



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Northern Region

810 West Maple Street, Spooner, WI 54801
715-635-2101 fax 715-635-4105 TDD 715-635-4001

www.dnr.state.wi.us www.wisconsin.gov

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CONTACT: Susan Foote-Martin, (608) 266-0545

Great Wisconsin Birding Trail Celebrates" World Tourism Day" in Grantsburg

GRANTSBURG, Wis. — Ecotourism, or nature-based tourism, will soon take flight in Wisconsin with the Northern Woods Birding Trail kick-off next week. September 27 is World Tourism Day, when ecotourism will be highlighted in Wisconsin and around the world. While reindeer herders celebrate it in the remote village of Hemavan, Sweden, Wisconsin nature lovers will celebrate that day at the Crex Meadows Visitors Center near Grantsburg.

A news conference kick-off will begin at 10 a.m. at the Crex Meadows Visitor Center, located just east of the junction of County Highways D and F one-half mile north of Grantsburg in Burnett County. The public is invited to attend and learn more about the Northern Woods Birding Trail.

"The Great Wisconsin Birding Trail is the first bird-related ecotourism project of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, over 100 groups who work on the conservation of birds," said Susan Foote-Martin, project coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources' Endangered Resources program.

Ted Eubanks, president of Fermata, is working with the DNR to develop the Northern Woods Birding Trail, the first section of a statewide auto trail. Fermata is the only consulting firm in the world that specializes in sustainable projects related to wildlife viewing and nature tourism.

"The Northern Woods Birding Trail will invite travelers to venture along highways to destinations that mark the best places to see birds in the area," Eubanks said. "Along the way, travelers will need to buy film for their cameras and gas for their cars. They will buy local wines and cheese, will enjoy your restaurants and will need lodging."

World Tourism Day's theme for 2002 is *Ecotourism: The Key to Sustainable Development*. In Hemavan, people have found that it is one way to preserve their way of life. In Wisconsin, that means nature tourism. "Wisconsin is blessed with abundant natural resources that attract droves of vacationers each year. Put a Northern Woods Birding Trail map in their hands, and combine those visitors with friendly communities offering sustenance and support to the traveler, and ecotourism is born," said Eubanks.

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The following counties are in the Northern Region: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas and Washburn.
DNR Northern Region Public Affairs Manager Jim Bishop 715-635-4242 / james.bishop@dnr.state.wi.us