



Spring 2011

A Quarterly Look into Happenings at Wild River State Park

Friends of Wild River State Park Newsletter



Learn more throughout this newsletter by scanning the various QR Codes with your Smartphone & free QR Code app.



Signs of Spring Popping Up!

- 3/30 Sandhill Cranes near Spring Creek
- 3/30 Bald Eagles nesting near Amik's Pond
- 4/6 Mourning Cloak Butterflies
- 4/8 Wood Frogs on Nevers Dam Trail
- 4/9 Round-lobed Hepatica in wooded areas
- 4/10 Deer ticks plentiful in grassy areas
- 4/12 Many ducks in river backwaters
- 4/28 Bloodroot & Trout Lily in bloom
- 4/28 Coyote spotted in Amador Prairie
- 4/29 Marsh Marigolds in wetland areas
- 5/3 Six Bullsnares basking in open prairie

Welcome to the new format of the Friends of Wild River State Park Newsletter. To better inform Friends, volunteers, *and* park staff of what each other is doing, Bob Kessen, Friends Communications Director, and Kacie Carlson, Park Naturalist are uniting to co-write this quarterly newsletter. Inside, you'll find what's happening at Wild River State Park, tips and tricks for preparing for and enjoying the season, a calendar of events and activities taking place, and opportunities for you to get involved this summer.

But, don't wait three months to discover all that's happening at the park! Join us on Facebook or visit us on the web for the most current news and events.

- www.friendsofwildriver.org
- www.mndnr.gov/wildriver
- www.facebook.com/wildriver

Wild River State Park has a unique community of friends and we are grateful for you to be a part of it. Enjoy this new issue of the all-encompassing spring newsletter and we look forward to seeing you on the trails in the coming months!

... because a park is more than plants and animals. It's a community of friends who share a passion to help those plants bloom and animals roam free.

Park Reducing Energy Costs 20%

With perhaps significant reductions to our operating budget in coming years, we are needing to evaluate our operations and look for opportunities to implement efficiencies. In line with this, Governor Dayton recently directed all state agencies to reduce energy consumption by 20% over the next five years. If we are able to achieve this goal, the cost savings will be significant. For example, approximately 52% of the total non-labor operating budget at Wild River is spent on electricity, propane, vehicle fuels, and fleet costs. To address this reality, over the past few years the park has implemented a number of initiatives to reduce our energy consumption and expenditures. Programmable thermostats were installed in park buildings and incandescent light bulbs were replaced with compact florescent bulbs. In addition, motion activated light switches and restroom exhaust fan circuits were installed in most of the park's buildings including the two campground sanitation buildings, Visitor Center, Trail Center and shop. Old light fixtures were recently replaced with more energy efficient types throughout the park. With help from Century College students, the solar hot water heating system was reactivated in one of the campground sanitation buildings. We are also in the process of evaluating the possibility of installing solar panels to provide electricity to the park's office. As we move forward with reaching the governor's goal of reducing our energy consumption by 20%, more energy efficiencies will need to be implemented. If you have any ideas, I welcome your suggestions. I hope to see you at the park! ~ Paul Kurvers, Park Manager



2011 Dates & Rates

April 22 – Water on throughout park
 May 1 – Horse trails open for use
 June 11 – Open House (free admission)

Daily Vehicle Pass:	\$5/day
Annual Vehicle Pass:	\$25/year
Non-electric Campsite:	\$20/night
Electric Campsite:	\$25/night
Camper Cabin Rental:	\$50/night
Guest House Rental:	\$110/night
Trail Center Rental:	\$50/day
Canoe Rental:	\$40/day

Did You Know?

1. Dandelions roots, when cured, are thought to cleanse what organ?
2. Should it have developed as plotted, this large town would be located along the Sunrise Trail.
3. A group of these is an "army".
4. This many people visited Wild River State Park in 2010.
5. These WRSP animals have no front teeth on their top jaw.
6. This state mushroom is just starting to pop up around WRSP.

