



Newsletter

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



SEEGWAN Spring Celebration!

See Page 5 for a complete listing of activities.

June 13, 7:30 am – 4 pm

Seegwan Background & This Year's Programs

By Tom Dickhudt, President of the Friends

Seegwan is Ojibwe for spring and is the name of the the Friend's long running spring event. Long time board member Gary Noren recently sent me an account of the history and origin of this event. It dates back to the 1980's and was the result of the efforts of Gary Noren and Barb Nelson to find a suitable name for the proposed family spring day at the park. The Wild River Regional Environmental Education Council, area Audubon members and Wild River park staff were responsible for the first event and as the Friends of Wild River group developed, the event became one of the main activities of the group. Barb Nelson found an appropriate Ojibwe legend that captures the envisioned spirit of the event. The story is as follows:

PEBOAN AND SEEGWAN

LONG ago an old man sat alone in his lodge beside a frozen stream. The fire was dying out, and it was near the end of winter. Outside the lodge, the cold wind swept before it the drifting snow. So the old man sat alone, day after day, until at last a young warrior entered his lodge. He was fresh and joyous and youthful.

The old man welcomed him. He drew out his long pipe and filled it with tobacco. He lighted it from the dying embers of the fire. Then they smoked together.

The old man said, "I blow my breath and the streams stand still. The water becomes stiff and hard like the stones."

"I breathe," said the warrior, "and flowers spring up over the plain."

"I shake my locks," said the old man, "and snow covers the land. Leaves fall from the trees. The birds fly away. The animals hide. The earth becomes hard."

"I shake my locks," said the young man, "and the warm rain falls. Plants blossom. The birds return. The streams flow."

Then the sun came up over the edge of the Earth-plain, and began to climb the trail through the Sky-land. The old man slept. Behold! The frozen stream nearby began to flow. The fire in the lodge died out. Robins sat upon the lodge poles and sang.

Then the warrior looked upon the sleeping old man. Behold! It was Peboan, the Winter-maker.

The Seegwan celebration of spring will occur again this year on June 13. The St Croix Valley Camera Club will be part of this year's event with the theme of "Picturing Spring". Visitors to the park on that day are encouraged to bring cameras and smart phones or anything that will take a picture and join the Friends of Wild River and the camera club and park staff in celebrating spring in pictures.

The day will also feature the annual native plant sale, a visit and encampment from the voyageurs, the spreading of the seeds in the prairie, bird and wild flower hikes as well as a number of other activities.

Admission to the park on June 13 is free.

Snake Survey Help Needed

-- by Dave Crawford, former Park Naturalist, active Volunteer, and Friends Board member



Have you seen the "Brake for Snakes" signs in the park? The ongoing volunteer citizen science snake survey is in need

of more help. Volunteers play many roles, and one of them might be right for you: search for and photograph snakes; capture snakes and scan them for embedded microchips; radio track snakes; assist with other monitoring activities. Your participation will help fill gaps in scientific knowledge about elusive and little-known species. Training and team learning opportunities are provided. Incentive awards may be available for those who make significant contributions of time. Contact Dave Crawford at naturalistdave@hotmail.com for details.



Brake for Snakes!

SEEGWAN

PLUS

The St. Croix Valley Camera Club

Picture Spring at Wild River State Park!

Naturalist Notes

By Mike Dunker
Wild River State Park Naturalist



Getting Bird-Brained

Ah, May. It's the time of the year when trees leaf out, flowers bloom and birds make their first local appearance after a winter in the south. For warbler watchers, it is also a time to see these spring migrants come through the park for a week or two.

Personally, I need to prepare each spring if I intend to stay ahead of the warbler rush and be ready to answer questions from park users. It's like a training regimen that athletes use to prepare themselves. True, very little of it is physical. Other than a few arm curls to get my arms in shape for quick binocular or camera raises, it's all about getting my brain a little "birdier" than usual.

First off comes the migration research. My main source for schedules, date, sightings and more is the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union website at <http://moumn.org>. They use previous year's migration patterns to predict the start and end of many of our Minnesota migrant species. You can also find out up-to-date sightings and locations by subscribing to a MOU group. These daily reports are handy to find out which county has had sightings and gives you an idea when would be the best chance you may have of seeing them in your area. This is also a helpful spot if you are looking to find out where the snowy owls have been sighted during the winter.

