



Friends of Wild River State Park Newsletter

March, 2008

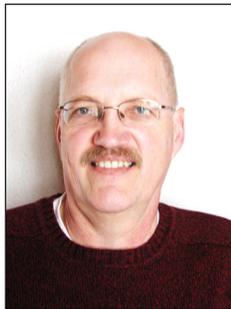
www.WildRiverParkFriends.org • info@wildriverparkfriends.org • 651-583-2926 (Visitor Center)

Welcome to our New President!!!

After over 20 years of dedicated volunteer service Gary Noren has handed the helm over to Dave Kozlovsky of North Branch. The Friends Group Board would like to formally welcome Dave and we're excited to begin working with him. Here is a little more about Dave from Dave!

I am Dave Kozlovsky, the newly elected president of the Friends of Wild River State Park. I am replacing Gary Noren who has been president of the "Friends" for the past 20 years. When you see Gary, thank him for his unselfishness and commitment to keep the Friends a beneficial and helpful organization to the betterment of Wild River State Park.

Wild River State Park has been important to me and my family since 1984, when we moved to the area. My wife Jan and I spent time camping at Wild River when we were interviewing for new jobs and also looking for a place to live. I remember hoping we did not smell like wood smoke at those interviews! Jan and I eventually ended up teaching at North Branch High School where we have been for more than 20



Dave Kozlovsky

years. Jan has been

teaching Spanish and I was the high school band director and now am the library media specialist for the last eight years. Our children are now grown and married, with Kristina teaching in Chippewa Falls and Sarah, an instructional designer, in Hopkins. Kristina has given us one living grandson, Caden, who will be 3 and expected to ski at the "Candlelight Ski" next year, and another grandson due in April.

I have been a member of the Friends for many years and remember all the good times my family has had skiing, hiking and canoeing at the park. Happily in 2001, we were able to move so that Wild River State Park is now across the road from our property and is an even larger part of our lives. To really get involved with the park, Jan and I became plant stewards for the first time last year and really enjoyed getting a closer look at the park and collecting seeds which will be used to help regenerate what the park property once was.

I have enjoyed my time as a member of the Friends of Wild River State Park helping with the Moonlight Ski, participating in Seegwan, and being a plant steward. One thing I would like to see is an increase in membership of the Friends. I plan on bringing in five new members this year and I would like to challenge each and everyone of you current members to enroll at least one new member so the friends can better support the goals and programs at Wild River State Park! See you at the Pancake Breakfast on March 15!

State of the State....Park (Wild River that is)

By Park Manager - Paul Kurvers and Assistant Manager-Shawn Donais

Annual Report - Wild River hosted 172,000 daytime and 31,000 overnight visitors in 2007. The park continues to see a steady increase in attendance every year. Overall Minnesota State Park are seeing modest increases in attendance at about the same rate as the state population increases. This suggests that we need to continue working to reach out to nontraditional groups and help them learn about the great experiences we can offer. The four new camper cabins under construction (adding to the two we currently have) will allow us to do that by offering more individuals or even multiple family groups to enjoy the park who may have minimal camping experience or equipment.

Other major improvements in the last year were the reconstruction of the main park road to the campground and grading, gravel and base work done up at the Sunrise Entrance. Park staff also put

a lot of sweat equity together with a little funding to gut and rebuild the kitchen in our two bedroom guesthouse facility. The cabinets originated with the former private owner of the house and the updates were long overdue.

Winter Season Report - It has been great to have a pretty good ski season for a change. Despite the limited amount of snow in January new grooming equipment and hard work by park staff have kept everyone skiing for most of the winter... with still a few weeks of promising weather to go. We also continue to improve winter hiking and snowshoeing opportunities by creating about seven miles of packed trails for visitors to enjoy.

All and all we must be doing something right! Preliminary results from visitor surveys from this summer have given us a higher than 95% satisfaction rating. These ratings as well as any thoughtful

letters of support to your state legislative leaders will hopefully help us hold on to our funding in what may be a tough leg-



One of Wild River's four new popular "Camper Cabins" that will be ready for rental this spring at \$45 per night.

islative year with lots of needs for dollars in many public areas. Thanks for all the hard work the friends group does. And please stop in anytime... our office doors are always open!



