

CNRA—The First 50 Years
CITIZENS NATURAL RESOURCES ASSOCIATION



1951 — 2001

So much of nature is gone, friends.

So much of it is gone....

We in CNRA have work to do.

— Wallace Grange, 1951

Front Cover:

CNRA Council and friends, Sandhill Game Farm, Babcock, WI, August 4, 1951

Front row: Emil Kruschke, Fred Ott, Dixie Larkin, Albert Fuller

Seated on steps: Wallace Grange, friend

Third row: E.M. Dahlberg, Jesse Walker, two friends, Owen Gromme,

W.C. McKern (with pipe), friend, Robert Bailey (far right)

Standing on porch: C.P. "Chappie" Fox

Back Cover:

CNRA's mission statement framed by Owen Gromme's pen-and-ink drawings from the CNRA membership brochure and masthead of *The CNRA Report*. A hemlock seedling growing from a stump symbolizes CNRA's successful fight in 1952 to prevent the Wisconsin Conservation Commission from salvaging blowdowns in a 360-acre Scientific Area in the Flambeau State Forest. CNRA argued that this area was the only section of the forest where seedlings of yellow birch and hemlock were growing on rotting logs. Hemlock forests are difficult to reproduce. Watching these seedlings develop could contribute to an understanding of the relationship of rotting logs to hemlock forest regeneration.

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CITIZENS NATURAL RESOURCES ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN

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Citizens Natural Resources Association of Wisconsin, Inc.

CNRA—The First 50 Years

October 2001

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CNRA would like to thank the International Crane Foundation for use of their facilities and for providing archive space for CNRA records from the last 50 years.

CNRA Council—2001

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Dedicated to

Frederick L. Ott

***for his unswerving loyalty to CNRA over the past 50 years,
his giving spirit, his humor, and his commitment to
protecting, preserving and maintaining
Wisconsin's natural resources.***

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President's Message

IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR AND a privilege to become part of living history through the activities and accomplishments of the Citizens Natural Resources Association. True pioneers of the environmental movement, these first “militants” emerged decades before anyone stood up for the ecological values now prevalent throughout our society. Many of the deeds described in this booklet took place before I was born or during my childhood. Today, 50 years later, I am filled with gratitude and utmost respect for those efforts—I know how hard and how rewarding it is to be a grassroots activist.

Today, the Kickapoo River continues its crooked, sparkling path through rocky bluffs, the Wisconsin is cleaner than it has been in years, Horicon Marsh is a refuge for birds and birdwatchers alike, and the headwaters of the Wolf River in northern Wisconsin are still wild and pristine. The Menominee forest is a global model in sustainable forestry. Neither our children nor our neighborhoods are bombarded with DDT and, increasingly, our roadsides are home to native wildflowers and shrubs.

These are but a few of the conservation battles fought by CNRA over the years. The legacy that this small yet feisty group has left in Wisconsin deserves sincere acknowledgment and praise. Our passion, foresight and commitment through the decades still provide a model and foundation for myriad new groups that have emerged in the last 50 years around conservation issues.

CNRA is living proof that, to paraphrase Margaret Mead, a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can indeed change the world. CNRA helped change Wisconsin's past—and will continue to shape its future.

—Kira Henschel

Foreword

HUNDREDS OF PAGES OF REPORTS, minutes, correspondence, and clippings stored away in boxes and basements needed to see the light of day once again. To celebrate CNRA's 50th year, we sorted through these archives and created a booklet that tells CNRA's story, written by people who were there in the trenches. We supplemented their writings with comments from the editor and brief asides: "Voices from the Past"—citations written years ago that shed light on a topic, and modern "Reflections"—memories of events, people and places written specifically for this booklet. Throughout, Fred Ott offers a perspective on the issues in his own words.

The story we tell here is not the whole story. Someday someone will examine more thoroughly CNRA's voluminous records and document its true impact on the conservation movement. Until then, this booklet, as the collective voice of our first 50 years, will stand as testimony to the vision CNRA's founders had of a collaborative organization working for the "preservation, management and restoration of Wisconsin's natural resources."

—Jan Scalpone, Editor