1. Liver 2. Nashua 3. Frogs
 4. 202,745 5. Deer 6. More!

Restorations Result in Healthy Snake Population

The bullsnake (aka gophersnake) is a species of special concern in Minnesota, but because of efforts to restore dry prairie, Wild River State Park has become host to one of the largest populations in the state.



In order to determine where they spend the winter, how far they travel, when they enter hibernation and when they come out, state Herpetologist, Carol Hall began a study within WRSP in fall 2010. By placing several hidden cameras throughout the park and pit-tagging a few of the snakes she hopes to capture these events. Pit-tagging is a method where a small tag (about the size of a pencil lead) is inserted beneath the back skin of the snake. It doesn't allow radio tracking but provides simple identification of the individual. These snakes are then marked with blue ink in order to be tracked visually. Learning more about bullsnake behavior will allow resource managers to preserve and restore their habitat in a way that will benefit the species for years to come. If you see one of these or any snake we are very interested in hearing about it! Please contact Kacie at kacie.carlson@state.mn.us or 651-583-2925 to report snake sightings.

You can help this species of special concern and other Minnesota snakes! They are cold-blooded reptiles which means they bask for heat – often on paved roads. The next time you see a snake give it a "brake" and scare it off the road.

Outdoor Education Connecting Users to WRSP

It's inarguable that outdoor education is more important than ever these days. People are becoming more connected to iPads and SmartPhones and less connected to their natural resources. In carrying out our Minnesota State 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", staff and Friends are reaching out at Wild River State Park.

Park interpretation is about luring people to give the outdoors a try. It's about assuring them that our natural resources are safe and sharing with them the importance of preservation. We offer visitors a chance to understand the resource and allow a hands-on opportunity to make a connection to it. Since May 2010, 301 of these opportunities have been given to 10,494 visitors and the interpretive calendar is booked with more! Diving into new technologies and reaching out to new users, we anticipate up-to-date self-guided trails, and participation in local schools, fairs, and festivals. Made possible by Friends of WRSP funding, we also anticipate the arrival of the new educational displays at the Visitor Center and a variety of guest talent to present this summer.

Thank you to all who helped to make a difference for our visitors this past year. We are seeing more and more new users to the park, and with you, they will develop that connection to the outdoors that just might make a difference.
 ~ Kacie, Park Naturalist



New Leadership at WRSP

When WRSP Asst. Manager, Shawn Donais, accepted the Asst. Manager position at Gooseberry Falls State Park, we felt his void. While he and his family are greatly missed, we welcome Dave Felleson, past WRSP volunteer.

Dave began his work at WRSP as a volunteer in the early '90s when he was amid a career change from being a photo equipment reconditioning supervisor while attending park management classes at the U of M. Recognizing the skill and work ethic that Dave brought to the park, he was hired as a Parks Worker in 1999, and ended his time as a Buildings and Grounds Worker. Since then he has worked as a Specialist at Monson Lake State Park, Manager at Split Rock Creek State Park, and Asst. Manager at St. Croix State Park where he has been the past six years. He is excited at the opportunity to be back at Wild River State Park and looks forward to helping restore its native prairies as he has done on his private lands. Please welcome Dave when you see him out and about in the park!



Mark Your Calendars! For a Summer of Outdoor Activities

Thanks to the passing of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment in 2009, Wild River State Park has received funding for three Naturalist Corps positions which will triple educational programming at the park. For a full list of Minnesota State Park activities, visit us at mndnr.gov/wildriver or scan the QR code to the right using your Smartphone.



