

FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL & HOFFMAN HILLS NEWSLETTER



Number 35

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Tom Kilgore, Treasurer
Ron Pffner
Jane Butsic
Barb Gorman
Doug Voy
Dale Seppa, Newsletter Editor
(715) 233-5624

DNR ADVISOR

Jim Janowak, Trail Manager
(715) 232-1242

National Trails Day – June 2, 2007

With nearly perfect weather conditions, the annual celebration of National Trails Day (NTD) attracted many to the depot for the planned activities. Trail fees were waived for the day. In addition to biking, there were a number of other activities. Young and old alike enjoyed the nature walks on the trail led by Dennis Weibel (Volunteer Coordinator), and the children's program presented by Bill Dingwall of the West Wisconsin Land Trust. Pete May of Bad Cat Bicycles was there to answer questions about bicycle safety and, also, did some minor adjustments for a number of bicyclists. Adding to the atmosphere of the day was the musical talent of Jude Marion. The DNR provided booklets, pamphlets and posters on a number of related subjects. Also a number of prizes were awarded. Free lemonade and cookies were a treat after a day of biking. Also, on this day, the newly designed Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills T-Shirts were introduced. They can be purchased at the depot.

This event was very successful because of the coordination of the DNR and the efforts of a number of volunteers. Thanks to all!

Candlelight Ski – January 25, 2008

Again this coming winter, the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills will be sponsoring the popular Candlelight Ski/Walk event. Plan now to attend this event by either skiing on the Red Cedar State Trail or by walking on the Stokke Trail. There will be a bonfire, hot chocolate and prizes. It is a fun time for the whole family to experience the joys of winter. It will be Friday Night, January 25, 2008. Let's pray for snow!!

TRAIL MANAGER'S REPORT JIM JANOWAK, DNR

Ah yes, autumn in Dunn County, Wisconsin! As I write the colors are coming in very nicely. Generous amounts of wind and rain lately keep us busy as downed trees, limbs and leaves litter the trails but still what a wonderful setting to work in.

All three properties are beautiful this time of year but Hoffman Hills always grabs my attention most in the fall. The park contains a wide variety of habitat from hills to prairie to wetlands so the colors are not only in the trees but also in shrubs, native grasses and prairie forbs such as goldenrods and a wide variety of asters. And, of course, the view from the 60 foot observation tower on one of the highest points in Dunn County allows for perfect viewing of all this for miles in every direction. So if you are looking for a nice quiet place to do some fall hiking don't forget about the Hills.

As other articles in this newsletter can attest to it's been a busy year. Some great events, lots of hands on volunteer activities and helping out at the Depot Visitor Center are just a few of the ways people have been involved. Many have also been active with community concerns such as the county's bike route planning, Dunn County Community Visioning and the city's trail extension. Please keep in mind the influence we all can have as individuals. Our local elected officials depend on our input to make fully comprehensive decisions about the quality of life we have now and will have in the future. The influence of the Friends Group can have an even greater affect because of its long history and large constituency. Enjoy it and employ it. This year has been particularly gratifying because of the group's strength and its energy and activity. Thank all of you for all your help in making the trails and our community the best they can be.

Well it's time to enjoy the fall and prepare for winter. Have fun and be careful. We'll see you on the trails!

THANK YOU CORNER

The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills has always been blessed with the willingness of its members and the community to volunteer their time and help with projects. Some of these projects are highlighted in the volunteer coordinator's article of the newsletter. The Friends would like to recognize and thank two people who have been generously donating their time and expertise with several computer projects. Jim Tenorio has been assisting the Friends in designing a new logo and formatting files for quality, compatibility and consistency for use in several different areas. Joe Hagaman has been working on establishing a website for the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills. Jim and Joe's generous donation of time and expertise has occurred at a good time for the Friends' group. In the past several years, the Friends group has become more involved with Hoffman Hills, and consequently, we are in the process of changing our name to reflect this. The new logo and website will also reflect this change. Thanks Jim and Joe!

I DON'T KNOW... I ALWAYS FEEL SORT OF SAD WHEN I SEE THE SUN GO DOWN... - CHARLIE BROWN
LIKE WHEN YOU'VE EATEN THE LAST COOKIE... - SNOOPY
(FROM PEANUTS)

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR REPORT

DENNIS WEIBEL

The major volunteering efforts took place right inside the Visitor Center this year. Initially, volunteers gave the inside of the depot a badly needed new coat of paint. A dedicated group of individuals gave graciously of their time each week in order to staff the center. They sold passes, answered questions and kept the exhibits and building looking spiffy. A big thank you to all of them. If you would like to be a part of this fun and exciting experience next year, just let me know. We would love to have you be part of the team.

