



Winter Newsletter

www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org ■ info@FriendsOfWildRiver.org ■ 651-583-2125

From the President:

Friends Support Activities in Every Season

By Dave Kozlovsky, Friends of Wild River State Park



Greetings, from a snowy Almelund. What a great holiday gift: 12 inches of snow on December 10! After having a Candlelight walk in 2012, I hope this will be an omen for a snowy January 26, which is the date of the 21st Annual Friends of WRSP Candlelight *ski*, *snowshoe*, and hike event. Save the date! The details of the night are included in this newsletter and at www.friendsofwildriver.org.

Speaking of Friends activities, we now have an activity for you in every season. The year starts off with the aforementioned Candlelight Event for our winter activity. Then, come spring, March 16 is the Annual Meeting, Pancake Breakfast, and Silent Auction. This meeting will feature all you can eat “secret recipe organic pancakes” and park-made maple syrup. Last year was our first silent auction which was a great success. Some of the items auctioned were Gary Noren nature photos, a night in a tree house, locally made wine, and private backyard tours. If you have an item to donate, email Tessa at KSEWW@aol.com. If your membership is renewed at or before the annual meeting on March 16, you will be entered into a drawing for a FREE night stay in a camper cabin at Wild River State Park. 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!

Our second spring activity is Seegwan, “A Celebration of Spring,” on June 8 which includes a bird hike, archery in the park, seed sowing, native plant sale, and other activities to celebrate spring throughout the day.

July 13 brings us together for our summer activity: our annual St. Croix River Cleanup Canoe Trip. More details to come on this, but it’s always an enjoyable, relaxing, and feel-good day. Don’t have a canoe? Thanks to the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Fund, Wild River purchased eight canoes for interpretive opportunities like this!

Our newest event is the Wild River 5k Run/Walk which will round us up in the fall: to be held in September or October of each year. Check www.friendsofwildriver.org for developing details, and pictures of last year’s race. This family-friendly activity attracted participants from 1 to 66 years old and was a unique way to enjoy the fall colors.

Thanks for your support, and we hope you’ll join us throughout the seasons to get to know the other Friends of Wild River State Park.



Wild River Run 2012

WHERE IS IT?
ANSWER ON PAGE 3



State Park Update

By Paul Kurvers,
Wild River State Park Manager



If you’ve visited the park recently, you may have noticed a new array of solar panels installed just north of the park office. On a sunny day these panels

generate more than enough electricity to provide for the needs of the park office. Any electricity generated in excess of the building’s needs flows back into Xcel Energy’s grid and is credited back to the park to reduce our electric charges on cloudy days and during evening hours. Over the course of a year these new solar panels should provide for 100% of our office electrical needs. Since solar electricity is a renewable source of energy, the park will also reduce its overall emissions of CO2 by roughly 12 tons per year, which most scientists believe is a significant contributing factor to climate change.

You may recall, about one year ago I mentioned in this newsletter a goal to reduce the park’s energy use (gasoline and diesel fuel, electricity, propane) by 20% by 2015. This goal is consistent with an Executive Order issued by Governor Mark Dayton which requires all state agencies, including the DNR, to do the same. Since that time the park has implemented a number of energy saving measures designed to work towards achieving this goal. Some of these measures included: installing programmable thermostats; replacing old light fixtures with new more energy efficient fixtures; replacing incandescent

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Two Big Events this Winter

Mark your calendars and join us at the following programs sponsored by the Friends of Wild River in the next three months:

January 26

21st Annual Candlelight Ski / Snowshoe / Hike

One of our most popular events, and this year will feature a full moon assisting the luminaries along the trails (hopefully there will be a clear sky). See page 5 for more information.

March 16

Pancake Breakfast & FWRSP Annual Meeting

This delicious and Free to Friends members breakfast will start at 9:00 and our Annual Mtg. will follow around 10:00. Also, the Friends Board meeting will start at 8:00 and we would really like you to join us in our mission of "preserving and enhancing the experience of Wild River State Park."



- State Park Update -

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light bulbs with LED bulbs; installing occupancy activated sensors for lights and building ventilation systems; caulking, sealing and better insulating park buildings; and replacing an older poor mileage vehicle with a newer electric/gas hybrid vehicle. Some of the costs of implementing these energy efficiency investments were offset by grants or rebates provided by our local electric utility.

So far, the results of all these efforts have been very promising. In fact, a comparison of our energy use this past year (thru June 2012) compared to the same period a year prior shows that we were able to reduce our energy use (measured in BTU's), by 24%. This translates into an annual savings of \$7,500. Perhaps most importantly, by using renewable sources of energy such as solar, and by reducing the amount of energy we use that is produced from the burning of fossil fuels, we are able to reduce carbon emissions that pollute the air, land, and water. This benefits all of us by decreasing the impacts of pollution on human health and climate change and promotes sustainable ecosystems and habitats critical for plants and wildlife. I encourage all of you to look into ways in which you can also reduce the energy you use at home and work. It's the right thing to do. Visit www.mndnr.gov/energysmart for our current energy saving stats and for ways you can do the same in your own home.

