

# Tails and Tales of the Seneca Army Depot



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## Welcome!

Welcome to the first issue of "Tails and Tales of the Seneca Army Depot," the newsletter of Seneca White Deer, Inc.

Seneca White Deer, Inc. hopes that Cold War and wildlife enthusiasts alike will enjoy the stories and information provided.

From the commencement of World War II to the end of the Cold War and even the First Desert Storm War, Seneca Army Depot played an important role in the security of the United States. During that era, in the early 1950s white (non-albino) Northern white-tailed deer appeared, the result of a genetic anomaly of the deer enclosed. These white deer, afforded protection by the Depot Commander were grown to a herd size of approximately 200 deer and which continue to inhabit the 9,000 acres of the Depot property.

The white deer herd is the largest herd of its kind in the world and represents a rare opportunity for the public to view an U.S. Army success story of preserving a unique variation of deer which occurs to this day.

Seneca White Deer, Inc. believes that, along with responsible development of the Depot property to bring jobs to Seneca County, this is also an opportunity to preserve the white deer herd so that it may continue to thrive alongside this development, which successfully occurred while the U.S. Army was present at the Depot.

Seneca White Deer, Inc. thanks its many supporters to date and hopes that this newsletter will serve to continue informing the public about the endless eco-touring possibilities of the Seneca Army Depot featuring the white deer herd.



Great photo opportunities during the last tour!

(photo by Brady Dillsworth, used with permission)

## Spring 2009 Depot Tours-A Success!

Over 2,000 people enjoyed three weekends of beautiful weather when they toured Seneca Army Depot. The tours, held the weekends of April 18-19, 25-26 and May 2-3, allowed access to the Depot by the public since the sold out tours in the Fall of 2006. Tour goers were rewarded with multiple opportunities to see Seneca's famed white deer herd along with several birds including *Great Horned Owls*, *Red-tailed Hawks* and *Ospreys*.

(continued)

### Spring 2009 Depot Tours-A Success! (cont.)



Guide Dennis Money during a recent tour of the Depot

(photo by Brady Dillsworth, used with permission)

Access to the Q-Area at the North end of the Depot where nuclear weapons and components were stored from 1958 until 1993 was also a highlight of the tour with the "fake building" (Building 803) used to store 1st generations nuclear components, the 4800 volt middle fence surrounding the Q area and the high measures during the Cold War elicited many questions. (See page 3 Q & A)

Tours were announced in mid-March and quickly sold out. "The fact that the tours sold out during the challenging economic times speaks to the high interest the public has

concerning Seneca Army Depot." said Thomas J. Klotzbach Board Member of Seneca White Deer, Inc.

People drove from the surrounding Western and Central New York region with many tour goers coming from out of state. These enthusiasts generated not only dollars for Seneca White Deer, Inc. but also tourism dollars for Seneca County and the Finger Lakes region.

The tours were covered extensively with media coverage including articles in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, multimedia presentations by the Canandaigua

Messenger Post, and the Syracuse Post Standard.

Tour planning and operations were conducted by the Board of Directors of Seneca White Deer Inc., and a group of dedicated volunteers. Their help was critical to ensure that buses were on schedule, tour goers signed the appropriate forms and that evaluation forms were filled out.

A special thanks to the Seneca County IDA, Finger Lakes Technologies Group, Knapp Winery, all the vendors who participated and the Varick Fire Department for helping to make the tours a success!

"How wonderful that the White Deer Tours at the Seneca Army Depot are again available! I have gone twice and have raved about the tours to my friends." - Louise Bement

FALL TOURS JUST ANNOUNCED!  
  
SEE PAGE 4 FOR MORE INFO!



White deer east of Fayette Road, Seneca Army Depot Activity, April 26, 2009  
  
( by Richard Stanton, used with permission)



### The White Deer Trilogy

The White Deer Trilogy—Red, Blush and White Wines bottled by Knapp Winery.

In an exclusive arrangement between Seneca White Deer, Inc. and Knapp Winery three of Knapp's outstanding wine—*Kat Knapp, Pasta Red and Cayuga White* have been bottled with special labels featuring images of a white doe, buck and fawn from Seneca Army Depot. A portion of the proceeds of each sale goes to Seneca White Deer, Inc and their mission of establishing a conservation park and Cold War museum at Seneca Army Depot. For more on this limited time offer, please go to the Knapp winery web-site at [www.knappwine.com](http://www.knappwine.com) or call them at 800.869.9271.

## Questions and Answers

Several questions were asked on the tours, with some answers being provided to some of the more common questions.

**Q—Why did it take so long for tours to again be offered? The last time was the Fall of 2006.**

**A—**The tours in Fall 2006 saw around 1,300 people sign up. The Spring 2009 tours were for almost 2,000 tour goers. All the services to accommodate those 2,000 people including parking, rest-

rooms, food needed to be required and rethought. Additionally, there were required insurances for the public to be present on the Depot, along with security to open and close the depot perimeter gate. The ability to plan and operate such a large tour took careful planning, scheduling and teamwork. With the lessons learned from both 2006 and spring 2009, future tours can be more frequent and an even better experience for the public.

**Q-What is the current status of Seneca Army Depot?**

**A -**The Department of the Army continues to manage the environmental remediation at the Depot. Their work is continuing, and the Army is being careful to ensure that all work is done according to federal and state laws. Land transfer from the Army to Seneca County IDA will continue to take place as land is approved for release.



Ammunitions igloo in the Q-Area, Seneca Army Depot

(photo by Brady Dillsworth, used with permission)

## Seneca Army Depot and Crown of Serpents

A novel that uses Seneca Army Depot as a backdrop has been released by author Michael Karpovage. *Crown of Serpents* uses many historical elements of Seneca Army Depot and the surrounding Seneca County and Western and Central New York. The novels spans several hundred years from 1779 in the Seneca Nation Territory to the present day Seneca County and weaves a story that sees Seneca Army Depot and the white deer as a central theme.

Karpovage, a native of Western New York consulted several historical resources for the novel including Seneca County Historian *Walter Gable*, *Cornell History*, *Department of the Army civilians* and *Seneca White Deer, Inc. Board President Dennis Money*.

For more information, please go to the *Crown of Serpents* web-site.

"Karpovage crafts a story rich in intrigue, history, folklore, and the mystery of the white deer. His myriad of subbing and personalities keeps the reader entranced and on edge, begging for more." - Dennis Money on *Crown of Serpents*

## Recent Research

Seneca Army Depot is again becoming a focus of historical and conservation research.

In late Fall, 2008, L. Dean Bruno completed a Masters Thesis titled "*Once a Home, Now a Memory: Dispossession, Possession and Remembrance of the Landscape of the Former Seneca Army Depot*" at North Carolina State University, detailing the history of events surrounding the Army's acquisition of land in 1941.

Also in late Fall, 2008, *Thomas J. Klotzbach* completed a research project for a B.S. in History from the College at Brockport, State University of New York. "*Cold War Artifacts: The White Deer of Seneca Ordnance Depot*" is the first comprehensive history of the origins of the white deer at the Depot.

Visit [www.senecawhitedeer.org](http://www.senecawhitedeer.org) for more information.

