

Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills Newsletter

Number 40



Spring 2009

In This Issue

National Trails Day.....	1
From the Editor	1
Trail Manager's Report	2
Membership Drive	2
Annual Meeting	3
Garlic Mustard	3
Treasurer's Tidbits	3
Cross-Country Ski Corner	4
Biking	4
Volunteering	5
Candlelight Ski	5
Business Membership	6
Varieties	7
Friends Membership Form	8

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National Trails Day – June 6, 2009

Activities are being planned to celebrate National Trails Day (NTD) on June 6, 2009. For NTD, Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills and DNR trail staff are working on plans for several special programs. At the Depot, programs that the entire family will enjoy are being planned from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. There will be a nature walk lead by Dennis Weibel, nature talks by Jim Swanson and music provided by Jude Marion. For those interested in eradicating garlic mustard, Katie Harrington will be leading a garlic mustard pull. Bad Cat Bicycles and Simple Sports will be there to check over your bike including checking for safety. Friend's merchandise, including newly designed T-shirts will be for sale. The DNR will provide booklets, pamphlets and posters on a number of related subjects. Also, of interest are the many displays in the Depot. Free lemonade and cookies will be provided. As this goes to press, there are a number of other activities that are in the planning stage.

NTD draws attention to the development of the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail. Both Red Cedar and Chippewa River Trails give excellent access to some of the best birding and wildlife watching in the state which includes the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area (LCRSNA).

Trail fees are waived for the day; however, yearly trail passes will be available for sale. It will be a good day to plan for a picnic for the family. We hope to see you there!

P.S. - Local organizations are invited to set up booths related to outdoor recreation and conservation for this special event. Contact the DNR office at 715-232-1242 for details.

From the Editor

As a Member of the Friends Group, periodically, you receive a Newsletter by mail. This provides you with news, activities and upcoming events related to the Red Cedar State trail and Hoffman Hills. You will still periodically receive newsletters by mail; however, less often. The Friends Group has a WEB site which is updated in a much timelier manner. <http://redcedarhoffman.org/> We have decided to make more use of this WEB site by also not sending out paper copies of every newsletter, and instead, informing you by postcard when an issue of the newsletter has been added to the WEB site. Current plans are to mail paper versions twice a year: at the beginning and at the middle of the year. You are encouraged to explore this WEB site as there are a number of items of interest.

Trail Manager's Report Jean Rygiel (Regional DNR Office)

Hello and Happy Spring, The weather is finally warming, birds are singing, buds are popping and spring cleanup is well underway.

As we experience some of the worst economic times like everyone else, the public support for our parks, trails and recreation areas is the strongest. It seems everyone is taking measures to enjoy the opportunities close at home. This includes new visitors as well as our long time valued users.

At this time we do not have permission to proceed with the recruitment for the property manager of the Chippewa River State Trail, Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills State Recreation Area. Vacancies along with all other current vacant positions within the Wisconsin State Park System are frozen as part of the financial status of the State.

Your extra efforts this winter that provided for a quality experience is appreciated by the property visitors and the Department Staff. As focused and dedicated volunteers you are an integral component of the operations now and in the future.

Your efforts do not go unnoticed. Thank you

Membership Drive

Barb Gorman

The annual membership drive is here. The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills has been fortunate over the years to have a supportive membership. Projects to sustain, improve and promote the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills simply could not be done without the assistance of its members. The friends appreciate the generosity of its business members and the commitment of its individual members. Membership fees have not increased, and fees support the projects needed to protect the two nature areas unique to Dunn County. Membership fees and renewals are yearly.

The two nature areas have a large number of users. The Friends/ConAgra/DNR sponsored 2009 Candlelight Ski/Snowshoe/Walk brought over 500 people to the Red Cedar State Trail. In the Fall, hundreds of people hike at Hoffman Hills to enjoy the vibrant color. The two areas average over 50,000 visitors yearly. Visitors buy gas, shop, eat and stay overnight in Dunn County. The Red Cedar State Trail and the Chippewa River Trail provide access to the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area. The trails also support the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail. Many participants in Dunn County businesses' health and fitness programs use the two areas to log biking, walking and skiing miles. The Red Cedar State Trail connects to the Chippewa River State Trail, offering a 38-mile bike trip to Eau Claire. The Red Cedar State Trail also connects to the Pepin County trail, offering a beautiful jaunt to Durand.

