

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

OUTDOOR VIEW

By Patrick Durkin

Lost in translation or just standard communication?

Greg Kazmierski, reigning chairman of Wisconsin's Natural Resources Board, often described himself falsely the past three decades, but his most recent self-titled job description tops all previous whoppers, jaw-droppers and knee slappers.

Kazmierski dubbed himself "The Translator" while speaking April 20 at the UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources. His presentation came during the spring seminar series sponsored by the Wisconsin Center for Wildlife.

Quick reminders: Throughout the 1990s and 2000s — before getting himself appointed to the NRB in January 2011 by former Gov. Scott Walker — Kazmierski claimed to represent the "Wisconsin Deer Hunters Coalition" and its "thousands of members" when testifying at NRB and legislative meetings. Trouble was, he couldn't produce membership rolls, voting records, or state-registered organization records to prove his "coalition" was anything but his imagination and a few signatures on random petitions he circulated.

Undaunted, Kazmierski next took turns claiming to represent state chapters of the NRA, Safari Club International and the National Wild Turkey Federation. That was news to those groups, however, and they disavowed or distanced themselves from him.

He remains unfazed. In his latest role as "The Translator," Kazmierski tackles his biggest client yet: Science itself. Yes, whether you seek insights into biology, botany, geology, sociology or even astronomy, just call Kaz. He's The Translator.

Sigh. Will he offer an app for that, too?

Minutes into Kazmierski's UW-SP talk, he said science is usually right, but that he's "not real keen on models," and sees "some real problems with models."

He cites a bigger problem, however: College professors can't do justice to science because they aren't good public communicators.

"You need to know how to speak 'Bubba,' too," Kazmierski advised. "I would work on your communication skills. ... You may be presenting (information) to legislators who don't know the first thing about science. (It's important) to communicate your point, not just scientifically, but so they understand. That's how I got on the Board. To be the translator."

Yep. Who needs Aldo Leopold or UW Pointyheads like Scott Craven, Christine Thomas, Tim Van Deelen, Mike Samuel or Scott Hyngstrom to explain the wildlife sciences when you can call on Kaz to translate everything into Bubba-speak?

Granted, some academics can't relate to everyday folks, and they do worry more about impressing colleagues than communicating with us commoners. But let's face it: If any PointyHead — living or dead — desires a translator, none would speed-dial Kazmierski.

After all, he prefers to labor underground or behind the curtains, never leaving written or recorded details of his work as The Translator. He said so himself May 13 while addressing the Wisconsin Conservation Congress' annual convention in Wisconsin Dells, telling the 350-plus attendees that NRB members value their input:

"Don't hesitate to pick up the phone and give us a call," The Translator said. "As a matter of fact, I'd prefer to communicate that way. In this litigious era we live in right now, with open records and all that kind of stuff, I'd rather you call. I'd rather just talk one on one."

Translation: Kazmierski dislikes open records, open government and public access to his communications when crafting policies that affect all Wisconsinites. If you doubt that, file a Freedom of Information Act request on any matter the NRB addressed since Kazmierski joined the Board 11 years ago. Of the troves of emails, memos and text messages you'll receive, one to none will include firsthand words Kazmierski wrote. Most materials are from DNR staff discussing yet another Crazy Kaz demand made by phone or in closed-door meetings.

In his WCC talk at the Dells, The Translator also told the delegates the NRB will no longer consider any WCC resolution requiring legislation. Keep in mind, the WCC is legislatively sanctioned to advise the Natural Resources Board, which sets DNR policy.

Translation: Get lost, WCC. As NRB chair, Kaz doesn't care that thousands of people voting on WCC resolutions each April want to send messages to legislators. He says nice things about the WCC while attending its conventions, but until he was appointed to the Board he swatted WCC members as if they were mosquitoes, and routinely called the Congress the DNR's "rubber stamp."

Kazmierski loses things in translation, too. When a UW-SP student attending his talk asked about reduced deer harvests in recent hunting seasons, Kazmierski blamed wolves more than our declining population of deer hunters. "We lost a bunch of hunters after (finding) CWD (2002), but (their number) built back about halfway (to pre-CWD levels), and it's been stable since then within a percentage (point) or two."

