

Friends of Wild River State Park

Newsletter

Fall 2019



www.FriendsOfWildRiver.org ■ info@FriendsOfWildRiver.org ■ 651-253-3498

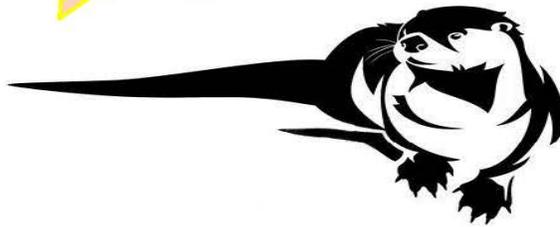
Friends of Wild River State Park

Annual Fall

wild river run

Otter Trotter!

5k

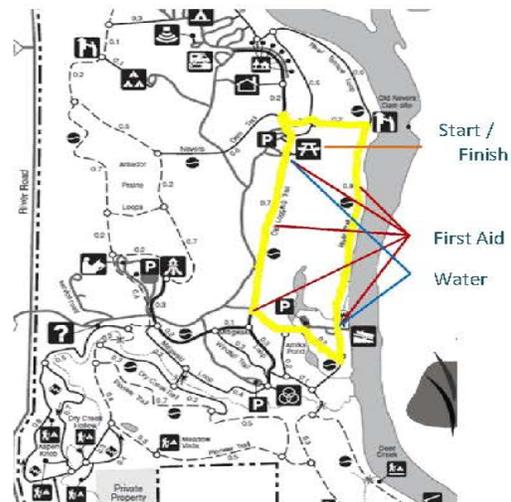


Join us on October 12!

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 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. See page 2 of this newsletter for a registration form or register online at www.friendsofwildriver.org.
- T-shirts are available race day while supplies last.
- All proceeds go to the Friends of Wild River to help support park programs and improvements.

RACE ROUTE:



Wild River State Park

39797 Park Trail
Center City, MN 55012
651-583-2125

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



Friends of Wild River State Park
 Eighth Annual
Wild River Run
 Otter Trotter 2019!



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 8th 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 for sale when you pre-register before Oct. 1; some will be available after Oct. 1 and on Race Day while supply lasts.
- **New for 2019:** T-shirts are Long Sleeve and made from Moisture Wicking material.

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

Race Day:

Saturday, October 12, 2019

Registration: **8:30-9:45** at Picnic Shelter.

Race begins at **10 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)

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

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



Wild River 5K Run/Walk

Saturday, October 12, 2019

Registration: 8:30-9:45 am -- Race begins at 10 a.m.

Wild River State Park

Note: You can also register online at FriendsOfWildRiver.org
 and payment there is by credit card through PayPal.

Main Contact Info:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

--- Check here to be added to the Park and Friends email lists.

Individual Runner Info:

Name	Male/Female	Age Group	T-shirt Size
		0-11, 12-30, 31-45, 46-60, 61 and over	none, S, M, L, XL, XXL
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Cost Each: Before October 1, 2018: \$20 (\$36 with Long Sleeve T-shirt)
 After October 1/Race Day: \$25 (\$41 with Long Sleeve T-shirt)

Total Amount Paid: \$ _____

A \$7 daily or \$35 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 "Friends of Wild River State Park" with "5K Run" in the memo field, then mail this form to:

Friends of Wild River State Park, c/o Jan Kozlovsky
 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. I hereby release Friends of Wild River State Park, Wild River State Park/DNR, and Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota—including their officers, event partners, organizers, associated entities, and any or all persons including volunteers connected with the event—from liability for injuries or damages to my person or property arising out of my participation.

Signature of understanding the terms of liability:



River Clean-Up a success

The Friends of Wild River and volunteers spent a day on the St. Croix River on July 13 cleaning up any trash along the way. The group started at the Sunrise Landing and ended at the Wild River Landing. The river was relatively clean and it was a great day for a paddle! If you'd like to help out, the annual River Clean-Up event takes place on the second weekend of July each year.

Candlelight Night returns February 8!



The snow isn't flying yet, but it's never too early to starting planning for Candlelight Night. The annual cross-country ski, snowshoe, and hiking event has been taking place every year since 1997, making it the oldest continuous event of its kind sponsored by a state park in Minnesota. Take advantage of the dark winter evening to experience the state park by candlelight. The event also includes a large bonfire, entertainment, treats and more! Candlelight Night takes place with or without snow, so make your calendars now! The event is free, but a vehicle permit is required to enter the state park. For more information, check out our website at www.friendsofwildriver.org.

Adding Taylor to the Team by Kris Backlund, Park Manager

The Wild River management team is once again complete with the arrival of Assistant Manager Taylor Scott in July. Taylor has worked at state parks in just about every corner of the state during his lengthy career. Most recently, Taylor was the assistant manager at William O'Brien State Park. Taylor also recently served a one-year mobility assignment as the lead assistant manager at Interstate State Park, so he brings a broad base of knowledge of the St. Croix River Valley, and the state park system as a whole. Taylor will focus more on the day-to-day operations of the park, where he is well-suited to direct the park's maintenance team. Before he even had a chance to get settled, Taylor was called upon to work a long day clearing trees off roads following the July 19 storms that toppled numerous trees in the park. We are pleased to have Taylor on staff at Wild River. Stop and introduce yourself if you haven't met Taylor already.

