



PHOTOS: PAUL MCFADDEN

## Mother Nature – A Painted Lady




Clouds all pretty in pink.

**B**arrington Hills Farm, located principally between Haegers Bend Road on the west and Spring Creek and Chapel Roads on the south and north consists of a diverse acreage. Approximately 420 acres are planted with various crops this year with the remainder being oak woodlands and wetlands. The wetlands are primarily marsh areas, some adjoin, some are isolated.

The Barrington Hills Farm photo feature in this issue showcases one of the marsh areas that is located on the farm. Its highlight feature is a 5- to 7-acre open water pond that occasionally dries up entirely during drought years. It is fed by runoff water from the adjoining cropland. On wet years such as this one, it will flood the roadway making it impassable and even closing the road to through traffic.

There is considerable wildlife activity on the water and in the surrounding trees most of the year. The pond attracts Mallards, Canada Geese, Canvasbacks, Wood Ducks, Sandhill Cranes, Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, Green Herons, hawks, crows, blackbirds, bluebirds, swallows, killdeer, an occasional grebe, muskrats, mink, turtles and frogs along with newts or salamanders which we have seen as they were caught by the raptors. Buzzards circle overhead. There are no fish or sparrows. And during the winter months, the only wildlife are the crows.

Mother Nature is an artist and reveals herself in an ever-changing portrait of these wetlands. In my nearly 40 years of taking photos in the area, I have found that it is not always easy to put a “pretty face” on the pictures she paints, but we do our best anyway. 





*An old soldier still standing tall after yet another winter.*



*Painted turtles basking in the early spring sunshine.*



*Black locust tree blossoms frame this view of the pond.*



*A cloud with "flair".*



[www.barringtonhillsfarm.org](http://www.barringtonhillsfarm.org)

Barrington Hills Farm is 700 acres of pristine, undeveloped land located at Haegers Bend and Spring Creek Roads in the northwestern most corner of Barrington Hills. The rarity of Barrington Hills lies in its open space, fresh air, clean water, and abundant wildlife. The land is precious and delicate and in constant need of stewardship to keep it that way.