Translation: Kaz forgot he expressed similar worries about hunter numbers when submitting a question for April's WCC statewide hearings. Actually, he didn't forget. He just blamed the problem on crossbows.

As a reminder, here's how Kazmierski prefaced his question about declines in gun-hunters: "In the last 20 years (gun) deer hunters have declined by 100,000."

That's a percentage or two? Not to nitpick, but gun-license sales were about 552,000 for the November 2021 season, or roughly 136,500 (-20%) fewer than the 688,540 sold in November 2001.

Those losses are huge, but as we've discussed for years, the reasons go far beyond CWD, crossbows and wolves.

Speaking of wolves, The Translator blames a federal judge in California for Wisconsin's woes.

"She doesn't understand our (wolf) season," Kazmierski told the UW-SP students. "She said the Fish and Wildlife Service should not have (returned) the wolf (to the federal Endangered Species List in November 2021) because it hasn't recovered across its entire pre-white man (European settlement) range. I could help her with that. ... If she wants some wolves, we could capture a few and haul them out there."

Translation: If a judge issues a ruling about wolves that The Translator doesn't like, he assumes the judge must be emotional and, therefore, female.

One small problem: That senior federal district judge in northern California, an appointee of President George W. Bush, is named Jeffrey S. White. And judging by White's official photo, his parents didn't mistake his gender when naming him "Jeff."

You would think a man so skilled in science as The Translator wouldn't flub something so basic. A small detail, perhaps, but a roomful of future professors and wildlife managers sets a high bar.

They expect and deserve near perfection from those translating their work, whether the translator is named Greg, Jeffrey or Bubba.

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Greg Kazmierski considers himself the translator of scientific information for Wisconsin legislators and the state's policy-setting Natural Resources Board. This photo shows him addressing the 2013 Wisconsin Conservation Congress convention.

Colby to speak at Tuscobia dedication

By Bob Zientara

Nature, glacial geology and history form a rich environment along the Tuscobia Trail, which starts along County Hwy. SS about five miles north of Rice Lake, and runs in a northeasterly direction all the way to Park Falls.

Between Rice Lake and Birchwood, the Tuscobia Trail is also an official segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. And it preserves an old rail line which — in the 19th century — was a major artery for Wisconsin's booming lumber business.

The late Hulda Hilfiker, and her family, who owned property around the western trail head, were key figures in the development of the trail.

Those efforts will be recognized and honored on Saturday, June 11, 2022, when the Superior Lobe Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance holds a series of events that will include a dedication ceremony for a plaque honoring the Hilfiker family.

Included in that schedule are a pair of speeches to be given by Barron resident (and railroad historian) Arlyn Colby.

The author of many books about historic rail lines in northwestern Wisconsin, Colby is scheduled to give a lecture at 10 a.m. June 11 on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire-Barron County in Rice Lake.

He will also be among the guest speakers at a dedication ceremony that starts at 12:30 p.m. the same day, near the trailhead north of Rice Lake.

"My presentation in the morning at the campus will (include) railroad pictures of the line," Colby said.

A photo accompanying this story shows what the railroad looked like when it was still active.

The photo was taken in Tuscobia, itself, a community roughly halfway between Rice Lake and Haugen.

"This is where the Park Falls Line branched off from the main line," Colby said. The location of the photo is close to the current location of the Country Inn, he added.

"This picture was taken by Marv Nielsen and given to me for the book," Colby added. "(It was) taken the day after Thanksgiving, 1955. The train (in the photo) is coming from Spooner and crossing Old Highway 53, now SS, and heading to Park Falls."

Honoring trail pioneers

Tuscobia/Ice Age Trail supporter Don Erickson is helping to organize the June 11 event. He said that the dedication ceremony will place an official Wisconsin Historical Society marker near the trailhead.

There's an "unofficial" marker along the trail, about a mile east of the trailhead on Hwy. SS, near the property that the Hilfikers sought to preserve by creating a trail along the rail line.

"I submitted an application for an official Historical Society marker in October 2019," Erickson said. "During the years that followed, Historical Society staff conferred with (family descendant) Mary Hilfiker and myself and revised (the plans)."

About two weeks ago, a new, authentic, timber frame was erected to support the new sign, Erickson added.