As, always, we look forward to seeing you out at the park this winter season.

Kris Backlund on Target as Assistant

Kris Backlund began her state park career in 1984 as a seasonal naturalist at Gooseberry Falls. In 1992, she landed her first management position as the Assistant Manager at Lake Bemidji State Park. Kris has held various management positions including serving at Wild River (1994-1998; 2005-2006), Sakatah Lake and Afton state parks. She also values the insights gained while working in a few different roles at the DNR's main office in St. Paul.

Undoubtedly, Kris' career choice was influenced by her family's many trips to state and national parks, guided by her dad who was an earth science teacher. The wonder of the natural world has always intrigued her. She hopes to contribute to the park's efforts to cultivate the next generation of park users, to restore native landscapes and curtail invasive species, and to carry forward the park's existing efforts to become a more energy efficient work site.

She is thrilled to be back at Wild River, and looks forward to meeting many of the Friends of Wild River, as well as reconnecting with members she already knows. Please stop and say hello if you haven't met Kris already.



A few photos of recent fun events at the Park:



Snowshoe Lacing in November.



Archery in the Park in September.



Katie and the new "Sidewalk Stop" stand throughout the Summer.

WHERE IS IT?
FROM PAGE 1

DON'T KNOW WHERE THIS ONE IS?
COME FIND OUT ON JANUARY 26 AT THE
CANDLELIGHT SKI / SNOWSHOE / HIKE!

Naturalist Notes

By Kacie Carlson
Wild River State Park Naturalist



Just as fast as the old year flies by, the new one comes soaring in, making it hard to take time to stop and reflect on all that we did in a blur of the last 365 days. So, I'll stay short and sweet and simply provide you with a few of the 'best-of' moments at Wild River State Park in 2012 for you to reflect on, and some to interpret through your own imagination.

Words in Numbers:

172,802	Visitors to Wild River State Park
11,206	Participants at Nature Programs
\$39,221	Worth of Prairie Seed Collected
4,902	Hours Volunteered to the Park
72,364	Approximate number of Marshmallows Eaten at Wild River State park This Summer

Memorable Quotes:

"Wow! This Dr. Pepper flower is like a party in your nose!"
[Speaking of Bergamot] - Moundsview 8th Grader

"I (pause) just (pause) saw (pause) a (pause) TARADACTLE!"
(Speaking of Pileated Woodpecker) - Waist-high Visitor

New Events

Seed threshing at the Almelund Apple Festival had more adults lined up than kids for the chance to thresh and flail genuine WRSP bergamot seeds to plant in their own gardens.

The Wild River Run 5K combined autumn health, happiness, and fundraising and is highly anticipated for next fall already!

Kids Check-out Backpack Journal Entry:

"I tide nots the 1st and 3rd. Then I read the book kald Just me and my dad, it was a prity fun book. Then my dad told me about the compis! We went to the river and on the way we saw a frog. And poison ivy and we walked past it no won touched it. It was a lot of FUN! The End"

Neat News Article

FWRSP were featured in the Minnesota Parks and Trails Magazine as making WRSP a "place for community".

2012 was a fabulous year for everyone who is or became part of Wild River State Park. Resource management projects were successful, interpretive programs were bursting at the seams, many thousands of smiles were produced, and more and more people found Wild River State Park to be their backyard away from home. Thanks for all you've done to make those accomplishments possible and I look forward to 2013 with you.

Tips to Talking Climate Change

By Kacie Carlson, Wild River State Park Naturalist

Climate change can be a controversial topic to talk about, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some tips to having an open discussion about the changes we're seeing in the outdoors and how we plan to move forward with restoring, preserving, and sharing them as we've committed to do.

Tip 1: Is Climate Change Happening?

Rephrase: What climate-related changes are we seeing?

In a recent MN DNR survey in northeastern Minnesota, 74% of people surveyed believe climate change is happening, 18% aren't sure, and 8% believe it's not happening. Rather than phrasing this as a yes or no question, discuss the changes we are seeing. In a less controversial manner, facts show that Minnesota's average annual temperature has increased 1.9°F since 1895, warming rates are accelerating, and annual precipitation in Minnesota has increased by about 3.1 inches since 1895. Between 1973 and 2008, maximum ice cover on the Great Lakes has declined by about 30%. Big weather events are becoming more common. In 2010, 48 tornadoes blew through Minnesota for a total of 110 that year – a state record. At Wild River State Park, we had a Carolina Wren spend the entire winter (a bird historically found south and east of Minnesota) and are now seeing Fox Sparrows in December. This spring, the wildflowers bloomed roughly two weeks early. It's easier to agree that we saw some effect of a warmer temperature this past year, so take the heat off of the big question and start the climate change conversation small and close to home.

Tip 2: What is Causing Climate Change?

Rephrase: What *can* cause climate change?