May-June		Prairie Seed Sowing (available to Groups by request)
May 7 & 14	10-11 am	Spring Wildflower Walks
May 28	7:30-9 pm	Live Frogs! & Other Amphibians*
June 4	9 am-3 pm	Volunteer Training
June 11	8 am-10 pm	Seegwan Celebration & Open House*
July 2	7-8:30 pm	Live Animals from Wildlife Center
July 9	6-10 pm	Moonlight River Paddle (must register)
July 16	12-4 pm	Tools From Stone: Flint Knapping*
July 23	9 am-3 pm	Friends-hosted River Cleanup*
July 30	7-8:30 pm	Storytelling by Dwight Wilcox*
Aug-Oct		Prairie Seed Collecting (available to Groups by request)
August 6	9 am - 3 pm	The Amazing Race - Through the Valley
August 12/13	9-11 pm	Perseid Meteor Watch w/ Kenny Bahmer*
August 14/21	12-2 pm	Monarch Tagging
August 20	6:30-8 pm	Beneath the Big Blue Sky Musical*
August 26	7-9 pm	Live Musical Performance - Dancing Light*
September 3	11 -3 pm	Autumn Harvest Day!

* Program paid for by Friends of Wild River State Park

What happens to the dues we pay?

Greetings Friends of Wild River!

I would like to thank everyone for making our Annual Meeting/Pancake Breakfast a success. The pancakes, eggs, and great conversation made for a wonderful morning. Special thanks to our speakers--Tom Landwehr, DNR Commissioner; Courtland Nelson, DNR Parks and Trails Division Director; and Bob Barrett, Minnesota State Representative for District 17B--who took time out from their busy schedules to fill us in on what is in store for us at Wild River State Park from the DNR and the State Legislature's view.

Generally members of Friends of WRSP pay their dues at the Annual meeting or through the mail or online at that time. The question was asked, "What happens to the dues we pay?" Our mission is to "preserve and enhance the experience of Wild River State Park through various activities and efforts, seek to sustain the natural beauty and ecology of the park, support interpretive and environmental education programs of the park, augment the work of the park staff through recommendations for activities and improvements and increase local interest & utilization of park facilities".

A prime focus of the Friends of WRSP is from the statement "support interpretive and environmental education programs of the park". One of our goals is to bring children to

WRSP and show them the wonders of the outdoors in hopes of inspiring them to become life-long lovers of nature. To attract youth and their parents, for the past several years Friends of WRSP has spent \$1500 on programs to entertain and educate. We are now working on funding transportation to get students from area school districts to have the opportunity to help with prairie seeding. Since we do not do any other fundraising besides donation buckets or raffles at our events and the annual plant sale at Seegwan, dues are the main source of funding for our programs. So, if you have not paid your dues please do so and encourage others to become members. Friends of WRSP memberships make great gifts! Do you belong to an organization that gives to charitable causes? Bring a membership form to your next meeting and suggest having the group become a member of our group, too!

As you can see, every membership counts. Thank you for your valuable contributions.

~ Dave Kozlovsky, Friends President



Friends Offer Transportation Grant to Schools



For years Friends of WRSP has funded a Prairie Care intern position. With the recent addition of three WRSP Naturalist Corps members through state Legacy funding, Friends have decided to use this money to fund the transportation of kids to WRSP. Area schools, which are cutting back field trip costs, will now be able to continue hands-on, outdoor education opportunities at WRSP. With roughly \$900, Friends expects to bring in 600 students per year which will provide roughly 300 hours of volunteer service to the park – mostly in prairie restoration.

Find us on the Web >>>

Scan using a smartphone and free QR code reader app.



www.friendsofwildriver.org

Focus on a Friend

Every quarter, we would like to give special spotlight to a Friend of WRSP. This quarter, Friend Jan Kozlovsky would like to introduce you to Tessa Hill, newly elected vice-president of Friends of WRSP.

Tessa has been on the Board for years, having been "roped in" when she started dating her husband Dennis Johnson. Even so, her love of the park comes naturally as her background is in Parks and Recreation. She especially enjoys walking the trails in the park and the beauty of the wild flowers year-round.



Tessa has a degree in education from the U of M, spent her early years teaching elementary, and then ran her own business teaching art, drama, and physical fitness.