The cast-aluminum marker will be 70 inches by 57 inches, and will tell the story of the Hilfikers in letters one inch high.

Erickson said he has "worked as a volunteer maintainer on the Tuscobia Trail for 20 years."

"During this period, I have served as vice president of the Friends of the Tuscobia Trail and have also been on the Ice Age Trail Alliance board of directors (where he also served as vice president for development)," he added.

Something for everyone

The Tuscobia Trail is important to many people, because of its rugged, wooded surroundings, its significance in Wisconsin's rail history, and its presence in the midst of terrain that was sculpted by continental glaciation within the past 10,000 to 12,000 years.

All of those interests will be rec-



When it was a railroad — A steam engine crosses what's now known as Barron County Hwy. SS (near the current location of the Country Inn) north of Rice Lake, in a period photo that appears in a book written by Barron resident Arlyn Colby. The Omaha Railway line ran 75 miles from Tuscobia to Park Falls. Construction began in 1902 and the line was abandoned in 1965. For information, visit www.wisconsinrailroadbooks.com Photo contributed

ognized June 11 when the Wisconsin Historical Society dedicates the marker which, it says, will "honor the Hulda Hilfiker Family, who dreamed of this trail and made it so."

Events begin at 7:30 a.m., when guides Laura Sandstrom and Dave Greschner will lead an hour-long bird identification hike on the Ice Age/Tuscobia Trail segment.

Sandstrom has identified more than 100 bird species on the trail. Greschner, a Prairie Farm area resident, is a retired Rice Lake Chronotype outdoor editor and birder. Guests should bring binoculars and cameras.

At 10 a.m., Colby will speak about the Tuscobia Line of the Omaha Railroad at the Blue Hills Lecture Hall, UW-EC-BC, 1800 College Drive, Rice Lake.

The Trail Historical Marker dedication starts with a social hour at 11:30 a.m. June 11. The ceremony is at 12:30 p.m.

Guest speakers include 75th Dist. State Rep. Dave Armstrong, 7th Dist. State Sen. Janet Bewley, and speakers Mary Hilfiker, Arlyn Colby, Dave Greschner, Fitzie Heimdahl of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Luke Kloberdanz of the Ice Age Trail Alliance, and Dan Yakowiak, Department of Natural Resources. There will be exhibits, a book signing and a food truck.

At 1:30 p.m., Greschner and volunteers from the Superior Lobe Chapter, Ice Age Trail Alliance, will lead a hike on the Tuscobia Trail.

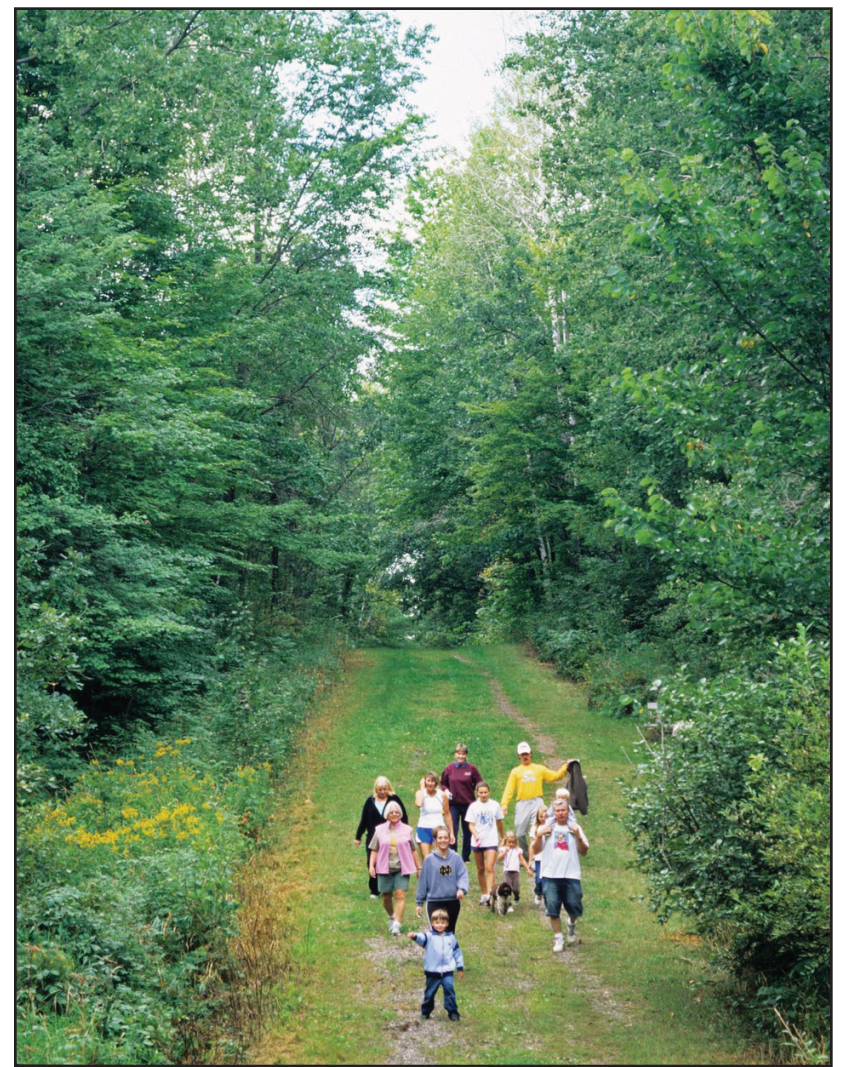
Editor's note: For more on the trail, visit:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/tuscobia>

