

PROGRAM

for the dedication of the

**Mackenzie Environmental
Center**

Honoring Harley W. MacKenzie



Harley W. MacKenzie

Poynette, Wis.

October 1, 1971

**MacKENZIE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
POYNETTE, WISCONSIN
OCTOBER 1, 1971**

3:00 P.M.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Representative Robert Thompson, Poynette

POYNETTE HIGH SCHOOL BAND

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

L. P. Voigt, Secretary, Department of Natural Resources

DEDICATION OF CENTER

Governor Patrick J. Lucey

RESPONSE

Harley W. MacKenzie

REMARKS

*Senator Clifford Krueger, Chairman, Senate Natural Resources Committee
Representative Lewis Mittness, Chairman, Assembly Natural Resources Committee*

Senator Everett Bidwell, Portage

Tom Jamieson, Poynette Chamber of Commerce

Cliff Matchey, Chairman, Conservation Committee, AFL-CIO, Milwaukee

Les Woerpel, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Stevens Point

R. J. Antes, Wisconsin Raccoon and Fox Hunters Association, Evansville, Wisconsin

CONCLUSION

Representative Robert Thompson, Poynette

POYNETTE HIGH SCHOOL BAND

REFRESHMENTS

HARLEY W. MacKENZIE

Harley W. MacKenzie was born and raised at Poynette. He began his conservation work for the State of Wisconsin as a seasonal employe in 1910 and became a permanent Conservation Warden at Antigo in 1917. In 1925, he was appointed Chief Conservation Warden. He became Conservation Director in 1933. He held this top position until he resigned on May 31, 1942. In all, he served the people of the state for over a quarter century. As a local civic leader, he served as a member of the Columbia County Board, as Poynette Village President and as a member of their park board. For most of his 83 years Mac has been active in community and state affairs.

Mac was a pioneer in the Wisconsin conservation movement. He helped pull together the new Department of Conservation with shoestring budgets and drafted urgently needed protective and regulatory legislation. He was responsible for formation of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and the acquisition of Horicon Marsh, promoted conservation education, hired the first biologists and started the first federal aid projects for wildlife research and management. Most of all, he consolidated the game farm activities at Poynette and created an arboretum of more than 300 species of native and exotic trees in addition to plantings of

windbreaks and landscaping for beautification. Throughout the state, the building landscaping of Department ranger stations, fish hatcheries and other installations was encouraged by him. At one time, during the depression, over 45 field stations were under construction at the same time, including the fish hatchery at Spooner. He started the Conservation Warden Efficiency Award in 1930 and the Conservation Bulletin was first published after he became Director.

At the present time, Mac is an Honorary Trustee of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation, Inc. In his active years as a public administrator he played key roles on both the State Planning Board and the State Geographic Board. He also served for three years on the Executive Committee of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners and was one of the organizers and second President of the Association of Midwest Fish and Game Commissioners. His record of accomplishments for natural resource conservation in Wisconsin during the difficult years of the Great Depression is substantial.

Mac started the Sportsmen's License, another innovation for Wisconsin. The Milwaukee Sentinel Conservation Award was presented to him in 1957.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE POYNETTE FACILITIES

The state game farm has been located at Poynette since 1934. It was created when H. W. MacKenzie merged operations of Fish Creek, Moon Lake and Waupun.

Even then the prime function of the "Experimental Game and Fur Farm" was pheasant propagation because "native grouse had been crowded out through destruction of their habitat by an expanding agricultural program". Technique progressed from chicken coops and cluck hens to a modern incubation system. Annual production today is 120,000 day-old chicks (72% sexed) for conservation clubs and youth groups plus 50,000 adults for public hunting grounds. Rearing of chukkar and Hungarian partridge, turkey, wood ducks, raccoon, fox and mink has long since ceased, reflecting new knowledge about birds, mammals, men and habitat.

Also eventually abandoned was the pathology laboratory which at one time diagnosed 6,000 cases per year for Wisconsin fur and game farmers.

Educational potential of the facility was recognized early. The native birds and fur animals were a magnet for many visitors and prompted establishment of formal exhibits. These attracted thousands and led to development of demonstration forests and an arboretum which contains the largest collection of native and exotic trees west of Boston.

The Department's traveling exhibit program for state fair, county fair, sport and other shows was also centralized here and is still important.

Educational functions were further formalized in 1961 when 250 acres were split out for development into a state Conservation Education Center. Its purpose is to give students, youth groups, families and individuals some in-depth knowledge about and a sense of responsibility for the environment and its problems.

During the past ten years, museums, classrooms, nature trails, farm practice and demonstration areas have been developed. Last year, over 80,000 persons visited the Center. Of these 419 groups totaling more than 20,000 people came on an organized tour basis. Attendance is on the increase and will continue up.

To help provide for it, the general public use area was separated from educational activities this year by construction of a new \$50,000 picnic ground.

Expansion and modernization in the future will enable the Center to serve more and more of the state's one million students.

A year-round youth camp is planned for construction, hopefully soon. In the summertime, it will concentrate on programs for girls similar to Wisconsin's boys' camp program and be the first in the nation to do so. The remainder of the year overnight facilities will provide a more intensive outdoor educational experience for all students.

The youth camp has financial support from many groups which have made donations. A bill appropriating \$400,000 for construction is now in the legislature. It is 1239 A introduced by Representative Robert Thompson.

In addition the Poynette Chamber of Commerce has donated \$2,500 for construction of a shelter. This will be matched by federal money and construction integrated with the trail system.

Also planned when money becomes available is a new layout and design for the animal exhibit. Every proposed improvement will mesh with a long-range development plan now in preparation.

All in all the newly dedicated MacKenzie Environmental Center can look forward to a future similar to its past—toward growth and expanding public service.