Tessa now serves as President of the non-profit organization Kids for Saving the Earth Worldwide, one of the largest and most influential children's environmental organizations. KSE was founded by her son, and after his death from cancer she and her first husband established the non-profit to carry on his dream of a healthy planet. Tessa also writes and designs materials and a website for environmental education and is passionate about environmental health because of the link between cancer (having lost her son and first husband to cancer) and the health of the environment.

The Friends are grateful to Tessa for her willingness to accept an officer position, and for her unwavering commitment to go above and beyond in support of the Friends mission.

FREE Admission to the Park!
On June 11th – State Park Open House day

* SEE GWAN 2011



Meaning “Spring” in Ojibwe, “Seegwan” is the annual celebration of spring at Wild River State Park! Spend this completely FREE day at the park discovering all that spring brings with a variety of guest presentations including orienteering, blacksmithing, and a live owl! Ongoing activities and scheduled programs at the Trail Center and Visitor Center are sure to make this a fun-filled day for all ages.

This event is hosted by the Friends of Wild River State Park.

Saturday, June 11th

The 28th Annual Celebration of Spring at Wild River State Park

All programs are FREE and open to the public.

Plus a MN State Park Vehicle Permit is NOT Required on June 11, 2011.

- 7:30 am Early Morning Bird Hike** -- Meet at the Trail Center. Bring binoculars! Sponsored by Wild River Audubon.
- 9 am Geocaching** -- At the Visitor Center.
- Nature Photography** -- At the Trail Center.
- 10 to 3 (ongoing) Blacksmithing - A Craft from the Past** -- At the Visitor Center. With Paul Webster.
- 10 to 3 (ongoing) Native Plant Sale** -- At the Trail Center. Locally grown native plants for your garden! Sponsored by Chisago County Master Gardeners.
- 10 to 3 (ongoing) Orienteering** -- At the Trail Center. Learn how to use a map and compass to find your way from point to point on one of our restored prairies.
- 1 pm The BIG 26th Annual Seed Sow!** -- At the Trail Center. Help bring back a prairie! Sow some of last fall's volunteer collected seed in new locations.
- 2 pm Wildflower Walk** -- At the Visitor Center.
- River Seining** -- At the Boat Landing.
- 7:30 pm Raptors of Spring!** -- A Live Owl at the Amphitheatre. With a lively presentation and discussion led by Barb Walker.

Leave a Legacy: Become a Friend

As a Friend of Wild River State Park you will:

- Connect with others who enjoy the outdoors
- Provide educational activities for visitors
- Be invited to attend special programs and field trips
- Help fund educational, restoration, and preservation initiatives within the park
- Reach out to new park users and provide connection to local communities and groups
- Stay included on park news and happenings
- Go behind the scenes to help during some of the parks biggest events of the year
- Be part of leaving a legacy for generations

Membership dues are the Friends' main source of funding for programs that they support at the park. Please send in the form at the right or sign-up online and help support the great programs Friends of Wild River State Park bring to Wild River!

Still getting the paper newsletter?

To save paper, mailing costs, and time we encourage you to have your name added to the Friends' secure email list. You can request to be taken off at any time.

To be added to the email list, please visit our website at:

www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org

or contact us at info@friendsofwildriver.org

If you prefer to receive a paper copy of the quarterly newsletter, we'd be happy to do that also.



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:		Zip:	
Email:			

We will never sell or trade your email address

Favorite activities at the park include:

Option 1: Mail above with check to
Friends of Wild River State Park
c/o Treasurer Maurice Whalen
3663 164th Ave NE
Ham Lake, MN 55304



Option 2: Sign-up OnLine and use your credit card

www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org

Thank you for your support!