Eradicating invasive species came next on the long list of volunteer projects. The summer began with efforts to rid areas of the Stokke and Red Cedar Trails of Garlic Mustard. This plant is tenacious in its effort to “take over” the many native species found along the trails. A wonderful group of dedicated volunteers worked many hours and made some good headway before the plants went to seed, and work needed to stop for the season. You can bet we will be back at it next year – but a bit earlier, I hope.

The other major eradicating project was directed at Buckthorn. Once again, this aggressive invasive is pushing aside many of our native shrubs, trees and forbs. This stuff is way too big to pull, so a hardy group of volunteers attacked it with chainsaws, handsaws and clippers. The results of those efforts were truckloads and truckloads and truckloads of buckthorn, which were hauled away – hopefully to never be seen again. I liken the task of eliminating buckthorn from the entire trail, to emptying Lake Menomonie with my coffee cup. It seems impossible, but we need to forge ahead – each year eradicating more and more. Maybe we need to sing that famous song from the sixties, “We Shall Overcome” as we do it.

Some smaller, but no less important, efforts were directed towards the prairies. Woody invasives were cut from the depot prairie, and mullein was pulled from the one at Hoffman Hills.

Improvements were made to some exhibits at the Visitor Center. Hopefully, more efforts will be directed in this area next year.

The project I am most excited about is the establishment of a website for the Friends of the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills. Joe Hagaman has been working tirelessly on this. I guarantee you will hear more about it in the near future. The site gives our group the potential to reach out to trail users close and far. The possibilities are boundless.

There was an educational component to my position this year. The Friends group sponsored a number of interpretive walks along the trail that were well received by local residents. They also supported a biweekly column in the Dunn County News, called the Red Cedar Notebook, which featured species found along the trail.

The final project of the year has yet to start. A group of volunteers is waiting for the foliage to die back, before embarking on an effort to identify, clean, fix and rebuild the many bluebird houses found along the 14 miles of trail. Come spring, volunteers will monitor the houses and file their data with a national bluebird association.

All in all, it was a fun and productive season on the trail.

THE DEPOT VISITOR CENTER HOURS OF OPERATION

May 1 until Memorial Day, Labor Day through Oct.	Memorial Day through Labor Day
WeekdaysClosed	Weekdays10 A.M. – 4 P.M.
Saturday - Sunday 9 A.M. – 5 P.M.	Saturday - Sunday & Holidays 9 A.M. – 5 P.M

Please Note: The Depot is closed from November until May.

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP BARB GORMAN & TOM KILGORE

October is the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills business membership drive. The Friends appreciated the 2007 business members. These businesses include:

Bad Cat Bicycle

Cedar Corp

The Creamery

Gentle Dental Care, Lisa Joyce DDS

Dan Wood, DDS

Dunn County Energy Coop

The Medicine Shoppe

Gary Welch Construction

Legacy Chocolate

McCoy Development

Conagra

3M

Heritage Builders

Phil Steans S.C.

Silver Dollar Saloon

The generous support of the Dunn County businesses have helped provide funding for several projects that enhanced and improved the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills. It is amazing the number of people who use the trail; skiing, walking, biking, running, or just strolling along. The 9/16/07 edition of the Dunn County News highlighted a group of friends from Wausau who chose the Red Cedar State Trail for a bike trip. The group stayed overnight, went out to dinner and purchased gas, all from Dunn County businesses. The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills continues to look for ways to further highlight its business members. The Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills are not just tourism gems, but both are valuable assets to the health and well-being of our community. Users of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills should know about the generous and supportive business members.

The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills thanks the 2007 business members and hope each will renew for 2008.

TREASURER'S TIDBITS	TOM KILGORE
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Memberships through 10/1/07 have us with 29 "family" units, 11 "individuals," 6 "others" and 23 "lifetime" for dollar receipts of \$1,240.00. This will be bolstered soon when the "Business" membership mailings go out.

