



Friends of Wild River State Park

# Newsletter



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

## State Park Update

By Paul Kurvers,  
Wild River State Park Manager

It's hard to believe yet another year has come to pass and it is time again to embark on a journey into a new year. However, before we begin the new year, I'd like to share with you some of the highlights from this past year.

- For the fourth consecutive year, both attendance and revenue increased over the previous year. Although the attendance numbers are not final yet, I am estimating that total park attendance will approach 200,000 visitors. The concessionaires operating the ski and canoe rentals both reported having one of their best years on record and increased revenue compared to 2009.

- Through funding derived from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment, the park completed prairie restoration work on over 180 acres of old field north and west of the equestrian campground. Improvements were also made to significant portions of the park's hiking trails to reduce erosion and provide a better surface for hiking, skiing, and horseback riding. Numerous energy conservation improvements were also made to buildings throughout the park. In addition, funds from the Clean Water Land and Legacy account also made it possible to hire three Minnesota Naturalist Corp staff which provided increased interpretive services between Memorial and Labor Day.

- In the fall of this past year, work was

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## From the President

By Dave Kozlovsky - Friends of Wild River State Park

Greetings from snowy Almelund! Jan and I have just returned from skiing at the Park and the conditions were spectacular. The temperature was 10 degrees and Special Green and Blue Glider were the right combination for a fast hour of skiing.

We stopped in to warm-up at the Visitors Center and visited with Kacie, our new naturalist, for a few minutes. She commented that a variety of outdoor activities were done on Saturday, December 18th, which included ice cream making, including 86 young folks. Way to go Kacie!! One of the goals of the Friends of WRSP is to introduce outdoor activities to the young and young families and Kacie is helping us accomplish this goal!

It is with happiness and a heavy heart that I report that Shawn and Kia Donais are leaving us as Shawn has taken a job as Assistant Manager at Gooseberry Falls State Park. I am happy for Shawn and Kia as I know they have property on the North Shore and wanted to move closer. I have a heavy heart because Kia has been a very integral member of the Friends, doing the newsletter and many other secretarial jobs that are too numerous to be mentioned. Kia, you

will be missed! Good luck and success to you and Shawn as you move on to a new adventure.

Kacie, in her annual report, mentioned that we had ten active members and a hundred and some inactive members.

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP!!**

We could use help on the board, help with setting up the Candlelight Ski, and help with secretarial skills, such as the newsletter. If you are interested, please contact me at 651-583-2123 or kozlovsky@northlc.com and I will put you to work. No matter how little you can help, it will be appreciated, as there is nothing better than volunteering for a good cause.

Last year my five-year-old grandson Caden skied for the second year and has moved on to new equipment and Connor (2 1/2) has his old skis. Connor skied for the first time last weekend and said it was "too slippery." Anyway, if you want to visit with me and my grandsons come to the Candlelight Ski on January 15, 2011!

## Mark Your Calendar!

- **Saturday, Jan. 15 6-9pm - Moonlight Ski** See poster on next page!
- **March Annual Meeting TBD** Fresh Maple Syrup (need we say more?)
- **May 7, 2011 - Seegwan** Celebration of Spring



We need some friends to **HELP SET UP** for the Candlelight Ski!

Come dressed for the weather and meet us and NB National Honors Society Students at the

**VISITOR CENTER**  
**2:45 PM JAN 15**

**DON'T FORGET TO TUCK A BUCK & BUY A RAFFLE TICKET**

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completed on a project to add electrical hook-ups to 15 campsites in the equestrian campground.

- Prescribed burns were conducted on approximately 240 acres of oak woodland and prairie. It is my understanding that the total acres burned this past year represents the largest number of acres burned in any one year.

- In April, we welcomed Kacie Carlson to the park as the new naturalist. As we've all learned, Kacie has demonstrated a can-do attitude and brought to her job a seemingly never ending supply of enthusiasm, energy, and new ideas. During her short time here, Kacie has introduced a variety of new interpretive programs, strengthened and expanded partnerships with other agencies, and broadened and increased outreach efforts to attract new visitors to the park. Kacie has been a great addition to the park staff and we look forward to many more years of continued outstanding service.

Finally, as you may be aware, Shawn Donais, the park's assistant manager has accepted an appointment as the assistant manager at Gooseberry Falls State Park. We are happy for Shawn and Kia as they are able to realize their dream of living and working on the beautiful North Shore of Lake Superior. Over the years, many of you have had the pleasure of getting to know Shawn and his wife Kia through their countless hours of volunteering with the Friends Group on activities such as the Candlelight Ski, Seegwan, board meetings, the newsletter publication, and much more. I also have had the pleasure of working with Shawn and witnessed first-hand his dedication and commitment to improving the park and providing a better experience for all visitors. Without a doubt the park is a better place because of his service. Please join me in thanking Shawn for being an exceptional steward of the park for the past 10-plus years.