Volunteer Spotlight

Dan Carlson of White Bear Lake, Minnesota has been volunteering as a prairie seed collector for over ten years and logged 79 hours in 2010. He and his son, Andrew, have become so familiar with prairie plants and Wild River State Park that they are quick to locate and collect some of the rarest species. When he's not in the prairie, bird-watching, or fishing, Dan is busy working with developers and lab analysts at Big G (General Mills). He also enjoys long-distance running, baseball, and crossword puzzles and looks forward to volunteering at Wild River State Park for years to come.



2011 Opportunities at Wild River

Calling all Friends and past volunteers! Wild River State Park's attendance surpassed 200,000 people in 2010. That's an increase of 5% over 2009. With more visitors there are more educational opportunities. You might consider hosting the Visitor Center a few days this summer, or staffing a booth at the local fair. With the park being one year older, there are also opportunities to fine tune things like the self-guided trails and wildflower gardens. Or help us stay on top of the restoration projects such as seed collecting and buckthorn removal. Have a talent? Share it with our visitors and make Wild River State Park a place to remember and want to come back to year after year.

<p><i>Spring</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maple sap collecting - Seed preparation - Trail trash & debris pickup - Phenology recording - Wildflower garden prep 	<p><i>Fall</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seed Collecting & prep - Visitor Center Hosting - Trail debris pickup - Data entry and filing
<p><i>Summer</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Species Stewards - Visitor Center Hosting - Buckthorn removal - Park photography - Staff a fair booth 	<p><i>Winter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitor Center Hosting - Candlelight Ski event help - Data entry and filing - Grant & curriculum writing

Share your ideas, talents, & interests! kacie.carlson@state.mn.us

Volunteers donate 7,369 hours in 2010

Wild River State Park is lucky to have the dedicated volunteer base that it does. Throughout 2010, 44 individuals and 18 groups (consisting of over 1300 individuals) donated 7,369 hours in various capacities including Visitor Center hosting, daily cleaning, Species Steward responsibilities, seed collecting and seed sowing, buckthorn removal, trail maintenance, geocache maintenance, and various wildlife surveys. If the park were to pay a staff person \$12/hour to complete those tasks, it would cost \$88,428. That's not even considering the \$35,000 worth of native prairie seed that was collected and the acres of habitat that were improved. It is obvious that volunteers of Wild River State park are priceless to the legacy we hope to leave for future generations. Thank you, 2010 volunteers, for your dedicated efforts to restoring, preserving, and sharing the natural and cultural resources of Wild River State Park.

"The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers." Everett Mamor



"I don't see [volunteering] as labor but as an opportunity to be outside among some of Minnesota's richest resources.

I can enjoy a relaxing afternoon while leaving a legacy for generations to come. They will be able to look upon this and see what this landscape looked like hundreds of years ago."

~Dan Carlson, Volunteer

Stay Involved, Says Dave

Dave Crawford developed a bit of wisdom in his 19 years as Naturalist at Wild River State Park, founder of Prairie Care, and now in his year and a half of retirement. From volunteer to volunteer, here's his advice for you.

Everyone needs happiness and a sense of accomplishment in their day to day lives. This is more true than ever in times of stress and uncertainty. Whether in your personal life or the external state of affairs in the economic and political realms, concerns can become overwhelming. A natural response is to feel hopeless and to disengage from trying to do anything constructive. But a much better response is to find something you care about, and pursue it on a daily or a weekly basis. Whether it's solitary, like treating yourself to a couple of hours of quietly walking and enjoying natural surroundings, or getting

together with a group for a special event or volunteer project, you'll benefit mind, body, and spirit by getting involved. Doing this with a group is especially valuable – being with like-minded people helps you feel appreciated, lets you know you're not on your own, and helps you see tangible progress. Positive change in the world always starts with positive change in individuals. If you get involved in something you enjoy, you're making yourself a better person, and you're making a difference – slowly but surely making the world a better place!