<https://www.tuscobiatrail.com/history.html>

Tuscobia Trail Historic Marker Dedication Saturday, June 11, 2022

- 7:30 a.m. — Laura Sandstrom and Dave Greschner bird identification hike.
- 10 a.m. — Author Arlyn Colby speaks about the Tuscobia Line of the Omaha Railroad, Blue Hills Lecture Hall, UW-Eau Claire-Barron County.
- 11:30 a.m. — Trail Historical Marker dedication.
- 1:30 p.m. — Hike on the Tuscobia Trail Segment, maintained by Superior Lobe Chapter, Ice Age Trail Alliance.



Preserved for hikers and history — Descendants of the late Hulda Hilfiker walk on a portion of the Tuscobia Trail, which also serves as part of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Photo contributed by Don Erickson

DNR: Leave fawns alone

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds the public to help keep wildlife wild this spring by keeping a safe distance from baby wild animals.

Now is the peak season for fawns to be born, so Wisconsinites may come across newborn white-tailed deer while out walking or even in their yards. If you spot a fawn, remember: "If you care, leave them there." A fawn's best chance of survival is in the wild with its mother.

Once fawns are a few weeks old, they are strong enough to keep up with their mothers and escape from danger, but until then, they lie still in the brush or grass and keep quiet while their mother is off foraging.

"Mother deer leave their babies alone as a survival strategy. If you come across a fawn lying still and quiet and don't see mom around, that's perfectly natural," said Amanda Kamps, DNR Wildlife Health Conservation Specialist. "That fawn is doing exactly what it's supposed to do to keep safe. Even if you don't see the mother doe, she's likely nearby."

Fawns are born with a spotted coat and minimal scent that help them stay safe.

"Mom knows that being around her fawns will draw attention, so she leaves them alone and checks on them periodically throughout the day," a DNR press release states.

What to do if you find a fawn
Unaccompanied fawns have rarely been abandoned. If you find a fawn lying quietly by itself, leave it alone unless it is visibly sick or injured.

Do not bring other people or pets to look at the fawn. The mother will not return while people or other animals are around. Giving the fawn and its

mother space is the best thing you can do to support their natural behavior.

If a fawn is in an unsafe location, such as near a roadway, it's okay to move the fawn back from the road several yards. Be sure to wear gloves and a facemask to protect the

health of the fawn and consider your safety when walking near a road. The mother will find the fawn.

Although you should avoid touching the fawn unless necessary, it's a myth that the mother will reject the fawn if it has a human scent on it.

If a fawn appears visibly sick or injured, call the DNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for further guidance. Visit the DNR website to find a wildlife rehabilitator near you.

Taking possession of any wild animal, including a fawn, is illegal.



I'll wait here — Newborn fawns naturally spend most of the day on their own, quietly waiting for their mothers to return from feeding. Reggie Gauger photo

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