



PHOTOS: PAUL MCFADDEN

## Mother Nature's Fine Artwork



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 typically planted with various crops, with the remainder being oak woodlands and wetlands. The wetlands are primarily marsh areas, some that adjoin, and some are isolated.

Our Barrington Hills Farm photos in this issue were taken last year. They showcase one of the marsh areas that is located on the farm. The highlight feature is a 5- to 7-acre open water pond that occasionally dries up entirely during drought years, such as this one. It is fed by runoff water from the adjoining cropland. On wet years, it will flood the roadway and make passage dangerous. Occasionally the road is closed off 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 pair of Cooper's hawks at the marsh.*



[barringtonhillsfarm.org](http://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.