THIS IS YOUR INVITATION TO THE FRIENDS OF WILD RIVER STATE PARK'S

Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 15th

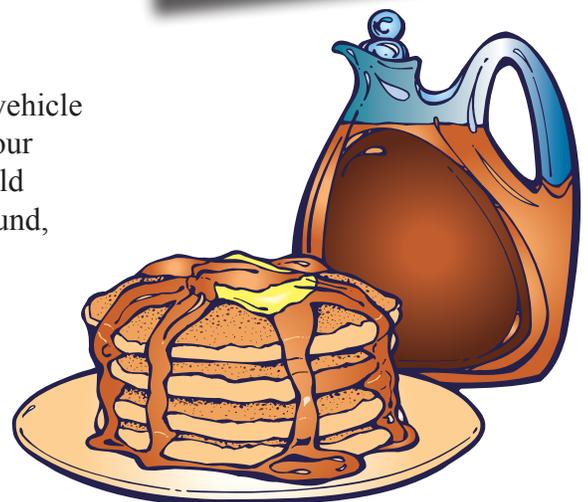
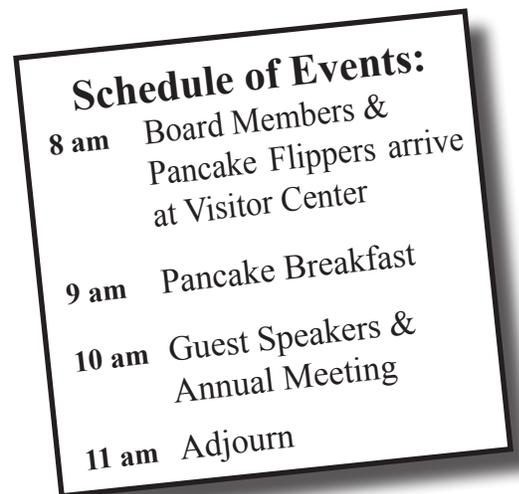
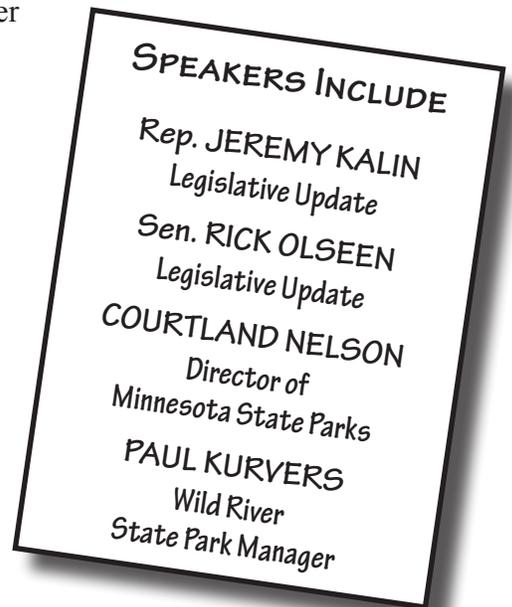
You're invited on Saturday, March 15 to attend the Friends of Wild River State Park annual pancake breakfast. The event begins at Wild River's visitor center at 9 a.m. There is no charge for the breakfast, but you must be a member of the Friends group in order to attend. Memberships will be available before and during the breakfast. Individual memberships cost \$10 and family memberships cost \$20. Friends of Wild River State Park will provide pancakes (and not just any pancakes, but Secret Recipe Pancakes!), coffee, juice, and pure maple syrup made at Wild River State Park. Come and enjoy this sweet spring treat!

For those interested in giving special support to Wild River State Park, Friends of Wild River is an independent, non-profit group which provides opportunities for involvement in special programs such as the annual Candlelight Ski in January and the annual spring celebration, Seegwan, which will take place this year on Saturday, May 17 along with the Friends of Wild River annual native plant sale. Other opportunities to get involved in helping the park's resource management and outdoor education programs are announced in the Friends' newsletter and other mailings to members. See www.WildRiverParkFriends.org!

Local Senator Rick Olseen and Representative Jeremy Kalin will be guests at this year's breakfast, and will speak briefly afterward about important issues in the Minnesota Legislature. Courtland Nelson, Director of the Division of Parks and Recreation in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will be another special guest, talking about recent developments affecting the Minnesota State Park System. Other activities of the Friends of Wild River State Park, and opportunities for the public to get involved in support activities will also be discussed after the breakfast. Wild River State Park's managers will be on hand as well to give information and answer questions.

Be sure to stop at the park office on the way in and purchase a Minnesota State Park vehicle permit. A \$5.00 fee will admit one vehicle for the day, or a \$25 permit may be purchased which will admit your vehicle to any state park in Minnesota for the next 12 months. Wild River State Park is located 3 1/2 miles north of the town of Almelund, which lies halfway between Taylors Falls and North Branch on Minnesota Highway 95.

Come to Wild River State Park's visitor center at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 15 for a sweet breakfast and a chance to get involved with people who are working to support the park!



Naturalist Notes

By **Park Naturalist**
Dave Crawford

Winter activities are winding down, after a successful Candlelight Ski/Walk. Attendance was great, and the help from Friends and North Branch National Honor Society members, particularly having to deal with a one-week postponement, was tremendous. Snowshoe hikes have been well-attended this winter too.