# Naturalist Notes

By Kacie Carlson - Wild River State Park Naturalist

Greetings, Friends! Amongst the hustle and bustle of the holidays, we have much to celebrate at Wild River State Park. This year, over 200,000 visitors enjoyed the variety of activities and beautiful resources here. With the help of three Naturalist Corps staff, the Interpretive program was able to reach out to over 9,000 of those visitors in over 245 educational programs. Highlights from the summer include participating in Seegwan and the Chisago County Fair, the addition of 'side-walk-stop' programming, seining activities, and digital photography classes, the development of the Butterflies of Wild River State Park book and a family-friendly geocache puzzle, and enhanced cooperation between the North Branch and Chisago County Community Education programs. It is the Division of Parks and Trails vision to "create unforgettable park, trail, and water recreation experiences that inspire people to pass along the love for the outdoors to current and future generations", and with your support we continue to do just that.

As founded by Dave Crawford in 1993, the Prairie Care program maintained flawlessly throughout the transition of Naturalist staff. With the warm, wet weather, the prairies were taller and thicker than ever before. Volunteers came from all over to provide 2,315 hours of seed collecting, sowing, and monitoring. A total value of \$34,987 worth of seed was collected to enhance the parks 450 acres of current prairie restoration efforts. An additional 974 volunteer hours were committed to hosting the Visitor Center, buckthorn removal, trail and facility up-keep, and various wildlife surveys.

We also continue to be thankful for all that you, the Friends of Wild River State Park, do for us each year. With money



raised through the Pancake Breakfast, grants, donations, and membership fees, 11 guest presenters were funded which drew an interest of 766 participants. Countless smiles, laughs, and memories were made as visitors enjoyed acoustic entertainment with Charlie McGuire, live frogs with Randy Korb, blacksmithing with Paul Webster, flint knapping with Joel Osmond, story-telling with Dwight Wilcox, star-gazing with Steve Tonsfeldt, and music and dancing with

Pierre Jacques Pleau. 57 individuals also checked books out from the Barb Nelson Memorial Library, a truckload of garbage was removed from the St. Croix River during the Friends-hosted canoe cleanup event, and two Naturalist Corps staff were extended to assist with the Prairie Care program and in designing new interpretive exhibits for the Visitor Center lobby

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# Wild River State Park CANDLELIGHT

❄️ *Ski • Snowshoe • Hike*



❄️  
6-9 PM  
Saturday  
January 15th  
2011

Raffle for Set  
of Skis

❄️ **Join Friends of Wild River State Park** ❄️  
**for a fun moonlit evening of cross-country  
skiing, hiking or snowshoeing on over five miles of  
candlelit trail. Enjoy refreshments, indoor and outdoor  
programs for all ages, musical entertainment, and the  
BIGGEST prairie bonfire around to warm your buns on!**  
***IT'S WINTERTIME FUN FOR ALL AGES!***

To get to Wild River State Park go 14 miles east of North Branch or 10 miles northwest of Taylor's Falls on MN 95. At Almelund go north on CR 12 about 3 miles to the park entrance. Vehicle permits and ski passes are required. Annual ski passes can be purchased at any ELS vendor or by filling out a mail-in application at the park office on your arrival. Freewill donation for refreshments provided by Friends of Wild River State Park.

❄️  
**SKI & SNOWSHOE RENTAL AVAILABLE**  
Call the park for more info: 651-583-2125  
<http://www.wildriverparkfriends.org/>



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that will be unveiled this spring. Needless to say, Wild River State Park is lucky to have such a dedicated Friends group and is ever-appreciative of the value you bring in being proactive in preserving, restoring, and sharing Minnesota's natural resources. Thank you.

Finally, as the snow falls and wind-chills drop below -20 degrees, we are busy preparing for and anticipating the upcoming summer. You can expect an entertaining and educational variety of guest presenters, events for all ages, and unique opportunities to take advantage of throughout the Valley. To request private programming for scout, community, or school groups don't hesitate to contact me at Kacie.carlson@state.mn.us. For an always-updating list of activities for everyone, visit our web calendar at [www.mndnr.gov/wildriver](http://www.mndnr.gov/wildriver).

With thanks for all of your support in 2010, here's to wishing you a safe, happy, and healthy 2011.



# WILD RIVER STATE PARK FRIENDS

## Membership Dues

- Individual Friend** – \$20/year
- Family Friend** – \$35/year
- Silver Friend** – \$50/year
- Gold Friend** – \$100/year
- Platinum Friend** – \$250+/year
- Add an additional \$10 and be a member of MN Parks and Trails Council*

Name/Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer snail mail. Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign Up Online!**

Email \_\_\_\_\_

We will never sell or trade your email address

Favorite activities at the park include: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with check to:



**Friends of Wild River State Park**  
 c/o Treasurer Maurice Whalen  
 3663 164th Ave NE  
 Ham Lake, MN 55304

**[www.friendsofwildriver.org](http://www.friendsofwildriver.org)**  
 to donate using your credit card

Thank you for your support!

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

A community organization devoted to preserving and enhancing the experience of Wild River State Park



**Find us on Facebook**

**Friends events at the Park**

- Wild River December Activities
- Candlelight ski / moonlight walk  
January 15th, 2011

Annual Friends' member's meeting and pancake breakfast  
 March 20th, 2010 Saturday  
 watch for 2011 dates

- Seegwan "Celebration of Spring"  
May 7th, 2011 Saturday
- Canoe, explore and cleanup on the St. Croix - Press release  
July 17th, 2010  
Watch for 2011 dates.

St. Croix River Clean up Thank you!



Friends of WRSP dedicate park bench for Barb Nelson and brave the -20° temperatures. 12-14-10

**CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE!!!**

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