

Friends of Wild River State Park

Newsletter

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Winter 2019



23 Years of Minnesota Winter Fun

Annual Candlelight Night returns February 9

By Dave Kozlovsky

Save the date for our annual Candlelight Night event, which will be held on Saturday, February 9, 2019, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Wild River State Park. The first Candlelight Night was held in 1997, making this our 23rd annual event.

Depending on snow conditions, there will be up to 6 miles of trails illuminated for cross country skiing, snowshoeing or walking. Regardless of snow conditions the evening's activities will take place. There will be live entertainment at the Visitor Center as well as cookies, treats, and hot drinks to warm you up. (Your free will offering for the goodies will be appreciated by the Friends. And thanks to Kwik Trip for the donation of cookies.)

Out in the prairie west of the Trail Center, there will be a gigantic bonfire the size of a house! If there is a clear sky, an astronomer will have his telescope out to peruse the winter sky. If the conditions are right and you don't have your own equipment, you can rent snowshoes or cross-country skis from Wild River Ski Rental located at the Trail Center at Wild River

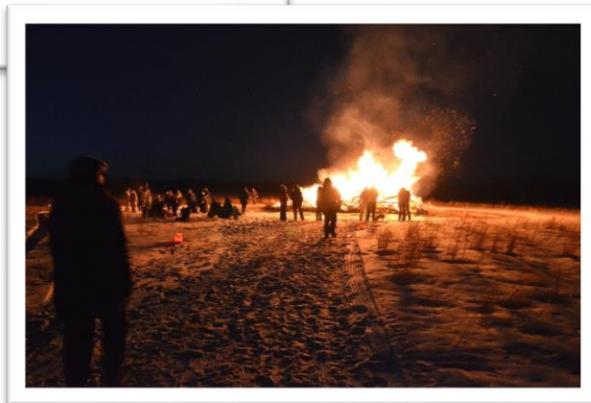
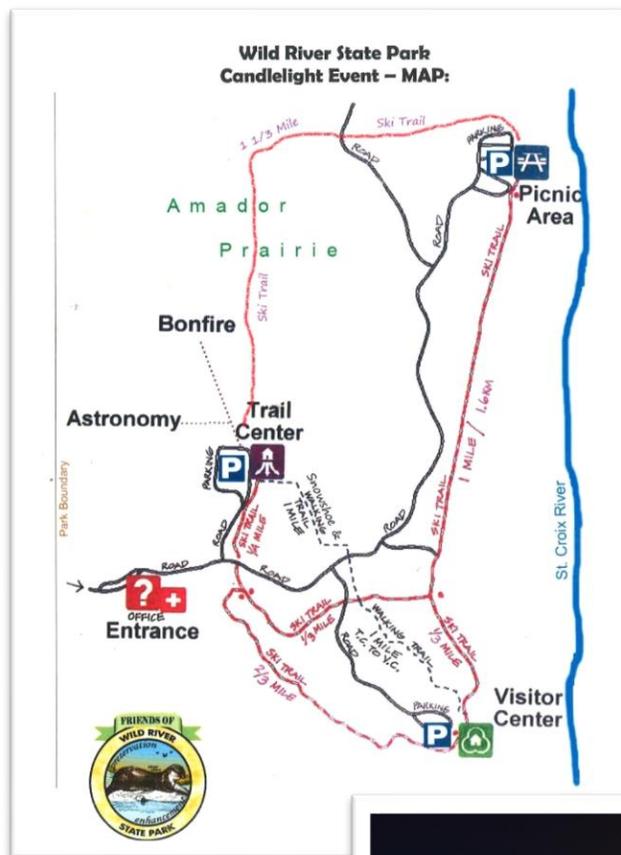
State Park. If you want to rent for that evening, since demand can be high, you can reserve your equipment by calling 651-257-0685. Also, a big thanks to Wade Vitalis, owner of Wild River Ski Rental, who has donated ski packages to the Friends for many years!

There is no charge for the event, but vehicle state park passes and cross-country ski passes are required.

As placing and maintaining up to 6 miles of luminaries can be quite a chore, for the last 15+ years, up to 60 members of the North Branch High School National Honor Society have helped us with Candlelight Night.

Candlelight Night has become quite an undertaking and it takes a "team" effort from the Wild River State Park staff, the Friends of Wild River State Park, and the North Branch High School National Honor

Society. Please come out on Saturday, February 9, from 6 to 9 p.m. and help us celebrate Minnesota winter!



From the President:

Visit a beautiful resource

By Brad Bjorklund, Friends of Wild River State Park president



Rather than promote Friends, let's think about an amenity or two the Park has to offer. Having lived close to the Park for many years, I have first-hand knowledge of its source of quiet and for being alone.

Located just far enough from the Metro, on just about any day of the year, you may walk trails and be completely alone. The near perfect quiet can be soul reaching and refreshing from the daily electronic ablation and noise interruption we all suffer.

Then there is deep darkness. It's not available at all in the Metro. A short walk to a prairie from camp spot or cabin is an inexpensive immersion into the deep and the larger universe. A recent issue of the Minnesota Conservations Volunteer magazine, produced by the Minnesota DNR, highlights our lack of darkness. Darkness is an important thing in nature and to us all. Our loss of darkness should not be taken lightly.

