



Newsletter

www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org ■ info@FriendsOfWildRiver.org ■ 651-583-2926 (Visitor Center)

**Pancake Breakfast & Annual Meeting
is coming up soon: March 17!**

New! Silent Auction:
**Many unique and valuable items will be
up for auction – see page 3 for more information!**

**Spring Native Plant Sale
Moved up to May 20th**

With spring only a few weeks away, thoughts of warmer weather and longer days are commonplace, and this also means spring planting ideas are taking shape. In previous years the Friends sponsored the Native Plant sale at Seegwan which is now being held in conjunction with National Get Outdoors Day – June 9, 2012. Because this is often too late for spring plantings, the native plant sale will now take place on Sunday, May 20, 9am-3pm at Wild River State Park.

As always, a wide variety of native plants will be offered, including wildflower species like Prairie Smoke and Wild Lupine; native grasses like Little Bluestem, Indian grass, and Bottlebrush grass; and a unique selection of ferns and sedges.

Tom Dickhudt, owner of Sunrise Native Plants (sunrisenativeplants.com) in Center City reminds us that, "Native plants are more than just pretty plants. Research shows they play an important role in providing balance in landscapes. Native pollinators like butterflies and bees prefer native plants they evolved with as opposed to introduced species which are foreign to them. Native plants are also important in water conservation efforts and ecologically sound lakeshore and habitat restorations in addition to being recognized as cost effective solutions to many of the environmental problems we are facing."

Many thanks go to Friends Board Member, Tom Dickhudt, for growing and donating the plants for this fundraiser. All proceeds will go directly to the Friends of Wild River State Park to support a variety of park programs. Please come out on May 20 to support the park and get your spring plants!

~~Candlelight~~ Ski Hike Snowless but Successful

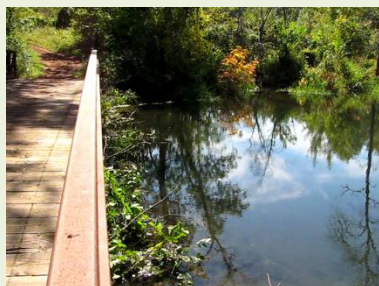


The annual Candlelight Ski, Snowshoe, and Hike Event was held on January 14 and Friends, who sponsored the event, were pleased with the good turnout in spite of the lack of snow. Approximately 500 people participated in the night's activities which was a pleasant surprise when the event was quickly changed from a 5-mile ski to a 2-mile walk. For comparison, when we've had good snow conditions and moderate temperatures the event has averaged 1300 participants – the record being 2000 a few years back. In talking with a number of people who ventured out last month, they all thoroughly enjoyed the smaller crowds, walk, music, treats, and good company. Park staff and Friends pass on their sincere appreciation and thanks to all who volunteered to make this annual event such a success, especially:

- North Branch Honor Students for setting and luminating the trail.
- Wild River Rental for the donation of a ski package for the raffle.
- Patti and Mike McGloughlin for sharing their musical talents.
- Bonnie Patrick, Elizabeth Huselid, Tessa Hill, Gary Noren, Jan Kozlovsky, and Barb Carlson for the donation of delicious treats.

WHERE IS IT?

Do you know where in Wild River State Park this picture was taken? See where to visit this unique place on page 4....



Search for a New Treasurer

We are sad to announce that the treasurer of the Friends group, Mo Whalen, has resigned his position due to personal and professional reasons. While he will continue to be on the Board and provide much needed experience and ideas, the group is looking for someone to help fill this very important and fulfilling position. If you, or someone you know, is interested in working with a fun, social group of people helping to restore, preserve, and share all that is Wild River State Park, please contact Friends President, Dave Kozlovsky, at 651-674-1526 or email him at kozlovsky@northlc.com.

Naturalist Notes

By Kacie Carlson, Park Naturalist



Without much of a winter, it seems like yesterday that we said adieu to the blooming flowers and bustling critters of 2011. But, it won't be long before spring arrives and they'll be back, along with all of you we hope, for another season at Wild River State Park. Spring is a unique time when many things show a side of themselves not seen in the other months of the year.

One of the first signs of spring is the burst of Hepatica, Bloodroot (see "Species Spotlight"), and Trout Lilies throughout the woods. These, and other woodland wildflowers, have adapted to live in such shady areas. One way is through their leaves which are relatively large and dark green in order to absorb maximum sunlight during the shorter days of spring. It's also no coincidence that these flowers are the first to bloom – before the trees sprout their leaves and shade out the forest floor.

Another sure sign of spring is the constant call of the Wood and Western Chorus Frogs which are soon-after joined by the Northern Leopard Frogs and Spring Peepers. The more dominant males defend the best breeding territory. Once they attract a mate they will swim with her; externally fertilizing her eggs as they are laid. After about 21 days, the eggs hatch into tadpoles which after about five weeks will begin to develop into frogs. Just as we did, encourage kids it's ok to play with frogs – it's a unique way to connect with nature! Just keep your/their hands wet to protect the frogs important slime layer, be gentle, and let them go to their natural home when play time is over.

Lastly, we all look forward to the spring-time babies. The Bald Eagles near Amik's Pond and Nevers Dam have already claimed their nests, so we're hopeful for one to three eggs in each of those; with eaglet(s) emerging 35 days after they're laid. With the calm winter and healthy deer population, there's also a good chance that we see a few twin or triplet fawns loping around the park. Out on the Pioneer Loop, winter hikers have taken a liking to the active beaver lodge in the pond just off the southwest corner of the loop, so keep an eye out for kits there!

As these unique signs of spring pop up, I hope you get a chance to enjoy them and, as always, we look forward to seeing you at the park.