The Friends at the Almelund Apple Festival

Making walking sticks from buckthorn was the featured activity at the Friends' booth at the Almelund Apple Festival on Sunday, September 15. Bark from the green sticks is easily removed with table knives. Not only was this a fun activity but also a way to engage visitors and spread the word about the invasive nature of buckthorn.

The Friends' booth also included displays highlighting the annual activities of the group, including the Candlelight Night event, the 5K Run/Walk, the river clean-up, and annual pancake breakfast. Highlighted this year was Seegwan: A Celebration of Spring, the annual event that marked the



Connor, Kylee, and Caden Kolinski making buckthorn walking sticks.

beginning of this Friends group. Also included was information about the tree cage building grant and the youth engagement grant received this year from the Parks and Trails Council as well as transportation grants available to help youth groups visit the park. At this printing the results of the silent auction are not know. Hopefully the auction was successful and added to the funds being saved for the amphitheater replacement project. The Apple Festival is always a fun community event. We are happy to be able to participate.

The return of Seegwan!

Seegwan: A Celebration of Spring, returned this June after a few years of hiatus. The event on June 8 included a snake presentation by Dave Crawford, a woods and wildflowers walk with park naturalist Mike Dunker, and a concert by local musician Mark Keating.

Photos courtesy of Gary Noren



BOUNCING.....BABY.....BULLSNAKES!

By Kris Backlund, Park Manager

Often in the animal world, spring is the season for births and babies. But the reptile world turns that notion upside down, as fall brings a baby boom. Wild River is home to five species of snakes. Egg-layers like the bullsnake lay their eggs underground primarily in June. Between two to three months later, the hatchlings, like those to the right, emerge, making for a challenging game of hide and seek for those of us who are helping with bullsnake research at Wild River. Like other reptiles, snakes are prolific reproducers, laying many eggs,



so that a fraction will survive until adulthood. Finding dozens upon dozens of bullsnake hatchlings on a recent cool and cloudy day surprised me. It is also rewarding to know that this Special Concern species in Minnesota has valuable habitat at Wild River State Park. So the next time you see those “Bake for Snakes” signs at Wild River, watch for bullsnakes and other snakes in the park, and give them a chance to live a long life reducing the rodent population in the park and surrounding area.

Sharing our stories

Mike Dunker, Park Naturalist

I have always seemed to have a knack for storytelling. Not that I ever used it to get out of trouble as a kid, but it did give me a chance to build my imagination and creativity. I spent so much of my time building my imagination and character as a young lad; I had to get a number of county construction permits before the age of 10. My imagination alone had to build a pole shed just to hold extra pieces of my character.

That skill has transferred well into my work at the park. Evening campfire programs allow me to tell tales, myths, legends, and other exciting stories to campers. In each one, I try to relate it to the park in some way. This summer, however, the way I looked at storytelling changed.

While attending a meeting of interpretive naturalists this spring, we had a number of sessions with members of the Anishinaabeg or Ojibwe people. Something that stuck with me as I listened to them was the value they place on their story. In fact, it is customary to give them a small gift when asking them to speak to a group or asking them to share their personal background with you. The story they share is who they are and in sharing it, you are actually getting a piece of them to take with you.

It hit me how little value I put on my own personal stories I tell. My personal experiences really do help create who I am. Stepping out onto the trails, viewing the river from an overlook or even pausing a moment to watch a pollinator on a native wildflower touches my soul. When I share that feeling with others, I truly feel like I am sharing a bit of myself with them at that moment. They are seeing who I really am.

I quickly thought of social media. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter all provide an opportunity to share our story and who we are, but with a bit of anonymity. This allows most people to share a representation of who they want to be more than who they are, which is a bit disheartening. Maybe in this time and place, we don't even know our own stories anymore.

There is a reason my understanding of what it means to share a story is important. My job in a big way is telling the story of Wild River State Park. When hearing “park story”, many people immediately think of it is just sharing the history of the park. That is just a small part of the story. I truly feel the more time I spend here that this park is truly a living thing. It is more than the natural resources, the recreational opportunities and an overnight vacation spot for the public. It has a past, present and future.

Those that are close to me can share a little bit of my story, but nobody but myself really knows all of it. The more I explore and discover Wild River, I feel the same way. The work of park staff, volunteers and of course, Friends group members, have learned a bit of the park's story. In fact, you are actually a part of its story. Hopefully, you have made that connection to the park. In return, I also hope each of you have given something to the park in return for sharing who it is.

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



Help Wanted: Web Programming

Would you or someone you know want to volunteer a small amount of time to help with the website and database programming behind the Friends web site – FriendsOfWildRiver.org? Our Communications Officer, Bob Kessen, has been doing this for the past 8 years and would be happy to teach you the various languages and systems currently in use: HTML, JavaScript, PHP programming, and MySQL relational database. Most of the work is simple maintenance and usually takes only 2 or 3 hours a month at most. But sometimes we get a new project that can take a couple weeks or more – and these are real fun (according to Bob)! For more information, contact Bob at bobkessen9@gmail.com or call him at 651-462-8487. Thanks!

Like us on Facebook!



Search for "Friends of Wild River State Park."

Friends of Wild River State Park
 Bob Kessen
 31145 Genesis Ave
 Stacy, MN 55079-9417