Our busy season is about to begin – seems like winter barely got started before it was time to plan spring/summer events. Maple syruping begins March 15. Seegwan is on May 17. Any Friends members can help with Seegwan planning on April 19, 10 a.m. at the Visitor Center, or at the event itself. We're planning an American Indian history theme, and need ideas on presenters and exhibitors and people to make contacts with these folks once

we know who to contact. Be sure to set aside some garden space for native wildflowers from the Friends' Seegwan plant sale, and tell your friends to do the same.

As part of Minnesota's Sesquicentennial, Wild River is offering a series of history-themed programs through spring, summer, and fall this year. Many are funded by the mini-grant awarded to Friends of Wild River for hiring guest speakers. **See schedule available at the park or at the Friends Group Website: www.WildRiverParkFriends.org.** We have additional guest presenters lined up for the annual Friends-sponsored Summer Guest Program Series, and more to come before we're done. The schedule of currently-booked presenters and the Sesquicentennial history-themed programs will be mailed in early May.

Friends members can be a real help in getting the word out about these two program series. You know people who

would be interested in attending, and you have access to community and workplace locations where you could post the schedules for others to see. If you'd like a print-ready (legal size paper) file of either schedule in order to make copies to hand around or post, contact me at dave.crawford@dnr.state.mn.us. Please help insure that we get a good turnout for these programs!

Please Make Copies of and Hang Up the Invitation to the Annual Meeting on the Previous Page and Bring a Friend with you to the Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 15th!!!
www.WildRiverParkFriends.org

Wild River Youth Nordic Ski Club

By **John Grund**

This has been the second season for the Wild River Youth Nordic Ski Club. Our club skis at the park each Sunday afternoon from January through February for a total of eight sessions. Our club is a member of the Minnesota Youth Ski League, which currently has over fifteen clubs within it's organization that are spread throughout the state.

The Minnesota Youth Ski League is a volunteer run organization that promotes the development of Nordic skiing for children ages 4-14. The Minnesota Youth Ski League website is: <http://www.mysl.org/> The Wild River Youth Nordic Ski Club has a webpage at this site under the clubs link. Visit the website for detailed info on our club.

Currently, our club has 30 youths involved, which is an increase from last year's 24. This has been a good year for Nordic skiing in the area. The early snow in December gave us a great start to early season skiing. The staff at Wild River State Park has done a great job of grooming the trails all



Wild River Youth Nordic Ski Club at the Trail Center on February 17th, 2008.

season for us, especially given the limited amount of snow the area has seen since December.

Our club will be seeking more coaches and youth for the 2009 season. If you are interested in signing up your son/daughter, or would like to volunteer as a coach for a small group, then please contact the group leader John Grund at 651-674-6096.

Upcoming Events • Mark Your Calendar!

Call 651-583-2925 for more information or visit www.WildRiverStateParkFriends.org

March & April (weekends)	Maple Syrup From Tap to Table Tapping in March, Cooking in April	Call for more info!	Visitor Center
March 15	Friends' Group Pancake Bfst & Annual Mtg	9 am /10 am	Visitor Center
May 17	Seegwan Celebration of Spring	7:30 am - 8 pm	Trail Center/VC



Please check one or more and send with your due membership form or bring with to the Annual Meeting. Thank you for your input! Feel free to include your name or remain anonymous!

Activities I participate in while at Wild River State Park (check all that apply):

- Birdwatching Hiking Canoeing
- Camping Horseback Riding Seed Collecting Attending Interpretive Programs
- Skiing Snowshoeing Biking

Fun activity I'd like to see the Friends Group sponsor this summer:

- A group canoe trip Potluck Picnic A special hike led by someone who knows the park well A group camping weekend
- More talks/programs Trail work day
- Other _____

I am interested in:

- Joining the Friends Group Board (requires a commitment of about 5 meetings per year)
- Helping the Friends Group grow (finding new members)
- Volunteering at Seegwan
- Volunteering at the Candlelight Ski
- Volunteering to host a Super Saturday Speaker (no public speaking involved)
- Becoming a Species Steward for a rare native plant

Other ideas or suggestions:

Name (optional) _____



Yes!

I'll be a Friend!

- Individual Friend** – \$10/year
- Family Friend** – \$20/year
- Community Friend** – \$100/year
- Add an additional \$10 and be a member of MN Parks and Trails*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Favorite activities at the park include:

Mail with check to:
Friends of Wild River State Park
 c/o William A. Carlson
 810 Dellwood St. S.
 Cambridge, MN 55008-2122
 www.WildRiverParkFriends.org