Calendar of Events

FWRSP Pancake Breakfast & Annual Meeting

March 17: 9 - 11 am at the Visitor Center
Find more information on page 3 of this newsletter.

Maple Syrup Pre-planning Workshops

March 3, 4: 12 - 2 pm at the Visitor Center
Register at 651-583-2925

Hands-on Maple Syruping Workshops

March 24, 31: 10 am - 1 pm at the Visitor Center
Register at 651-583-2925

Maple Syruping Walk-in Weekend

April 7, 8: 11 am - 3 pm at the Visitor Center
Come and go to get a glimpse of the syruping process!

FWRSP Native Plant Sale

May 20: 9 am - 3 pm at Wild River State Park
Find more information on page 1 of this newsletter.

Find more activities at friendsofwildriver.org
or at mndnr.gov/wildriver

Species Spotlight

Bloodroot

Latin Name: *Sanguinaria canadensis*

Habitat: Rich hardwood & floodplain forests

Height: 2-6 inches

Bloom Date: Late April and May (before the trees shade the forest floor with their leaves)

Identification: Has a single flower with 8 white petals, a single 3-9 lobed round leaf encircling the stem. Red-orange sap "bleeds" from broken leaves and roots, hence the common name Bloodroot. It was/is used as a body paint and dye.



Just for Kids! Junior Friend Membership

Since when has having the chance to make a difference and be proactive in supporting Wild River State Park and our backyard nature been an adult-only thing? Kids can now join a unique group of Friends with the new Junior Friend membership for just \$5. Junior Friends will receive all the benefits of an adult Friend, a complete "Kids For Saving Earth" Action Guide, certificate of support, and annual Just For Kids e-newsletter with fun wildlife notes, games, and backyard activities from the Park Naturalist! Junior Friends can sign up online at friendsofwildriver.org or by completing the registration form included in this newsletter.

You are invited to the Friends of Wild River's

Pancake Breakfast & Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 17, 9 – 11 a.m. at the Wild River State Park Visitor Center

We will start at 9:00 with the delicious Pancake Breakfast (members eat for free), featuring:

- Famous secret recipe organic buttermilk pancakes
- Wild River State Park's home-made Maple Syrup tapped from the park "sugar bush" last spring
- Fresh scrambled eggs, hot coffee and juice

The Annual Meeting will follow at 10:00. Topics to include:

- Last year's very successful programs and initiatives
- Reports from the Friends Board of Directors
- Plans for the upcoming year and beyond
- Presentation of the annual "Wild Friend" award
- Featured speaker:

Brett Feldman

MN Parks and Trails Council Executive Director



New for 2012:

Silent Auction

- Private backyard tour with Naturalist Dave
- Overnight in a Tree House/Inn in central MN
- Sunrise Native Plants gift certificate
- Private dinner cruise on a houseboat
- And many more unique one-chance items!

*If you can help donate an item to the auction, please email Tessa Hill at KSEWW@aol.com

New for 2012:

Membership Special

If your membership is renewed at or before the Annual meeting, you will be entered into a drawing for a FREE night stay in a camper cabin for up to six people at Wild River State Park. Your stay will be uniquely complimented with a guided nature hike or hour-long activity of your choice with the Park Naturalist.

The drawing will be held at the Annual Meeting.

You do not have to be present to win, so renew your membership today online or by completing the registration form in this newsletter!

Join us for a morning of friendship, food, and fun at the Visitor Center! And please bring any friends who might be interested in joining us and supporting Wild River State Park.



Still getting the paper newsletter?

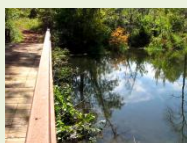
To save paper, mailing costs, and time we encourage you to have your name added to the Friends' secure email list. You can request to be taken off at any time.

To be added to the email list, please visit our website at:
www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org
 or email us at info@friendsofwildriver.org
 or call Bob Kessen at 651-462-8487

Answer to **WHERE IS IT?** ... from page 1

The Deer Creek Bridge

GPS coordinates: N45 31.438 W092 43.892



While many visitors stick to the trails between the Visitor Center and Campground, the Deer Creek Loop is a must in spring! The photo depicts the bridge that crosses Deer Creek as it enters the St. Croix River. From the Visitor Center, follow the Old Military Road, cross the bridge and continue the Deer Creek Loop. The lowland areas of this trail are guaranteed to be carpeted with Spring Beauties, Marsh Marigolds, and Trout Lilies as they appear.



It's also the place to see one of the first spring flowers pop out of the snow – skunk cabbage! For easier access, follow County Road 16 (Wild Mountain Road) south from Park Trail (the main park entrance) just a few miles and find "WRSP Gate 1" on your left. Park there, and walk right onto the south end of the Deer Creek Loop.

WILD RIVER State Park Friends Membership Dues

- ☐ Junior **Friend**, 12 and under – \$5 / year
Includes an "Action Guide" and other benefits
- ☐ 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

Your favorite activities at the park include:

Option 1: Mail above with check to:
 Friends of Wild River State Park
 c/o President Dave Kozlovsky
 17190 410th St.
 North Branch, MN 55056



Option 2: Sign-up OnLine and use your credit card:
www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org

Thank you for your support!

Photos by Rubin Stenseng: Bullsnae, Sandhill Cranes, Prairie Smoke bud, Yellow Warbler, Hooded Merganser, and Whitetail fawn all seen at Wild River State Park spring 2011.



Keep your Eyes Open Last year's signs of spring at WRSP:

- 3/30 Sandhill Cranes at Spring Creek
- 3/30 Bald Eagles nesting at Amik's Pond
- 4/6 Mourning Cloak Butterflies
- 4/8 Wood Frogs on Nevers Dam Trail
- 4/9 Round-lobed Hepatica in the woods
- 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 Bullsnaes basking in open prairie