We have received Trail Pass revenue of \$1,500 and "T" Shirt / books / patches revenue of \$1,064 this summer with additional trail pass revenue in that same amount coming later this year. Our major expense has been the "Volunteer Coordinator" position financed jointly with the Chamber of Commerce—that totaled \$3,500.

Our current cash balance is \$9,248.40 with an additional \$1,825.00 in the Hoffman Hills grooming account. Should it snow this season, we could spend some of that!! ☺

ANNUAL MEETING – JUNE 5, 2007

DALE SEPPA

The annual meeting of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills (FRCST& HH) was again held at the Holiday Manor Inn & Conference Center. In recent years, the Friends group has become more involved with Hoffman Hills and, consequently, we are in the process of changing our name to reflect that and creating a new logo, etc. Our new T-shirts with the new logo showing that name change were introduced. Tom Kilgore reported on the financial status of the Friends Group. Jim Janowak discussed the status of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills and the number of projects that were completed in the past year. He also emphasized the contributions that volunteers have made. Again this year, the FRCST&HH decided to hire a volunteer coordinator to aid in expediting and organizing the projects that were decided by the board and the DNR that should be done for 2007. It was announced at the meeting that Dennis Weibel was chosen as our volunteer coordinator for 2007. A number of attendees took the opportunity to sign up to help for the various projects. The FRCST&HH would like to thank all volunteers who signed up and also all who have volunteered in the past. Also, Barb Gorman talked about up-coming activities concerning cross-country skiing and opportunities for Business memberships.

The highlight of the Meeting this year was a presentation by Sam Thayer, Forager. Over the years Sam has built a reputation as one of North America's leading authorities on edible wild plants. He has appeared on several television and radio programs, his articles have been featured in numerous publications, and he has been invited to teach wild food classes and workshops across the continent. His knowledge of the subject and his humor made for an enjoyable evening. He is the author of "The Forager's Harvest: A Guide to Identifying, Harvesting, and Preparing Edible Wild Plants. His book was winner of the 2006 Midwest Book Award. He sold all of the copies of the book that he brought to the meeting that evening. For those of you who were unable to get a copy, you can refer to his WEB Site, [<http://www.foragersharvest.com/>] to purchase a copy. Also, the WEB site has a number of related items that may be of interest.

The FRCST&HH would like to thank the Staff of the Holiday Manor Inn & Conference Center for their part in making the evening an enjoyable one.

AD HOC BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY PLANNING COMMITTEE

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DALE SEPPA

Dunn County has formed an Ad Hoc committee to develop guidelines for a bicycle/pedestrian friendly transportation system. At this time, the goals and objectives of the committee are being developed. The make-up of the committee is a very diverse group of interested citizens and local county and city officials. The idea is to develop a county-wide system of bike/pedestrian corridors that encourage and promote bicycling/walking both from the recreational aspect as well as a means of commuting. In doing so, there are a number of considerations including safety, compatibility with the state trail system, coordination with adjacent counties' systems, compatibility with roadways, routing to county attractions and routes which serve the needs of potential users. This is a first step in the creation of a comprehensive plan for the county. Members of the Friends Group are participants in this committee.

DUES REMINDER

The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills is a non-profit support organization dedicated to enhancing the recreational and educational opportunities by sponsoring, promoting and funding many activities as well as participating in projects that help to maintain and improve the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills. The Friends group derives its funding from dues paid by individuals and businesses, donations, grants, and a percentage of trail pass revenues. These funds provide resources for interpretive programs, volunteer workdays and community events such as the Annual Candlelight Ski. As a reminder, dues can be paid by using the form on the last page of this newsletter and mailing to the address indicated. As a dues paying member, you will receive a membership card, newsletters, information on outings and 10% discount on Friends merchandise.

Thank You for your support.

NATURE NOTE

Below is a picture of a puff-ball mushroom. These can be found along the Red Cedar State Trail in late summer. Some get as large as basketballs. They were not as plentiful this year. They are edible as anyone who attended last year's volunteer picnic can attest. They were sliced, seasoned and grilled making an enjoyable treat.



Merchandise Available in the Depot

New T-Shirts are this year:

Green Short Sleeve ... \$15

Blue Long Sleeve \$18

In addition, there are previous years T-Shirts in orange, gray, beige in some sizes.

Books

Critters of Wisconsin. \$5. This is a small book with great pictures of mammals and birds commonly seen in Wisconsin. This book is great to carry in your pack or to give to a child.

