

Newsletter

www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org ■ info@FriendsOfWildRiver.org ■ 651-257-4414



Our Fall 5K Run/Walk: Fun, Healthy, and a Beautiful Course

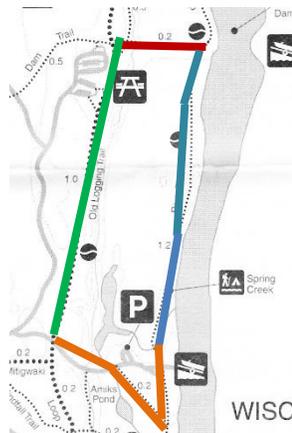
It's a wonderful time of year to get outdoors and take in some fresh air. And one of the most fun, healthy, and scenic things to do is held on the 2nd Sat. in October: the Wild River 5K Run (and also) Walk. It's our 3rd annual event and people of all ages and abilities take part: we had a record time turned in by Dan Carlson last year – 19 minutes flat, plus we had a few youngsters under 12 and seniors over 60. In addition there were a number of parents pushing their infants in strollers. Everyone can do it!

There are 4 legs to the route shown below. Here is a brief description of what you will see and enjoy on each while on this very beautiful course: **NORTH LEG** (in red): just after the start/finish line in the Picnic Area, this follows the Nevers Dam trail through a colorful forest. For much of the way you will be on top of the man-made dike that extends to the St. Croix where the actual dam was located.

EAST LEG (in blue): this is an amazing section which follows right along the west bank of the St. Croix River with the pristine forest on your right. Watch for otters, deer, bald eagles and many other birds.

SOUTH LEG (in orange): following the boat ramp, the trail opens up to the small Amik's Pond and native prairie. Check out the many wildflowers and native grasses in the open area plus ducks and other waterfowl on the pond.

WEST LEG (in green): returning to the forest after a small uphill section on the boat access road, you will be on the Old Logging Trail – a remnant from Minnesota's past logging industry. An upland woodland and wildflowers surround you until you get to the Finish Line back at the Picnic Area.



Registration information is on page 3 of this newsletter. Please join us on Oct. 11 and pass along this information to others so we have our biggest 5K Run/Walk ever! And if you have any questions at all, please contact the Friends chairperson for this event: Brad Bjorklund, poipubeach@aol.com, 651-253-3498.

From the President:

Yearly Events sponsored by the Friends

By Tom Dickhudt, Friends of Wild River State Park



The Friends of Wild River State Park sponsors a series of events during the year. The first event is Seegwan, the celebration of spring. The event is held the second Saturday in June and this

year, in addition to the annual native plant sale, a visit from the Raptor Center was featured. This year the Voyageurs Reenactment group once again did an authentic encampment at the visitor center. An opportunity was also provided for a guided bird walk and wildflower walk. Wild River is known for its prairie restoration efforts and as part of Seegwan seed collected in the fall is spread on the prairie. This is a fun event for adults and kids. Kids are great seed spreaders in that they love to throw the seed to the wind causing a very natural prairie as the seeds germinate.

Following the spring kickoff, park visitors can participate in the Wild River 5K Run, the candlelight ski and the annual membership breakfast featuring maple syrup from the park and the friends' famous pancakes. Each of these events provide an opportunity for adults, children and grandchildren to take a pause from the motorized digital world that dominates our daily lives and enjoy a more relaxed environment.

Where is it?

The signs probably give this location away, plus it's a very popular area in the Park.



Find the answer to this "Where is it?" on Page 6.

Due to budget concerns, the park lacked a staff naturalist for a good portion of the year. During this period the friends group became very aware of the importance of the naturalist position. Although the friends provide volunteers and some financial support for park programs, it is the staff naturalist that provides the leadership and coordination as well as the creativity that make the programs successful and an educational experience for park visitors. Thank you to those who have served or are now serving in that position.

Naturalist Notes

By Mike Dunker, Park Naturalist



Hello from Wild River State Park!

This summer has been a whirlwind of activity since I hit the ground running just a few days before Memorial weekend. School groups, scouts, families, campers, organizations and more have stopped out to see the wonderful destination we call Wild River State Park. Whether they are here to relax on a camping trip, recreate for the day or are just stopping by on the way to another destination, it's interesting to meet such a wide variety of individuals who connect to the park in different ways.

Since I started at the park just a few months ago, I have been amazed and grateful for the staff and volunteers that put so much time and effort into making this a special place for visitors. The DNR Parks and Trails Division mission statement is: *Our vision is 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.* When meeting so many of the Friends of Wild River in the first few weeks as they introduced themselves, I also heard of lot of stories of what the park means to you and your connection to it.

