

pg 74 **ATV/UTV  
ENTHUSIASTS**  
Get Your Rig  
Ride-Ready

# Badger Sportsman

WISCONSIN'S OUTDOOR MAGAZINE

## Summer Bassin'

TOPWATER TACTICS

## OPENING DAY

Trout Tribulations

## WOLF RIVER

Navigating  
Warming Waters

pg 46

## Winnebago WALLEYES

READING THE WIND

## PRE-SPAWN CRAPPIES

SLAB SECRETS

pg 20

EXPLORE FALCONRY: ONE OF WISCONSIN'S MOST UNIQUE HUNTING PRACTICES





Wisconsin's first hunting and fishing TV series

# OUTDOORS

with Randy Goodden

From a still northern lake on an overcast afternoon, you look on in excitement as a bruiser largemouth explodes from the surface of the grey water. The excitement from the company of your boat echoes across the lake after the fish slides into the bottom of the net. Not long after – at the top of the hour – you now shift to find your heart pulled by the allure of stalking ring-necked pheasant roosters, or maybe its pass shooting ducks in the marsh this time, or even tracking big game on a multi-day hunt.

Overlook the obvious hurdles like aligning various hunting/fishing seasons in a day, or managing the travel and gear all the while staying composed enough to be successful, and you'll still find that to schedule your Saturday as full as this would be next to impossible. Yet in last 50 years, the ability to tag along for these adventures has become accessible enough to do whilst donning pj's in your living room armed with a top off of joe.

Beginning around the 1970s in some parts of the country, outdoor television shows pulled us from our couch's and brought us onboard, through forests and across fields. Hearing 'fish on!' or your favorite outdoorsman's catch phrase and following along in their conquests did wonders to spark excitement and generate ideas for planning your own. As seasoned outdoorsmen,

many favorite apex moments could now be relived in our living rooms regardless of time of year, or most notably, whether we got our feet wet or not. And for the curious unseasoned, broadcasted shows presented audiences with the ability to learn about the outdoors and its bounty like never before. Wisconsin claims it's own little corner of outdoor TV history, ignited by a man with a simple goal; to see a decent show about hunting and fishing on TV.

## Genesis

In his twenties at the time, Randy Goodden, being an editor at Wisconsin hunting and fishing news on the side and training bird dogs on the weekends, spent much of his time in the Wisconsin outdoors. An avid hunter and fisherman, Goodden also had an interest to see his hobbies, bird hunting and fishing brought to television, because there was no regular hunting and fishing series being aired in Milwaukee and Wisconsin. Contrary to today's spread of outdoor viewing options, in the 70s the only thing airing on TV that came close was ABC's American Sportsman. As entertaining as it could be, episodes of Bing Crosby wrestling Marlin off the coast of Baja, California, or African big game hunts with celebrities were



often too much a dramatization for the everyday sportsman to relate to – a far cry from your uncle Leo panfishing for dinner on Lake Namakogan.

But even then the American Sportsman series quit airing in the Milwaukee area around 1974 or '76, and then there was nothing. And so, with an entrepreneurial spirit, Goodden thought, “I think I’ll produce one myself,” and set off to create Wisconsin’s first hunting show.

After finding a news cameraman from a local station willing to put in some side work, it was time for the first test: to figure out how to actually coordinate, predict and film a wild and often unpredictable event. This problem was only compounded by the fact that video tapes and video cameras hadn’t been created yet, meaning this first show was to be shot, cut, and spliced in 16mm film, where the ratio of minutes using film to minutes of usable film afterward was often dismal.

Nonetheless, he began the process of carefully planning, directing and filming what was going to be his first show. With Goodden taking on the roles of Producer, Director and host, he invited a friend to join him on the show and explained to the cameraman and friend what was to be filmed in each short segment. Having access to the dogs he trained, getting a local farmer to allow him to film the show on his property, and getting a new truck from a local dealer to use for the show, an upland game hunt seemed like a good start. To his delight, once the filming was completed he found his efforts to film efficiently had paid off, lot’s of good material without much waste.

“Normally you have to film three times the amount of film for a show like this in order to get the amount you finally need,” the experienced news cameraman told him, “but when I finished editing the actual 24 minutes of show time, there was only six minutes of extra film. That’s unheard of,” he told Goodden. Soon he had his finished product; a half hour show that walked the viewer through the process and thrills of a pheasant hunt, from working the dogs, to the flush, shoot and retrieve. All of this was done while physically demonstrating the techniques on the pheasant hunt – a script later cemented by TV shows that followed.