The beauty and quality of the two areas does not go unnoticed. It seems that at least yearly an area newspaper writes about an enjoyable experience incurred at either Hoffman Hills or the Red Cedar State Trail. This past year was no exception. In October 2008, Bruce Brothers of the St. Paul Pioneer Press featured the Red Cedar State Trail in the 10/26/08 edition. Both areas are groomed for cross-country skiing in the winter and grooming is done by volunteers. Conditions were outstanding all season. Several skiers, some from Minnesota, posted comments on www.skinneyski.com, complimenting the groomed conditions.

Hoffman Hills and the Red Cedar State Trail are quality of life resources for present and future generations. We hope you will join and become a member of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills.

Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills Meeting Schedule

Everyone is Welcome

Regular Meetings ---First Thursday of the months of Jan., March, May, Sept., Nov.

Time: 7 P.M.

Place: Leisure Services Center (Senior Center), Menomonie

WEB Site: <http://redcedarhoffman.org/>

June 11, 2009 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills will be held at the EconoLodge Inn & Suites (formerly the Holiday Manor Inn & Conference Center) on Thursday, June 11, 2009. This Meeting is open to everyone. There will be a social time at 6:30 P.M. with free hors d'oeuvres. The Program starts at 7:00 PM. with a few brief presentations by Board Members reporting on the past years activities and future plans and activities. Then, the feature of the evening will be a presentation by Richard Gauger from the West Wisconsin Land Trust. Rick will talk about nature preserves around Menomonie.

Throughout the evening, there will be an opportunity to purchase the newly designed Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills T-shirts. Also, the Friends group is always looking for volunteers for various activities and there will be opportunities for volunteers to sign-up.

Garlic Mustard

Katie Harrington

Garlic mustard or Alliaria petiolata is an invasive weed that came from Europe. It may have been brought over as a cooking herb or it may have been accidentally introduced. It was first recorded in the U.S. in Long Island, NY in 1868. In 1991 it was in 30 states – mostly in New England and the Midwest.

We have been fighting it in Menomonie for three years. It has a two year cycle. The first year it produces a rosette cluster of leaves close to the ground. The second year it sends up a stem, sometimes several. Each stem has small white flowers radiating from the stem which in turn makes many seed pods with many seeds in each pod. The many tiny seeds are easily carried by humans and animals to other areas. It takes about five years to eradicate the plant for sure. We have managed to do a pretty good job of eliminating much of it in some areas.

I am especially interested in fighting garlic mustard, because I have seen lovely woods in the southern part of the state where the understory of the woods is a sea of garlic mustard. Since it tolerates low light levels, produces many seeds, and begins growing very early, it can crowd out many wild flowers and even tree seedlings. I'm a wild flower lover and hate to see trilliums, solomon-seal, and other wild flowers disappear from the woods.

We have been trying to eradicate garlic mustard in Menomonie by pulling the second year plants. There are places where they are trying herbicides. Some people are talking about finding some insect that would feed upon it and hopefully kill it off. I am reluctant to import any new bugs that are not native to our area.

We will be pulling garlic mustard in May and June. If you were walking along the Stokke Trail last summer you no doubt noticed first year garlic mustard growing from the rocks along the new part of the trail. I believe we should focus our attention on this area and try to keep garlic mustard out of Menomonie.

I haven't noticed much garlic mustard on the Red Cedar Trail between Menomonie and Downsville, because we have been pulling and checking the area. Hopefully we can control it in our area. Please plan to help us in May. Our first pull will be at 9:00 on May 14. If this is inconvenient for you, please contact me and suggest a time when you could pull. My number is 235-1092 or e-mail kjharrington@charter.net. I plan to schedule other pulls.