Two program items in the park stick out for me this summer as being this connection. The first is the live snakes in the Visitor Center. They always seem to illicit a response. Whether it be the big smiles and wide eyes as visitors get a chance to touch them and even hold them, or the cringing in the background from those who would rather be waiting in another room. Let's be honest, some of them do wait in the other room. But more often than not, the fear of the snakes fades as they began to learn more about them and seeing them a bit differently as children and adults hold them. The moment when the same individuals that were terrified of this bullsnake are holding her and asking questions about the snake research in the park let me know they made a little connection to Wild River State Park.

The other is the Prairie Care program. I have been able to work with groups and volunteers through a number of aspects this summer. In spring, school groups, clubs and individuals came out to help sow seed after the prescribed burns this spring in the park. Stopping for occasional teaching moments, these visitors were able to help in the restoration process of these prairie and savanna areas. Other volunteers began picking seeds mid-summer as species stewards helping to increase our seed stock of plants that are a little tougher to get to with a group or are a bit more valuable. Even other groups came out to help with resource management. Pulling spotted knapweed and deheading common mullein are important parts of the restoration and removing invasive species within the park. No matter what the task, the individuals involved made some connection to the park.

The best part of being a naturalist in the state park is often being the one that sees and helps with these experiences, but I'm sure every one of you has had that same opportunity. I have seen it in the visitor center hosts, volunteers, park staff and more as you share your experience with others. This is the reason we have so many people return to Wild River State Park. We have made that unforgettable experience.

See you at your Park real soon!

New Procedure for Checks to Friends

The Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota (PTC, www.parksandtrails.org) is the fiscal agent for our organization, "the Friends of Wild River State Park." Effective July 1, 2014, PTC, a non-profit fiscal host for many local parks and trails organizations, has instituted new procedures to ensure that who donate money to the Friends receive proper tax credits for their donations or memberships. Instead of writing your membership or donation to "Friends of Wild River State Park," you should write your checks to "Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota," with the notation in the memo field that it is for our friends group, "Friends of WRSP," and below that notation, the purpose of check, e.g. "donation," "membership," or other reason. In turn, PTC will issue checks on our behalf to individuals, groups or organizations providing approved programming at Wild River State Park.

If you have any questions, contact Bob Walz, Treasurer of Friends of WRSP: 651-674-2587 or walzr@izoom.net.

Species Spotlight

Sandhill Crane

Latin Name: *Grus canadensis*

Habitat: They are birds of wet meadows and open landscapes, and migrate south for the winter.

Height: around 5 feet.

Wingspan: 7 feet.

Color: Mainly gray, except for a white face and distinctive red crown. The young are brown.

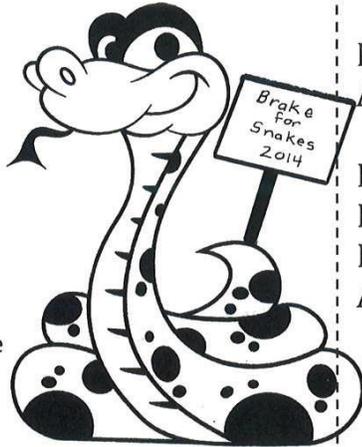
Population: Sandhill cranes are a protected species in Minnesota, but it is legal to hunt them in part of northern Minnesota during the sandhill crane hunting season each year.

Notes: They are conspicuous large birds, standing around five feet tall with seven foot wingspans. They make loud bugling calls that echo through a wide area. Sandhill cranes nest in wetlands in the state, notably at Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge near Little Falls. In Wild River, watch for them in the wetlands around Amik's Pond and similar areas near the St. Croix River. Other good locations to watch cranes are the Carlos Avery Wildlife Mgmt. Area in Anoka and Chisago Counties, and Crex Meadows near Grantsburg, WI.



Friends of Wild River State Park
 third annual
wild river run
 Snake Slither 2014! **Wild River 5K Run/Walk**

Take a walk or run under the fall colors and along the St. Croix River at Wild River State Park, and on one of the most beautiful 5K courses in the state! This 3rd annual event will take you on both paved and unpaved surfaces. Awards will be given to the top finishers, plus all those under 12 will receive a nice prize. Registration is available on the day of the race, but at a discounted price before Oct. 1. T-shirts are available race day while supplies last. All proceeds go to the Friends of Wild River to help support park programs.



Early registration discount – register by **October 1!**

Race Day:

Saturday, October 11, 2014

Registration: **7:30-8:45** at Picnic Shelter.