After I know when the birds will be coming, then I need to go through and remind myself what they look like. Among less serious birders, the first wave of sparrow species produces a number of "LBJs" on the ground. (Also known as those "Little Brown Jobbers"). Small distinguishing field marks and calls separate them, as they do for the many warbler species that arrive shortly after them. This is when I pull out my bird field guides and study them. Look at pictures, memorize field marks. If I'm lucky, I may even remember one of them while I'm out in the field.

The problem I face and you may face it as well, is that the leaves often return before the birds do. This creates a little issue of actually seeing these feathered migrants. It becomes important to know the songs and calls. I have purchased a CD or two that I start playing around the end of March to refresh my brain. In fact, I've gotten into the habit of playing it in my vehicle when I'm on the road so that it may subliminally soak into my brain and I'll recognize the sound instantly. Surprisingly, this has worked very well. As soon as I hear one of these birds calling when I'm out in the park, I recognize it from the CD. Not surprisingly though, I only remember that it is indeed on the CD and don't remember which bird it actually was.

If you are more of the last minute cram student, you can skip the CDs and books and head to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website at www.allaboutbirds.org. You can use their bird guide which includes pictures, calls and information all in one place. It also works great to identify your bird photos or ID what is at your feeder or bird bath.

Regardless of how serious of a birder you are or how much preparation you want to put into spring migrant season, Wild River State Park is an incredible place to see birds. Check out one of the birding kits from the Visitor Center if you don't have your own binoculars or field guide. You can also relax inside the Visitor Center and watch the bird feeder with a cup of coffee if you prefer. There is also a phenology sheet posted to share your sightings with other park visitors.

Good luck birding and I hope to see you out at the park!

Species Spotlight

Golden-winged Warbler

(*Vermivora chrysoptera*)



Description: A small warbler, measuring 11.6 cm (4.6 in) long and weighing 8–10 g (0.28–0.35 oz). The male has black throat (suggestive of the throat patch of a chickadee), black ear patch bordered in white, yellow crown and wing patch. Females feature a similar coloration pattern, but the black is replaced with light grey. In both sexes, extensive white on the tail is conspicuous from below.

Notes: Golden-winged warblers are Minnesota snowbirds. These warblers spend three to four months, from mid-May to mid-September, in Minnesota before heading south. Golden-winged warblers breed in open scrubby areas, wetlands, and mature forest adjacent to those habitats. They feed on spiders and insects, most often leaf-roller caterpillars.

The song is highly variable, but is most often heard as a trilled *bzzzzzz buzz buzz buzz*. The call is a buzzy *chip* or *zip*.

Calendar of Events

Live Frogs and other Amphibians

May 30: 11 - 12 am at the Visitor Center, with Rancy Korb.

Wild edible and medicinal plants of MN/WI

June 7: 10 – 11:30 am at the Visitor Center, with Dr. Kelley Haggenbuch

FWRSP “Seegwan” Events

June 13: all day throughout the Park – see page 1 and page 5 of this Newsletter for more information.

Native Plant Sale

June 13: 9 am – 3 pm at the Park Entrance.

Snake Behavior and Research

July 11: 1 – 2:30 pm at the Visitor Center, with former Wild River State Park Naturalist Dave Crawford.

Universe in the Park

July 18: 8:30 pm near the amphitheater, with members of the Institute for Astrophysics.

Bruce the Bug Guy

July 25: 1 - 2 pm at the Visitor Center, with Bruce Giebink from the Bug Zone, featuring live insects.

Archery in the Park

Aug. 8: 10:00 - 2:00 at the Picnic area.

Mushrooms 101

Aug. 22: 10:00 - 11:30 at the Visitor Center, with Dr. Kelley Hagenbuch from Taylors Falls.

Monarch Tagging

Sept. 7: 11:00 - 12:30 at the Visitor Center, with long-time butterfly gardener and educator Randy Korb, and in coalition with the Monarch Watch program.

Archery in the Park

Sept. 26: 10:00 - 2:00 at the Picnic area.

*For more info and activities go to friendsofwildriver.org
or mndnr.gov/wildriver*

Cleanup Our St. Croix on July 11

The Friends announce their 4th annual St. Croix River canoe trip and cleanup scheduled for Saturday, July 11th. We'll be cleaning the St. Croix River between the Sunrise Landing and the main boat landing within the park.

Seven canoes are available for free! Call 651-583-2125 x227 to reserve yours today. Bring a lunch, water, gloves, insect repellent, sunscreen, dress for all weather (we'll clean rain or shine, but cancel for lightning), and prepare for a good time. We'll meet at 9 am at the main boat landing in the park and be shuttled north to Sunrise. If you're bringing your own canoe or kayak, drop it at the Sunrise landing where a Friends member will watch it while you drive your vehicle to the take-out at the main landing then take our shuttle back. If you're not up for canoeing, we can always use help cleaning the landings!