~Naturalist Dave Crawford

\$385,000 in Seed Collected

When established in 1973, Wild River State Park was to “preserve, perpetuate, and interpret the natural features of the pre-settlement era”. That meant turning the 1400 acres of farm fields back into native prairies. (99% of Minnesota's prairie habitat has disappeared to agricultural and urban development.) To reduce the near \$1100/acre cost of such restoration, volunteers began collecting native seeds and redistributing them throughout WRSP in 1993. Since then, over 200 species of native plants have been restored to roughly 450 acres of WRSP prairies, over 16,000 hours of volunteer service have been donated, nearly \$385,000 worth of seed has been collected and sown, and countless habitat improvements have been made.

Thank you, to all who have made this possible!

Species Spotlight: Junegrass

(Currently looking for friendly Species Steward!)

Latin Name: *Koeleria cristata*

Habitat: sunny woods, edges, clearings, dry prairies, part to full sun

Height: 1-2 feet

Bloom Date: June

Collection Date: June 22 – August 24

ID Notes: A clump-forming grass with finely-textured heads that are compact and dense. Narrow leaves at base.



Visit WRSP Species Steward, Katy Chayka's website for more wildflowers!
<http://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/>



Prairie Care Volunteers! June 4

2011 will mark the 18th year of the Prairie Care program at Wild River State Park and we're refueling its fire! We currently have around 20 active Species Stewards and with the great progress they've made, they need help keeping up. Some Stewards have moved away and other potential stewards are new to the area. To regroup, reenergize, and reach out to new interest, an official Prairie Care Volunteer Orientation is being offered on June 4, 2011! Everyone interested in learning about resource management, prairies in particular, is invited to attend for FREE!



**Past & Interested Volunteers!
Contact Kacie to sign up by June 1**

kacie.carlson@state.mn.us

651-583-2925

From the Newsroom

We're a small newsletter, but big issues face the St. Croix River today! Read more about current research:

Use your SmartPhone and a free QR Code Reader app to scan the images below.



Sediment, Phosphorus, & Mercury Threaten Wild & Scenic Riverway:
(St. Croix Watershed Research Station, Marine, MN)
www.smm.org/scwrs



Small mussels make a big difference!
www.macalester.edu/~hornbach/St_Croix_Mussel_data



Bighead Carp Found in St. Croix River
www.mndnr.gov/news

Be Moved...by the St. Croix River

To celebrate 100 years, the St. Croix River Association is hosting 100 events along the river including a full-length paddle from the headwaters in Solon Springs, Wisconsin, an area of pristine natural beauty, to the confluence with the mighty Mississippi in Prescott, Wisconsin. The journey traverses eleven counties in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Some sections of the St. Croix are very wild and remote, where nature rules while others are more tame where families can enjoy a leisurely outing. Communities will welcome paddlers along the way with local celebrations and events. Learn more about the paddle and other events at scrapaddle.org.



“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world’s great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs.”

~ Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*

Get off the sofa! Join the SOFAS

The National Park Service, Wisconsin State Parks, and Minnesota State Parks are uniting for the 2nd summer to offer this action-packed family adventure club in the St. Croix Valley! Join the club, get a passport card at the St. Croix National Park Service Visitor Center or any State Park in the valley, attend five or more activities, and receive the SOFAS collectable pin—**FREE!**

From paddling the river and tagging butterflies, to fly fishing and geocaching, every activity is suitable for ages six and up, and a variety for ages six and under.

Enjoy time with your family, meet new friends, and discover the St. Croix Valley this summer.

List of activities on Facebook and www.mndnr.gov/wildriver



HELP WANTED

The Friends of Wild River State Park will be hosting the 2nd Annual Canoe Cleanup event on the St. Croix River on July 23, 9 am – 3 pm. Participants will drop their canoes at the Sunrise Landing, park at the main WRSP Boat Landing and be shuttled back to Sunrise to begin the 10-mile cleanup paddle. Mid-way refreshments and interpretation will be provided!
www.friendsofwildriver.org

Sign up today by contacting Kacie at kacie.carlson@state.mn.us
651-583-2925