No one wants to be told they're responsible for "global warming", so let's rephrase this question. Start by understanding where most of our heat comes from. Heat comes from the sun, which is then absorbed by greenhouse gases, which in turn warms our air temperature. The most common greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinate gases (i.e. chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)). So, what can cause an increase in these greenhouse gases? Lots of things from the methane of animal waste, to CFCs in aerosols (CFCs are one of the few greenhouse gases that can only come from human-related activities and one that also depletes the Earth's ozone layer), to the burning of fossil fuels. As argued, it can also be a natural trend. The Earth has gone through several cooling and warming cycles in its life, but none at the acceleration that we are now. Regardless, we can more likely agree on the things that *can* increase temperatures. So, let's focus on our human contribution (as small as some may think it is) and take responsibility.

Tip 3: How do we Stop Climate Change?

Rephrase: How do we reduce the effects of climate change?

Naturally or otherwise, stoppable or unstoppable, data shows that temperatures are warming, and the best science tells us that the risks are no longer a distant challenge, they have become immediate. With that, it is our duty to act in best intention of the foreseeable future. The first part is to reduce what we know *can* cause warming temperatures. The DNR is developing tools for managing and increasing natural carbon sequestration (absorbing of carbon by plants), and is committed to reducing its energy use 20% by 2015. Wild River State Park just installed solar panels to cut back 12 tons of carbon emissions from the park office alone. Our new hybrid vehicle will visibly burn less gas; and new LED lights, building insulation, and thermostats will allow us to use energy more efficiently. The second part of mitigating the effects of climate change is to acknowledge the imminent change and manage habitat differently. At this pace it's estimated that Wild River State Park will have climates similar to central Iowa in 2060 and that northeastern Minnesota will have climates like we're seeing at Wild River State Park today. Landscapes will change and species will move. So, the DNR is adapting for warmer days by assessing the vulnerability of habitats and species to climate change and acting to best protect and conserve those individually. An example of this is in restoring wetlands in the southwest for when ducks from the "prairie pothole" region of North Dakota move into Minnesota as expected near 2080. Invasive species, insects, and disease have become a state-wide priority as they are living longer and reproducing more with warmer winters. Whether it can be stopped or not, it's important that we take precautions against climate change while planning ways to reduce the effects it will have on the future of natural resources.

As stewards of the outdoors, you have or will find yourself in this conversation at some point, and I hope some of these angles will help direct the conversation into a less heated debate and game of blame. Take a step back, or out (into your backyard), and focus on the changes you're seeing at home and how we can best act to prevent and reduce the risk of damage to our woods, waters, prairies, and wildlife.



Species Spotlight

Fox Sparrow

Passerella iliaca

Another Unique Bird Settles at Wild River

Often seen hopping around in the leaf litter of dense thickets looking for insects, larvae or seeds. Notice its remote breeding territory on the map below where they nest on the ground or in crotches of trees. They are typically only seen during migration periods in Minnesota: one has only been documented 4 of 36 years of the Christmas Bird Count. They are identified by their rusty orange markings and are 6-7 inches long.




Wild River State Park CANDLELIGHT

❄️ *Ski • Snowshoe • Hike*



January 26, 2013
Ongoing 6-9 pm

Wild River State Park

FREE!

With a Minnesota State Park
Vehicle Permit

Featuring the following fun activities throughout the night:

- ◆ Raffle Prizes including a new set of skis, boots, and poles!
- ◆ Minnesota's largest prairie bonfire - to be lit at 5:45pm
- ◆ 6 miles of candle-lit ski, snowshoe, and walking trails for all abilities
- ◆ Live music at both the Visitor Center and Trail Center,
- ◆ Home-made cookies, cider and coffee (donations appreciated)
- ◆ Large Telescope for viewing the remarkable night sky -- led by Kenny Bahmer.
- ◆ Ski & Snowshoe rental available -- call the park for more info: 651-583-2125.
- ◆ Opportunities to get involved: Call Dave at 651-674-1526 to volunteer this night

IT'S WINTERTIME FUN FOR ALL AGES!

Friends, please cut this portion, then, hang this poster somewhere in your hometown or workplace to invite new Friends and visitors to Wild River State Park for this event!

The Calendar of Events

www.mndnr.gov/wildriver

January 19 Cross-country Skiing for Beginners	March 9, 10 Maple Syruping Workshop
January 20 Snowshoe Along the St. Croix	March 16 Pancake Breakfast & FWRSP Annual Meeting
January 26 21st Annual Candlelight Night	March 17, 23, 24 Maple Syruping Workshop
February 16 Snowshoe Along the St. Croix	
February 16 Full Moon & Folklore Snowshoe	Summer Guest Presenter Series and Events Will Be Posted on the DNR Web Calendar in late January!
February 24 Snowshoe Along the St. Croix See January 6 description for details	

Remember to Renew!

Membership dues are the Friends' main source of funding for programs that we sponsor at the park. Please send in the form at the right or sign-up online and help support the great programs Friends 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. Limited announcements and announcements will be sent, and you can request to be taken off at any time. Visit our website or contact info@friendsofwildriver.org to sign up for emails.

If you prefer to receive paper copies, we would be happy to do that also.



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
39168 Riverside Court
North Branch, MN 55056



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

www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org

Thank you for your support!