Coming to Candlelight Night at the Park on February 9, can safely introduce you to the above. Humor and joy aside. Attending our Annual Meeting, March 9, allows you to see the place, enjoy the place and have a pancake breakfast on us.

Breakfast's on us!

Join the Friends of Wild River and park staff on Saturday, March 9 for a pancake breakfast and the Annual Meeting at the Wild River State Park Visitor Center. The day starts with pancakes at 9 a.m. – our famous secret recipe organic buttermilk pancakes. The Annual Meeting will follow at 10 a.m. with reports from the Friends Board of Directors, plans for the upcoming year, presentation of the annual "Wild Friend" award, and much more! Remember that a vehicle permit is required to enter the state park. For more information go to friendsofwildriver.org.

Treasurer's Update

By Jan Kozlovsky, treasurer

A full financial report will be given at the annual meeting on March 9. Here are a few items of interest:

- Proceeds from Silent Auction at Apple Festival: \$355
- Proceeds from 5K race/walk: \$800.11

Both of the above have been earmarked for the amphitheater.

- Dues-paying members in 2018: 48
- Dues collected in 2018: \$2945

In January I will be using form 990N e-postcard to file with IRS. Since the Friends is now its own fiscal agent, annual filing is required, though of course no taxes will need to be paid.

Where skis and snowshoes fail to travel

The local effects of climate change

By Mike Dunker, Interpretive Naturalist at Wild River State Park

With the candlelight event just a few weeks away, the snow situation at Wild River State Park looks a little dire. We have yet to do any grooming on the trails and there really is no need for snowshoes midway through January. But like many of you, this is starting to feel more like the norm rather than an unusual winter. Why? Yup, I'm going to say it: Climate Change.

This last year I have been attending additional workshops and receiving information on climate change for the state parks. Some of the information is interesting for groups like the Friends of Wild River State Park who have a vested interest. On a resource level, Minnesota State Parks and Trails are more than just campgrounds. Of parks and trails lands in the state, only 5% is developed while 95% is managed to restore and maintain native plant communities and associated wildlife communities.

So many of you are regular visitors to the park and have seen the changes year after year as I have. Increasing precipitation and heavy or "mega-rain" events have affected our river trips and paddling. From 1973 to 2016 we had eleven heavy rain events in Minnesota. Eight of those have been since the year 2000. This has caused closure of trails due to flooding, cancelling of canoe programs plus erosion and damage to facilities and resources.

So what about our candlelight event? Our DNR climatology expert has shared charts and PowerPoints with me showing that winter is where some of the biggest effects are taking place. Since 1970, winters are warming 13 times faster than summer. This is especially noticeable in the winter lows. With warmer temperatures, our winter precipitation is more rain and less of that white, fluffy stuff so many of us like to ski and snowshoe in during the winter months.

Each year as we sit down and look at our luminary route, we decide which routes and how many miles of trail are accessible for skis, snowshoes and just plain walking. The last few years we have been using the "low snow" route. Currently, no snow is predicted for the foreseeable future. But we all know the weather in Minnesota can be quite unpredictable. Climate, on the other hand, looks to be following a nasty trend.

The DNR has recently updated its climate page with lots of new resources and information. More is coming for individual parks like Wild River, but if you want to check out the new information, go to:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/index.html>.

A few wintry moments...



Photos courtesy of Kris Backlund Assistant Park Manager

Spruced up!

By Kris Backlund, Assistant Park Manager

Last winter, a familiar sight, the Wild River State Park entrance sign, was rehabbed. All portions of the sign were removed, repaired and repainted. Larger beams had to be moved with our skid steer. Park staff and STS crew members joined forces to reset the beams in their proper place. The end result was a brighter welcome to Wild River State Park.



Another race for the books!

Thank you to everyone who came out for the 7th Annual Otter Trotter 5K on October 13, 2018! More than 50 runners came to Wild River State Park for the run, despite the cold temps, and runners still enjoyed the beautiful fall views the park had to offer. The 2019 Otter Trotter will take place on Saturday, October 12, 2019, so mark your calendars. To see more pictures from the 2018 race, visit our Facebook page.



Photos by Marjorie Otto

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



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

(We will never sell or trade your email address.)

Option 1: Mail above with check to:
 Jan Kozlovsky, FWRSP Treasurer
 (make check out to "Friends of Wild River State Park")
 17190 410th St.
 North Branch, MN 55056

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

www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org

We will never sell or trade your email address

Upcoming events

- February 9, 2019 – Candlelight Night, 6 p.m.
- March 9, 2019 – Pancake breakfast and Annual Meeting, 9 a.m.
- Weekends, March 10-30 – Tapping the Magnificent Maple – join Park Naturalist Mike Dunker to learn about the various stages of tapping and making maple syrup. Each weekend will be a different topic and stage. Visit the DNR website for more details and to sign up.
- April 27, 2019 – Sights and Sounds of Spring hike, 1-2:30 p.m.

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