Race begins at **9 a.m.**

Wild River State Park

39797 Park Trail

Center City, MN 55012

(15 miles east of North Branch, 12 miles north of Taylors Falls)

651-583-2125



WILD RIVER STATE PARK
ALMELUND, MINNESOTA

SPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF WILD RIVER STATE PARK
 AND THE PARKS & TRAILS COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA

Saturday, October 11, 2014
 Registration: 7:30-8:45 am -- Race begins at 9 a.m.
 Wild River State Park

Sponsored by the Friends of Wild River State Park
 and the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email*: _____

Division: Female Male

Age: under 12 12-24 25-50 51 and over

T-Shirt Size: _____ (Requires a \$7 additional fee)

* Email will only be used to relay information regarding the Wild River Run
 Check here to be added to park and Friends email lists.

Cost: Before October 1, 2014: \$15 (\$22 with T-shirt)
 After October 1/Race Day: \$25 (\$35 with T-shirt)
Friends Member Discount Free T-Shirt (\$7 discount)

Amount Paid: \$ _____

A \$5 daily or \$25 annual Minnesota State Park permit is required on all vehicles entering the park – not included in the Wild River 5K Run registration fee.

Please write a check made out to our fiscal agent "Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota" with "Friends of Wild River 5K" in the memo field, then mail this form to:



Friends of Wild River State Park, c/o Jan Kozlovsky
 re: Wild River 5K Run
 17190 410th St
 North Branch, MN 55056

The Wild River 5K Run will route participants on both paved and non-paved surfaces. By participating in this event, you understand the risks involved with trail running and individually take all precautions necessary. Should injury occur, the Friends of Wild River State Park, nor the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, nor Wild River State Park will be held liable.

Call 651-583-2125 x227 (Mike Dunker) with questions.

Signature of understanding the terms of liability: _____

Upcoming Activities and Events

Autumn is a wonderful time of year to get outdoors and take in some fresh air. Naturalists at the park have activities planned practically every weekend to show you the best of fall. And for a full list of Minnesota State Park activities, visit us at www.mndnr.gov/wildriver.

Regular Park Events

- Sept. 27: Fall Colors Walk @ 2:00 in the Visitor Center
- Sept. 28: Fall Colors Canoe Paddle @ 9:00 at the Sunrise boat landing (\$10 cost)
- Oct. 4: Harvest Time – Seed Collecting @ 2:00 in the Visitor Center
- Oct. 11: Wild River 5K Run – see pages 1 and 3
- Oct. 17-18: Wild “Shiver” Weekend

Details can be found at
www.mndnr.gov/wildriver/calendar.html

Friends-sponsored Main Events

At the Friends Board meeting on July 31st it was recommended by the Park Manager and others that we should set a standard schedule for our five main events. This would help in setting the schedules for the DNR staff at the park, plus it would aid the Friends membership and the general public in remembering the dates. It was decided to hold these main events on the 2nd Saturday of the month in which they are usually held. So, for 2015 the dates are:

- Feb. 14: Candlelight Ski/Snowshoe/Hike
- March 14: Pancake Breakfast and Annual Meeting
- June 13: Seegwan – Celebration of Spring
- July 11: St. Croix River Canoe Cleanup
- Oct. 10: Wild River 5K Run/Walk

Annual St. Croix River Canoe Cleanup makes a difference



On July 12, twenty-one volunteers took part in the annual St. Croix River Cleanup held in cooperation with the Friends of Wild River State Park. Once again, Boy Scout troop 242 returned to help, bringing along new troop members and their families.

Gary Noren started the day with a brief talk on behalf of the St. Croix River Association and shared the importance of the St. Croix River. Volunteers consisting of campers, local community members and the scout troop loaded up the canoes with plenty of plastic bags for the day. Aluminum cans, broken rods and reels, old camping equipment and other trash made it into the canoes.

A stop for lunch included a short naturalist program on the water quality of the St. Croix River. A little scooping for aquatic life in the river and some seine netting brought the point home to a few participants eager to get a little wet. When the group returned to the park's southern boat landing, the volunteers unloaded their collection of trash to show off numerous “treasures” to each other.

This fun and worthwhile event is held the 2nd Saturday in July every year. Please mark your calendars now to join us and you too can make a difference in the quality and enjoyment of the beautiful St. Croix River.



Little Free Library for WRSP

Wild River State Park will soon get the State Park System's first little free library (<http://littlefreelibrary.org/>). It will be located near the amphitheater (campground area). You may ask "what is a 'little free library?'" It's a "take a book, return a book" gathering place where park users will be able to share a book (or two) and bring back another book to share. We plan to stock it with books on birding, native plants, campfire stories and other books that park users might be interested in reading while they are at Wild River State Park.

Friends Vice President, Brad Bjorklund, is building the Little Free Library for the park. Bob Walz, Treasurer of the Friends, is collecting books for the Little Free Library and will monitor the Library once it is erected in the park. If you would like to donate books to the Little Free Library, you can leave them at the Visitors Center or put them into the Little Free Library. It is hoped that this will complement the Barb Ledbetter Nelson Memorial Reference Library in the Visitor Center, books that can be used, but not taken from the Visitor Center. The books in the Little Free Library are intended for you to take or exchange under the concept of "take a book, leave a book." For more information or to arrange for a donation, contact Bob Walz at 651-674-2587. An example of a little free library is shown below.