Anxiously he brought the film to the NBC affiliate in

Milwaukee, where the Channel 4 Program Director and Vice President of Sales viewed it for presentation on the station. They both really liked the show and scheduled it for a 4:00 p.m. Saturday spot in September of 1979 opposite a huge competitor - The Wide World of Sports on ABC. The television station never anticipated the response they received. Never before had they received so many calls about one of their weekend shows. The Program Manager called Randy on Monday and said the switchboard was flooded with calls, viewers asking if there would be more shows, and when. He was totally amazed.

Though intrigued by the reaction to his idea, Goodden was hoping the TV station would produce a series with him, but that’s not what they normally do. They would have been interested in showing a series only if Goodden produced them. Goodden realized he was in no position to hire and pay cameramen and start a production company. He wanted to continue making such a series, but wasn’t looking to replace his current career as a corporate director for a large international manufacturer. He just wanted to start seeing hunting and fishing shows on Wisconsin TV. But even though this television station wasn’t ready to produce such a series of shows, others were and “Outdoors with Randy Goodden” was born.

## Growth

After getting more opportunities and filming a few more specials for Channel 3 out of Madison under a different name, Randy finally created “Outdoors with Randy Goodden” in 1980 with a Milwaukee area cable network reaching the majority of the southern half of Wisconsin. Without there being a format to follow from other such shows, Goodden set out to pioneer the path to hunting and fishing television by making sure his shows were informative and educational, as action packed as possible, and entertaining and fun to watch, using top writers and sportsman in Wisconsin as his guests, some of whom would later go on to launch their own careers in outdoor television.

In the three years following his first show in '79, Goodden produced between 50-60 shows featuring distinguished



outdoorsmen, writers, tournament champions, and others who had never been on TV up to that point, such as Dan Sura (*who later joined In-Fisherman*), Joe Bucher (*who later created Joe Bucher, Outdoor News*), champion bass fisherman Tom Newbauer (*who later joined Outdoor Wisconsin*), and Dave Duffy (*Writer, Gun Dog editor, Outdoor Life*). Each appeared in the early episodes of Goodden's show, bringing their knowledge and skill for their sport to the screen with them for the first time.

It wasn't until 1984 that similar shows started showing up in Wisconsin, so Goodden ended his show feeling he'd achieved his original goal, and now the others could carry it from there. But, as it turned out his experience brought new opportunities for Goodden.

In the same year, Outdoor Wisconsin was to begin its first season on PBS and was looking to recruit a host. When approached for consideration, the position was hard to resist. So, Goodden offered to host the new show under the conditions that it was filmed on weekends, and he could continue to produce the shows in addition to being a Corporate Director. But the Milwaukee PBS station said the new show would be a full-time position, and Goodden felt there was no chance that a PBS station could pay him what he was already making, nor was this his ultimate objective. He had simply wanted to be able to watch hunting and fishing programs on Milwaukee television, and accomplished it.

Eventually, the host position on Outdoor Wisconsin was filled by a college teacher, Dan Small, who has been hosting it

since its premiere, and Randy & Dan have been good friends ever since.

## ABC outreach

As with any initial undertaking, the process of creating a series of outdoor shows did not come without its share of hurdles. Despite the efforts made to plan and produce a desired end result, there was never a guarantee that the critters on the other end of the equation would cooperate. For instance, filming a fishing show could create more problems than a pheasant show because it might take a long time to actually catch a fish. Thankfully, when Goodden started making the new series of show, video taping had surfaced, and he no longer needed to deal with 16mm film. Hours of tape could be used.

In his early start of producing such shows, he heard of other pioneers in other states, especially doing only fishing shows, that would employ scuba divers to connect fish to the host's fishing line, or even casting out pre caught fish from their livewells. The lifeless journey back to the boat usually gave these imposters away.

Goodden also wanted to present experts in a number of related areas that wouldn't have been as practical for a live outdoor show, so the cable station built a set for his show to bring such outdoor experts on like making tackle for fly fishing, expert information on trapping, African Safari hunting, and even Musky fishing, as Joe Bucher had told him, "We could be out fishing for a musky all weekend and not catch anything," so Goodden brought Joe and these others into his newly created studio set to do their shows.

But outside the studio, the issue of timing – matching conversation with action to display the topic – was regularly the most formidable issue, especially to keep it exciting and informative in the process. It would be an issue at the forefront of Goodden's decision when Roone Arledge, president of ABC sports in New York, reached out to Goodden around 1980 to do a feature show for the American Sportsman.

Arledge contacted Goodden and prompted him to get in touch with his show producer at the time, John Wilcox, who was at his house in the mountains of Colorado, to do a show in Wisconsin. Goodden was thrilled to be considered, until he heard the topic. Wilcox asked that the show be on a Wisconsin whitetail hunt.