This event is open to all Friends members and anyone else interested in canoeing and cleaning the river. It is part of the St. Croix River Association's River Awareness and Cleanup Week, July 11-19. Watch your local newspapers and the SCRA's website at www.stcroixriverassociation.org for other River Awareness events.



The 2014 Cleanup Crew

Enjoy summer on the
CLEAN St. Croix River!

WHERE IS IT?

Do you know where in Wild River State Park this picture was taken?
Hint: it's not in the main campground.

Answer on page 6.



Prescribed Burns Helping the Park Prairies

By Mike Dunker, Wild River State Park Naturalist

If you have been to Wild River State Park in the last couple of weeks, you may have noticed a different appearance of the median next to the park office and the prairie area at the turn off to the Visitor Center. On April 23, both of these small sections underwent a prescribed burn to aid in cutting back invasive plants and restore some of the native species that were present.

Students and volunteers are also continuing to sow seeds here and in other prairie areas of the park this spring. This is continuing the long standing Prairie Care program started at Wild River State Park introducing the need for stewardship to generations of people. We are also having volunteers continuing work on garlic mustard and buckthorn removal.

A big thank you to all of you who have helped in continuing the restoration of the park through your volunteer time and labor!

A few photos:



Pollinator Species Pledge

By Bob Walz, Board Member of the Friends of Wild River

Wild River State Park is part of the St. Croix River Watershed. The Watershed has initiated a "Pollinator Species" pledge to increase and improve pollinator habitat.

We have witnessed a significant decline in prairie (99% decline) and pollinator habitat and a resultant 90% decline in pollinators. The Monarch, our state's official butterfly, is seeing a dramatic drop in its numbers, and the Karner Blue, a neotropical butterfly, is endangered.

The Watershed is distributing a pollinator species resolution which we are encouraging you to sign. Forms are available from Jonathan Moore of St. Croix National Riverway, jonathan.moore@nps.gov or by phone at 715-491-6839 or from me, Bob Walz.

The Master Gardeners of Chisago County are considering making a demonstration pollinators' garden at the entrance of the park.

To learn more about the pollinator pledge, call Jonathan or check out this web site:

<http://www.xerces.org/pollinatorprotectionpledge/>.



FREE

Park Admission This Day!

Picture Spring at

SEEGWAN

June 13 2015

* Ojibwe word for Spring

Audubon Bird Walk

7:30 am

Voyageur Encampment

9 am – 3 pm

Native Plant Sale

9 am – 3 pm

Photography Hikes

9, 11 am, 1 pm

Wild Edibles & More

10 – 11:30 am

Selfie Photo Geocache

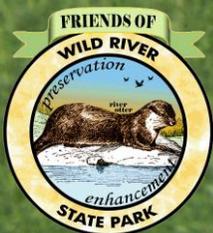
1 pm

Annual Prairie Seed Sow

3 pm – 4 pm



This year, make sure to bring your camera out to Seegwan as the St. Croix Valley Camera Club will be out to assist the Friends of Wild River State Park in order to provide activities for all levels of camera users. Picture spring at Wild River State Park!



www.mndnr.gov/wildriver
www.friendsofwildriver.org



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:
 Friends of Wild River State Park
 c/o Bob Walz, Treasurer
 39168 Riverside Ct.
 North Branch, MN 55056

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



The Maple Syrup / Sap Boiling Program

March/April 2015



Answer to **WHERE IS IT?**

Site #10 at the Group Camp

One of 9 large sites available for groups like scouts, church organizations, or extended families to reserve. Each accommodates up to 18 people and are for tents only. You have to walk varying distances (150 to 850 feet) from the parking area to your nicely secluded site. The area includes a hand pump for water and vault toilets. The location is in a small woods off of Amador Prairie and the main park road in the center of the park with easy access to many trails.



It's here

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!

If you know anyone passionate about supporting our state parks and trails and is interested in enhancing their experiences at Wild River State Park, invite them to join the Friends! And if you are already a member, why not join the Board and help organize and work at many of the events we sponsor, including: the Candlelight Ski in Feb., Annual Meeting and Pancake Breakfast in March, Seegwan in June, and the 5K Run/Walk in Oct. Please contact the President of the Board – Tom Dickhudt – at 651-257-4414 for more information.