Depot Improvement

The next time you go to the depot, notice the new wooden planks that are installed on the deck, ramp and walkway. Two years ago, part of the ramp was repaired by volunteers. At the time it was noted that the complete decking should be replaced. So to complete this project the Friends group, with the help of Scott Erickson of the DNR, applied for a matching Knowles/Nelson Grant of \$2000. The grant was approved. The Friends Group supplied the matching funds. Heritage Builders were contracted to complete the project and did an excellent job. Also, Heritage Builders gifted back \$420 to the Friends Group. We thank them for their generosity.

Cross Country Ski Corner

Barb Gorman

Although spring is here and summer is just around the corner, there are several thank-you's to say from this past winter of cross-country skiing. Skiers of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills enjoyed excellent skiing conditions from December to March. There was significant use of both ski trails. The Red Cedar State Trail was kept in prime condition due to the volunteer grooming work of Bruce Jordan, Ron Pfiffner and Dan Haug. Several other volunteers signed up to learn the grooming of the Red Cedar State Trail. These folks include John Wesolek, Jim Tenorio and Joe Plouff.

The grooming at Hoffman Hills was also outstanding as a core group of volunteers put in countless hours grooming, fixing the grooming equipment and digging out the stuck equipment. The expectation of grooming at Hoffman Hills is, "you will get stuck!" The grooming equipment gets stuck at least once during the 8-9 hours it takes to groom Hoffman Hills one time. The volunteer group worked hard and worked together resulting in Hoffman Hills having premier skiing conditions. The Hoffman Hills groomers include, Todd Burns, Chris Ruch, Pete May, Sean Bujold, Paul Peltier, Kim Wentworth, Paul Sterk, Roger Magnuson, Randy Eide, Jerry Porter and occasionally coaxed out of retirement- Jim Janowak. The grooming at Hoffman Hills and the Red Cedar State Trail also went well due to the support of the DNR. Bob Goers spent many hours training and assisting.

The efforts by the groomers did not go unnoticed. Several comments were posted on www.skinnySKI.com. These comments included "Conditions: Excellent. Maybe the best conditions I've ever seen here at Hoffman. New groomers doing it right, kudos to you! On my must see ski list. You want hills, ski Hoffman. Freeze those conditions!" and a comment about the Red Cedar State Trail, "Conditions: Very good. Temp 22F. Recently groomed. No ice or frozen chunks. Consistent dual classic track with narrower skate lane down the middle. Occasional light seed and twig litter. The drive from the Cities was worth it. The trail lived up to the recent report. There's consistent snow from Menomonie trailhead to roughly a half mile past Irvington rest stop. I'm sure it continues for another 3.5 miles beyond that. I've always been skeptical of the quality of skiing on multi-use trails like this. But except for two blanks who ignored the "No Walking" sign posted on the saw horse at the trailhead, people seemed to generally have respected the dedication of the trail to x-country skiing. The "ice wall" shown in the online trail description is on this section of trail and it's gorgeous as is the wide-open river beside the trail. I met five classic skiers and one skater beside myself." THANK YOU GROOMERS, BOB AND SCOTT!

Biking

Barb Gorman

The Dunn County bicycle plan with identified routes is finished. The map identifying Dunn County bike routes can be accessed at: www.dunncountywi.govoffice2.com. Click on county departments, then on Environmental Services Department in the Agricultural Service Center, then the Planning Division and then the Dunn County Comprehensive Bicycle/Pedestrian Pathways Plan. The Friends group was part of the committee that met over many months to develop the plan and bike routes. The development of this plan is a major step in having a bike shoulder on County Road D from Bongey Drive to the Red Cedar State Trail. County Road D is under review by the county highway department. A citizen group has requested that a bicycle lane be added between 440th street (Bongey Drive) and 430th avenue (Red Cedar Lane) with appropriate signage. The Highway Commission will consider this issue at their May 11, 2009 meeting. Maps of the bike routes will be printed soon and will be available at the Chamber of Commerce and local bike shops, hopefully in mid-May.