In Goodden's effort to try to convince them to do something more practical, like duck or pheasant hunting, Goodden proposed an alternative to deer hunting.

"To bring a camera crew into the woods to film such a television show and have a successful hunt, would be extremely difficult," he argued. "We could be there all weekend and not even see anything, much less having an entire camera crew standing behind me".

But the request from ABC didn't change.

"I may have made the jump into TV full time if that would have worked out differently," Goodden recalls, discussing his decision to turn down the offer.

But soon the gap in television that Goodden had hoped to



**IRON COUNTY**  
WISCONSIN

*For the Sportsman in You!*

Iron County has  
336 miles of trout streams  
and over 214 inland lakes  
that include the 14,300 acre  
**TURTLE FLAMBEAU FLOWAGE,**  
the 3,400 acre **GILE FLOWAGE,**  
along with our big lake ...  
**LAKE SUPERIOR.**

**Request an Iron County  
"Sportsman's & Outdoor Recreation Map"  
from one of these offices:**

Iron County Development Zone 715-561-2922 [ironcountywi.com](http://ironcountywi.com)  
Mercer Area Chamber of Commerce 715-476-2389 [mercercoc.com](http://mercercoc.com)  
Hurley Chamber of Commerce 715-208-0902 [hurleywi.com](http://hurleywi.com)

fill, was finally beginning to fill. It was time to pursue other interests. Randy had decided that “Outdoors with Randy Goodden” had aired its last show.

## A piece of history

The years passed, and production of hunting and fishing related media not only carried on, but continued to increase.

Randy Goodden had achieved his goal, and spoke of the time he spent producing the hunting & fishing shows, saying, “Some guys spend their weekends playing golf, I spent mine filming hunting & fishing shows.”



It should also be noted that Goodden never made any money from any of the shows. He wanted the television and cable companies to help him produce and air the shows for those that lived in Wisconsin, and didn't want to discourage them by asking for money. In his mind it was rewarding enough to get to know these individual guests, offer them the opportunity to be in front of the camera for every Wisconsin sportsman to see and hear, and to have had some of the best hunting and fishing he could imagine. But even though he didn't receive money for the show, the perks proved to be fantastic.

Today, hunting and fishing related television shows garner thousands of views across multiple platforms – Outdoor Wisconsin still being one of them in Wisconsin, now on their 36th season.

“It wasn't until recalling the stories with Dan Small that we realized my shows were the first, 40 years ago” Goodden said, reflecting on his time as the show's host.

In an effort to preserve this piece of Wisconsin history, old tapes of nearly a dozen of Goodden's shows have been dusted off, recorded, and uploaded for viewing on Youtube.

Several of his well-known guests from those early episodes have since passed away in recent decades. As unfortunate as that is, Goodden is pleased with the feedback he has received from sharing videos with the family members of the departed. For example, Outdoor Life followed by Peterson's Hunting Magazine's Gun Dog Editor, Dave Duffey, appeared on a few of Goodden's shows. He passed away in 2014 and his son, daughter, and granddaughter, created a Facebook page for him showcasing pictures they had of him. Goodden, having seen the pictures and comments from fans, posted the link

to two of the hunting shows he did on Outdoors with Randy Goodden. Each of the family members immediately contacted Randy and told him it brought tears to their eyes to see Dave walking and talking again as they apparently had no videos of him, just pictures.

More videos are going to be uploaded in the future if they can be saved and salvaged. If you're interested in seeing them yourself, search them out on Google or on YouTube and enter “Outdoors with Randy Goodden.”

We hope you enjoy the shows!



*Randy Goodden continued advancing in the manufacturing industry and became a VP for more than a decade in the early '90s up to 2007 for a large international manufacturer, and afterward became the Interim President for a year for the same company, was the author of 3 best selling books on product safety & product liability, a Keynote Speaker for decades at countless major conferences around the world, and taught seminars on the topic around the world, including at Oxford University, being viewed as the leading expert. He was also brought in to give special presentations at the State Department in Washington DC, brought in by the Chinese Government to teach his seminar to hundreds of manufacturers all over China, and was asked by the Connecticut Supreme Court for his expert advice on a product liability case being addressed by them, just to name a few of his list of achievements.*

**SALES • SERVICE • PARTS • STORAGE**

**ALUMA** Craft

The Premier Evinrude/Alumacraft dealer for the Fox Cities.  
Try before you buy.  
Buy from a dealer who cares.

**Spellman's Marina**

Family owned & operated for over 60 years

**www.spellmansmarina.com**  
920.231.1850 • 1713 W New York Ave • Oshkosh