strategies to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- Examine all of our roles in intervening when sexual harassment or sexual assault is present.
- Thoroughly explain reporting processes and procedures for reporting sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- Discuss support resources available.

2023 Training Dates

Who: All personnel of Fort McCoy.

What: The purpose of the leader led SHARP training is to conduct this in an interactive, participative discussion-based session.

Where: Leaders' choice - Individualized to meet the needs of each Garrison Directorate.

When: Leaders' choice - Individualized to meet the needs of each Garrison Directorate.

To register, please call Garrison Victim Advocate at 608-388-8951

Significance:

- SHARP training is good for one calendar year
- FY22 SHARP TSP can be used until FY23
- GTA 19-11-001 OCTOBER 2021 REFERENCE CARD will continue to be used until New Reference Card is available
- CONTACT: Garrison Victim Advocate, to coordinate and provide Leader-Led Training

ACS events are open to Military, Retirees, Civilian workforce, Family Members and registered Fort McCoy Volunteers, unless otherwise stated.



Fort McCoy 24/7 Hotline: 608-388-3000



UNLOCKING WELLNESS

2023 FORT MCCOY MWR WELLNESS FAIR

AUGUST 9, 2023

BUILDING 905



9:30 am - 1 pm: Red Cross Blood Drive
Every drop counts! Don't miss your chance to help! Walk-ins are welcome.



10:15 am: 5K Run or 2 Mile Walk
Return registration form (reverse side) to the Fitness Center B1395. First 100 participants to register will receive a FREE T-shirt. Size requested not guaranteed.



11 am - 1 pm: Area Business Showcase
Learn about fitness and health services available at Fort McCoy and the surrounding community... including nutrition, health screenings and information on new products.

1 pm: Door Prize Drawing!
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