With the warm weather mid-April has been providing, many folks have dusted off their bikes and are enjoying the pedaling. Several group rides occur weekly in Menomonie. On Wednesday night, bike riders meet at Bad Cat Bicycles, downtown Menomonie at 6:30 p.m. The Wednesday night ride is a moderate paced fitness ride covering 25 miles or more. On Thursday nights, leaving at 6:15 p.m. from Bad Cat Bicycles is a leisurely paced, community ride offering slower speed and shorter distances. Bad Cat is also offering several special biking events. These events are:

Full Moon Rides - 6/7/09, 7/07/09, 8/05/09

Red Cedar State Trail Picnic Rides – 6/28/09, 8/02/09

Call Pete at Bad Cat Bicycles, 231-2453, for more information and times.

Volunteering at the Depot

Jane Butsic

I can hardly wait for summer and the farmer's market. Oh Wednesday, I put the cooler in the car and go to the market. There I buy the fresh fruit and vegetables for the week and an egg roll for lunch. I bring the cooler because after the market, I go to the depot to spend my afternoon talking to visitors on the Red Cedar Trail. There are 16 of us who volunteer to spend 3 hours a week down at the Depot Visitors Center. While we are there we answer questions about our community and the Red Cedar Trail. We tell people where they can get ice cream, sandwiches, pizza or a fancy meal while on the trail in Downsville, or after they are done with their ride, in Menomonie and the surrounding area. We tell people where to buy inner tubes or rent bikes and canoes. People ask us where to stay and how to get there. Visitors often want to know what else is in Menomonie to see and experience. The volunteers can answer all these questions and more because we spend part of each day filling the brochure racks. We fill the racks with hotel and Bed and Breakfast information. There is the Menomonie Visitor guide, which highlights the shops and restaurants. We also have information on the Historical Center and our other historical sites. There are great maps of the area that have been published in the past couple of years that take people down back roads and on bike routes.

Some people who visit want to know about the nature on our trail and we welcome them into the depot to the exhibits provided by the DNR. We also sell trail passes so they can ride and shirts so they can remember the fun. Many people want to tell us about their experiences on the trail. Since our trail is so beautiful, they always have good things to say.

Each volunteer tries to do something to improve the depot. Some of us work in the flower beds, some sweep the spider webs off the outside of the building or the gazebo, some people keep the exhibits looking good. On rainy days sometimes all there is to do is read a book! Even on rainy days, someone usually stops by needing to know something. The best part of working at the depot is the people you meet.

The depot is looking for some new volunteers for the summer. If this sounds like a fun and useful way for you to spend 3 hours a week, please contact Doug Voy at 715-309-9111

Candlelight Ski - January 30, 2009

Jane Butsic

What a fun evening everyone had on Friday January 30th down at the Red Cedar State Trail. The Friends of the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills, along with Con Agra Foods and the DNR sponsored the annual Candlelight Ski attended by about 500 winter-lovers. Highlights included Swiss Miss hot chocolate inside the Depot Visitor Center, courtesy of Con Agra, and a bonfire tended by DNR staff. This year those who don't ski could not only walk on the candlelit Stokke Trail, they could snowshoe a candlelit course at Riverside Park. The Menomonie School District loaned the Friends group about thirty pairs of snowshoes for an added option. Pete May from Bad Cat Bicycles and some friends made a trail through the beautiful big pines and along the river. Volunteers from the high school and UW-Stout helped participants with the snowshoes.

Each year there are people who want to walk on the ski trail. This degrades the tracks for the skiers, not only for the evening, but also until volunteers can go out and groom the trail again. We thank all the participants who chose to walk or snowshoe to help keep the trail in good shape for the skiers.

Approximately 12 volunteers and DNR staff were needed to light the trail and the same number to collect the candles after the event. Volunteers from Swiss Miss made and served hot chocolate and other volunteers assisted in the Depot Visitor Center. Throughout the evening, more volunteers walked, hiked on snowshoes, and skied the trails, making sure the candles stayed lit and that everyone was safe. Several volunteers groom the ski trail to keep it in shape for the skiers all winter.