Monarch Butterfly Update

In last Fall's newsletter we had an article on the recent decline of monarch butterflies. There were a number of theories on why this is happening, the most commonly accepted of which were the loss of forest habitat in their central Mexican winter breeding grounds and the recent drought along the central US flyway.

In the latest edition of National Geographic (Aug. 19), it states "Although illegal deforestation and severe weather have contributed to the decline, research done by the World Wildlife Fund Mexico and the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve suggests that the overwhelming concern is U.S. farms' large-scale use of herbicides that destroy milkweed." It is our hope that these herbicides will be banned, but meanwhile please plant more milkweed and do not remove those plants that are currently on or near your property.

Sister Park relationship with Costa Rican Parks on Osa Peninsula

In 2013, Chris Stein, on behalf of the National Park Service, signed an agreement with the government of Costa Rica, establishing a "sister park" relationship ("hermanamiento") between 13 national parks in the Upper Midwest of the United States and 7 parks and preserves on the Osa Peninsula in southwestern Costa Rica. In January of this year Rotary District 5960 (eastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin) sent a "friendship exchange" to Costa Rica. This delegation visited many parks in Costa Rica and promoted the "sister park" initiative. Chris Stein invited other parks to join in this relationship. To that end, the Friends had planned to host a group from Costa Rica in early September. Unfortunately, this time period did not work out for the Costa Ricans. They are now looking at a May date in 2015.

The purpose of the sister park relationship is to exchange delegations, staff and ideas between parks here and those on the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica. An informal organization of people interested in this partnership was formed, "Tropical Wings." The name comes from the group's focus, the neo-tropic birds that migrate between our area and Costa Rica.

To learn more about or to join "Tropical Wings," contact Park Ranger, Jonathan Moore at jonathan.moore@nps.gov, 715-491-6839, Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, 401 North Hamilton Street, St. Croix Falls, WI 54024.

Stay Tuned to the Fall Colors!

Go to: www.mndnr.gov/fallcolors

If you're a Friend that lives far away and can't make it to see Wild River's spectacular show of colors, you don't have to miss out! Wild River staff and visitors will be posting weekly updates, including photos, to the Minnesota Parks and Trails website. For those of you that will be visiting the park during the upcoming months, please post your pictures and highlights for all of us to see!

Most of the deciduous trees in the park are oak, aspen, birch and basswood. To see a nice stand of maples, take the trail behind the entrance station that goes to Aspen Knob and our "Sugar Bush" used for maple syrup taps.



Thank you for your Membership

FWRSP Membership Options

- 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 Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota

Name:			
Address:			
City:			
State:		Zip:	
Email:			

We will never sell or trade your email address

Option 1: Mail above with check to:
Bob Walz, FWRSP Treasurer
 (make check out to "Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota"
 and put "Friends of Wild River membership" in memo field)
39168 Riverside Ct.
North Branch, MN 55056

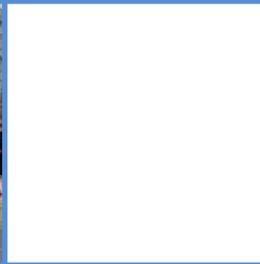
Option 2: Sign-up Online and use your credit card:

www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org

Photos from past Wild River 5K Runs/Walks



The Start



On Last Leg



A Family Event



A Big Finish!

Friends of Wild River State Park Board -- Working for You in 2014

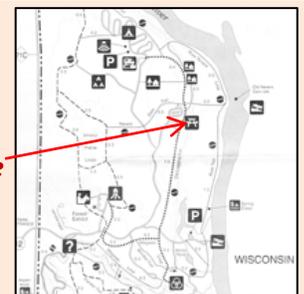
- President** Tom Dickhudt
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- Secretary** Jeske Noordergraaff
- Communications** Bob Kessen
- Past Presidents** Gary Noren
Dave Kozlovsky

- Board Members:**
- Bill Carlson Dave Crawford
- John Eret Dennis Johnson
- Tessa Hill Elizabeth Huselid
- Bonnie Patrick Jacque Zita

Answer to **WHERE IS IT?**

The Picnic Area: Start/Finish Line for the Wild River 5K Run/Walk

This photo is looking north from the northern-most section of the Old Logging Trail, and just 40-50 feet east of the main picnic shelter. It's the start/finish line for the Wild River 5K Run/Walk which we hope will be filled with participants on the morning of Saturday, Oct. 11.



It's here