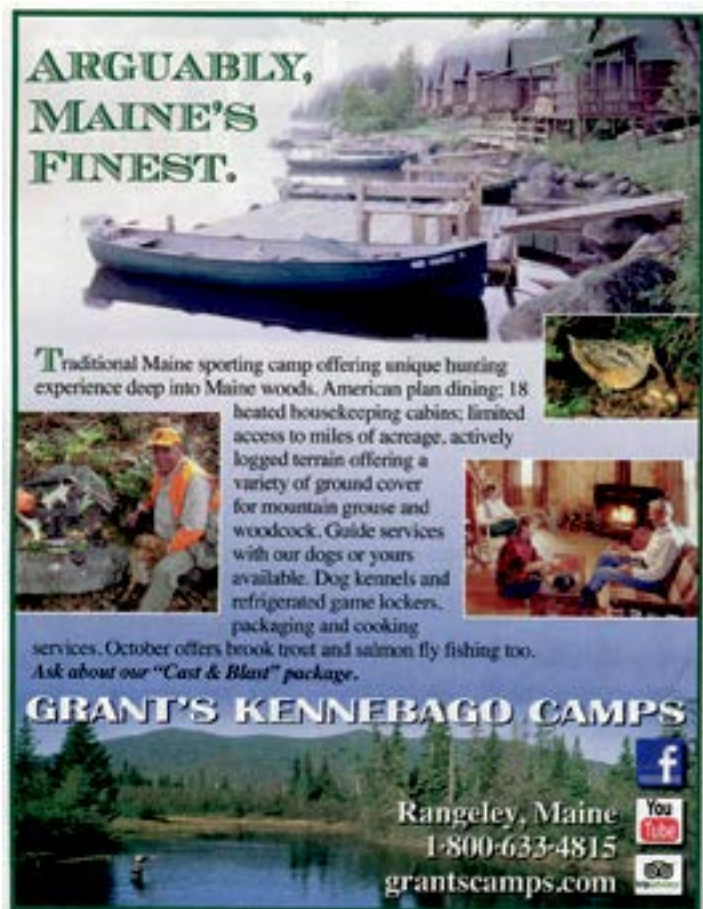


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Hunters Expo website. For more information about migratory birds in Wisconsin, visit the DNR Waterfowl Hunting webpage.

DRAWDOWN AIMS TO IMPROVE WATERFOWL HABITAT AT FRENCH CREEK WILDLIFE AREA

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced that local residents and users of the French Creek Wildlife Area near Portage will soon notice a significant change to the main flowage of the wildlife area due to an existing project aimed at improving prime waterfowl habitat.

This summer, DNR Wildlife Management staff will draw down water levels in the French Creek, which expands into a broad, 900-acre flowage through the property, to expose the creek bed and create mudflats to improve habitat for "puddle" ducks like mallards and teal.

Lower water levels will also allow for some repairs to be made to the dam that controls water flow through French Creek. DNR staff first began the habitat work in May 2022.

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will again co-host the Waterfowl Hunters Expo on Aug. 27, 2022 at the Sunnyview Expo Center in Oshkosh.

This outdoor, family- and dog-friendly Expo will allow hunters to engage with the latest experts and technologies ahead of the Wisconsin migratory bird seasons. Wisconsin is a great waterfowl hunting state, thanks partly to hunters' enthusiasm and dedication to the sport. The public is invited to join in a day of exhibits, competition, hands-on learning and all things waterfowl season in Wisconsin.

The Waterfowl Expo's one-of-a-kind experience will feature the 2022 Wisconsin Duck and Goose

Calling Championships, a fastest-retriever contest, judging for the 2023 waterfowl stamp contest and a chance for hunters to showcase their rigs. In addition, the Expo will include hands-on exhibits and booths from industry experts, habitat managers and waterfowl scientists.

The Waterfowl Expo is also the new home of the state Waterfowl, Turkey and Pheasant stamp competition, an event that helps hunters, conservationists and stamp collectors to support wildlife and habitat management, restoration and conservation around the state.

Find more event and ticket information on the Waterfowl

"Our goal is to preserve and improve wetland habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife by making seasonal adjustments to water levels in the flowage. These mudflats might look unappealing at first glance, but this is a chance for the French Creek flowage to undergo revitalization," said Sara Kehrl, DNR Wildlife Biologist. "Going through a drawdown cycle in late spring will create a good spot for this fall's hunting. Shorebirds also find these mudflats very appealing, so this should also be a good location for birdwatchers to spot various shorebirds."

Drawdowns projects like this allow soils to settle, anchor floating bog mats and provide great food sources for waterfowl, shorebirds and other wildlife species. Lower water levels resulting from the project will also allow some repairs to be made to the dam controlling water flow through French Creek.

French Creek Wildlife Area is a 3,506-acre property located in Columbia County offering many recreational opportunities including birding, wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting and hiking.

Before becoming a state wildlife area in 1947, the marshland was once devoted to the production of "wiregrass," a native plant used in the manufacturing of grass rugs and matting and later was subject to grazing and the occasional harvest of wild hay by farmers. Early settlers regularly hunted prairie chicken in the French Creek area. Today the property is primarily managed to focus on waterfowl production and hunting opportunities.



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