The Red Cedar Suite \$5. This book is by Menomonie's Jerry Bowker and Robert Schuler. The beautiful black and white photos by Jerry are enhanced by the poems by Robert.

For \$15.00 you can purchase the Wisconsin State Park Passport Book. This is a fun souvenir for the state park visitor. You put stamps from each state park in the book as you travel around the state.

Menomonie Water Bottles are available for only \$1.00.

Sales benefit The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills.

Trail Pass Fees

Daily\$4

Annual\$15

Pass purchase required before using trail for biking or skiing.

Pass is good for all Wisconsin state trails.

Use self-registration stations on the trail.

Same fee for residents and non-residents

MEETING SCHEDULE OF THE FRCST & HH

Everyone is Welcome

Regular Meetings ---First Thursday of the odd months (Jan., March, May, July, Sept., Nov.) Time: 7 P.M., Place: Leisure Services Center (Senior Center), Menomonie

CROSS COUNTRY SKI CORNER**BARB GORMAN**

As we are all enjoying the nice fall weather and the radiant color of the trees along the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills, it is hard to think ahead to winter. Cross country skiers eagerly await Mother Nature's blessing of SNOW. The Red Cedar State Trail will continue to be groomed by volunteers. Ron Pfiffner and Bruce Jordan have been the primary groomers for the Red Cedar State Trail. Their hard work and commitment have provided excellent skiing conditions.

Hoffman Hills is groomed by Jim Janowak, DNR trail manager for Hoffman Hills and Red Cedar State Trail. Area skiers often rave about the pristine grooming conditions at Hoffman Hills.

Funding for grooming at Hoffman Hills is provided by the DNR, skier fees, skier donations, part of FRCST/HH business memberships and a contribution by the FRCST/HH. Approximately \$2,500 per ski season is needed to cover the costs of grooming, trail maintenance, plowing of the parking lot and pass sales.

Due to Mother Nature's fickleness the past few years, it has become even more important to keep the groomed ski trails in good condition. Hiking, running, and walking on the groomed ski trails severely damages the conditions. Both Hoffman Hills and the Red Cedar State Trail have adjoining areas for non-skiers to utilize. Efforts will be increased this coming ski season to better address maintaining the groomed ski trails for cross country skiing only.

SILICA SAND MINE

During the year, the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills Board have submitted letters to both the Dunn County News and the Dunn County Board of Adjustment opposing the strip mine being proposed by Proppant Specialists LLC, a company from Texas. The original proposed strip mine included land that abuts Hoffman Hills. As of this printing, Proppant Specialists LLC has submitted a new proposal for the Dunn County Board of Adjustment. The new proposal reduces the acreage of the mine somewhat but many of the concerns remain the same. A hearing and decision regarding this new proposal will take place on Thursday, October 18 at 5 P.M. in the county board room (Room 122-124) of the Government Center on Wilson Avenue in Menomonie.

The primary objections include; the increase in noise, the increase in traffic, silica dust and the scenery near Hoffman Hills and how this alteration will affect the natural environment. Hoffman Hills is a unique resource in Dunn County and protection of its wildlife state is a priority. Please consider attending this hearing as the decision pending may affect our quality of life for decades to come. You will have an opportunity to voice your concerns if you wish. For more information, refer to www.saveourhills.net.

I JUST SAW A LEAF FALL . . . - SALLY
 THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S AUTUMN .. SUMMER IS OVER .. PRETTY SOON IT'LL BE WINTER, AND THE GROUND WILL BE
 COVERED WITH SNOW . . . - CHARLEY BROWN
 WHOSE IDEA WAS THAT? . . . - SALLY
 (FROM PEANUTS)

FRIENDS OF THE
RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL &
HOFFMAN HILLS
P.O. Box 628
Menomonie, WI 54751



Don't forget to get your annual trail pass

Everyone is welcome to
attend meetings of the
Friends Group.
(See Schedule on Page 6)

FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL & HOFFMAN HILLS

Join Today!

(or renew your membership)
Dues for 2007 (Jan. – Dec.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Annual Memberships Include:

- Membership Card
- Newsletters
- Information on Outings
- 10% discount on Merchandise

Make checks payable to:
Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail
P.O. Box 628
Menomonie, WI 54751

Check One:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Small Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Medium Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Large Corporation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Supporting | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Lifetime | |