The Friends of the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills would like to thank everyone involved with another successful Candlelight Ski. If you would like to learn more about the Friends group, please go to our web site www.redcedarhoffman.org. It was a wonderful event.

Business Membership Barb Gorman & Tom Kilgore

It has been rewarding to see the number of business memberships increase over the past year. The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills appreciate the support of the county's businesses to preserve these two nature areas. The number of people who use the two areas on a daily basis is just amazing. The two areas are unique for Dunn County and enhance the quality of life. The support of Dunn County businesses is very gratifying. Please support the business members of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills:

Gentle Dental Care	Heritage Builders Inc
Gary Welch Construction	Jackie Hunt Insurance
Main Street Framing	BOMAC Vets Plus Inc
Dunn Energy Cooperative	Dan Wood, DDS
The Medicine Shoppe	Menomonie Farmers Union Co-op
Bad Cat Bicycles	Red Cedar Medical Center
Simple Sports	Phillips Plastic Corporation
3M Corporation	Xcel Energy
ConAgra -Swiss Miss	

Treasurer's Tidbits

Tom Kilgore

The Membership cards were mailed a while back and after a flurry of returns, the general memberships have slowed. To date we have 4 "Contributing", 17 "Family", 9 "Individual", and 1 new "Lifetime". The letters to our business partners have recently gone out and our 2009 Small Business Members are: Gentle Dental Care, Heritage Builders Inc., Gary Welch Construction, Jackie Hunt Insurance Agency, and Main Street Framing. Our Medium Business members are BOMAC Vets Plus Inc., Dunn Energy Cooperative, Dan Wood, DDS, The Medicine Shoppe and Menomonie Farmer's Union Cooperative. Our Large Business/Corporations: 3M Corporation, Bad Cat Bicycle, Red Cedar Medical Center, Simple Sports, Phillips Plastics Corporation, Xcel Energy Corporation and ConAgra-Swiss Miss. We urge all of you to support these businesses that support us!

We have set aside \$2,000 for a matching grant and DNR has provided the additional \$2,000 to be used for repairs on the ramp at the depot. Details on this are elsewhere in this newsletter. REMINDER: There is still time to "re-member" and use the form on the mailing page to renew your membership OR JOIN AS NEW MEMBERS!

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.

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 and information on Friends activities.

Thank You for your support.

Interested in Volunteering

The Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills are indeed treasures that we locals enjoy as well as the many visitors that they attract. With State Funding cut-backs for trails, the role that volunteer groups play is becoming increasingly important. There are a number of opportunities available where help is needed. Some of the opportunities include eradicating invasive species, working on exhibits, gardening at the depot, repairing bird houses, trail projects, working in the depot, becoming a trail ambassador, or helping with special programs such as the Candlelight Ski and National Trails Day. If you are interested, or have any questions regarding volunteering, contact any of the board members. You will be rewarded knowing that you had a hand in preserving and maintaining these resources.

The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills would like to thank all of you who have volunteered in the past on various projects. Thank You.

Donation Information

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.

Also, from time to time, many have chosen to make special monetary gifts. For those wishing to make special monetary gifts, they can be sent to our mailing address: FRCST, P.O. Box 628, Menomonie, WI, 54751. Money received by donation for specific purposes will be subject to approval of the Friends Board of Directors before it is expended for the specific purpose. A Life Time Membership would be provided to a donor for any memorial donation of \$150, or more. In the case of memorial funds, a minimum contribution of \$250 is required for the addition of a plaque. The Friends express our thanks and appreciate the generosity of all donors.

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\$20

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

*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 2)

Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills

Join Today!

(or renew your membership)
Dues for 2009 (Jan. – Dec.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Check One:

- \$15 Individual
- \$25 Family
- \$50 Contributing
- \$75 Supporting
- \$150 Lifetime

- \$50 Small Business
- \$75 Medium Business
- \$150 Large Corporation

Annual Memberships Include:

- Membership Card
- Newsletters
- Information on Activities

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