

# FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL NEWSLETTER



Number 29

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## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>Annual Meeting .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Presidents Column .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Trail Manager's Report .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Hoffman Hills Notes .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Volunteer Coordinator.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Nature .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>FRCT Membership Form....</b>	<b>8</b>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Beth Alexander, President**  
(715) 235-4334  
**Tom Kilgore, Treasurer**  
**Ron Pfiffner**  
**Jane Butsic**  
**Barb Gorman**  
**Dale Seppa, Newsletter Editor**  
(715) 233-5624

## DNR ADVISOR

**Jim Janowak, Trail Manager**  
(715) 232-1242

## VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

**Damon Anderson**

## Annual Meeting – June 7, 2005

The annual meeting of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail was held at the Best Western conference Center in Menomonie. In her opening remarks, President Beth Alexander thanked the many volunteers who assist in various ways in maintaining the trail and Hoffman Hills. She expressed her thanks to those who have written letters supporting state funding for the trail. She introduced the board members and the three new members who were elected to the board this year. Also, new this year, the temporary position of Project Coordinator was created and Damon Anderson was hired for this position. His duties are to develop, plan, coordinate and implement activities and programs as directed by the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail, to increase Friend member's participation in trail projects and other activities of the organization, to work within the requirements of the Greater Menomonie Area Chamber of Commerce as it relates to visitor services at the Depot visitor center, and work with the DNR Manager of the Red Cedar State Trail.

Bill Butsic, on behalf of Swiss Miss, presented a contribution of \$5,000 to the Friends to be used on the anticipated projects for the trail. ConAgra, the parent company of Swiss Miss, makes available funds each year to divisions of the company that create environmental friendly ideas; the Menomonie division developed an improvement related to product packaging.

The Program at the meeting this year was entitled, "Birds of the Wetlands" and featured a presentation by John Bates. John Bates is a Naturalist and the author of five books, and a contributor to three others. He's worked as a naturalist for 16 years in Wisconsin's North woods leading botany, birding, canoeing/kayaking, biking, hiking, snowshoeing, and skiing trips. His knowledge of wetland birds that he possesses based on his intimate association with them in their natural habitat made for an enjoyable, educational and enlightening presentation. His presentation was enriched by many colorful photographs.

**PRESIDENTS COLUMN    BETH ALEXANDER**

As the saying goes, "the only constant is change". In the last few years the FRCT has experienced ongoing changes that can provide us with some wonderful opportunities. When I began my service years ago we had a large board membership that I felt was truly indicative of what a community board should be. The members contained a wide assortment of folks that represented the variety of Red Cedar Trail users. Some of us were casual strollers and some were hikers. Some enjoyed leisurely skiing or biking with frequent stops to enjoy the flora and fauna and some were serious athletes. As the years went by, the FRCT board shifted and changed. There were times when we had a full board with interested community members joining us as well and other times when there were only a few of us meeting together. A little over a year ago we experienced one of these lean times and faced the possibility of dissolution of the FRCT board altogether. No one wanted to see this happen so we rearranged things as best we could, I agreed to be a President on a temporary basis and we moved forward confident that our community would continue to support the trail so many of us love. And indeed, this is exactly what happened.

Last fall, under the threat of severe budget cuts, many people came forward to volunteer their time in support of the trail. Our board has new members and a very active volunteer group! Recently, there has been much discussion and problem solving regarding how we can continue to expand this volunteer base to assist the DNR so that both Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills can remain open with all of the services we've previously enjoyed. This discussion has also included grooming of all of the previously open ski trails at Hoffman Hills.

Ironically, the biggest obstacle is not financial. The FRCT board needs individuals to join us, both as board members and as hands on volunteers to achieve this goal. Those of us who count on these properties for leisure, exercise and income from tourists to our community can really become the bridge between inevitable budget cuts from the DNR and maintaining them in the fashion we have come to enjoy so deeply. We are in a time of transition and have a unique opportunity to make a difference before it is too late. Please take some time to think of ways you can help. We have many ideas and projects going on and there is a place for everyone!

**SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL**

**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

**THE DEPOT VISITOR CENTER HOURS OF OPERATION**

May 1 until Memorial Day, Labor Day through Oct.

Weekdays .....Closed

Saturday - Sunday ..... 9 A.M. – 5 P.M.

Memorial Day through Labor Day

Weekdays .....10 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Saturday - Sunday & Holidays ..... 9 A.M. – 5 P.M

**Please Note: The Depot is only open on Weekends from Labor Day through October.**

**"THIS IS MY REPORT ON RAIN. RAIN IS WATER WHICH DOES NOT COME OUT OF FAUCETS. . . AFTER A STORM, THE RAIN GOES DOWN THE DRAIN, WHICH IS WHERE I SOMETIMES FEEL MY EDUCATION IS ALSO GOING".**

**-- SALLY (FROM PEANUTS)**

**TRAIL MANAGER'S REPORT**    **JIM JANOWAK, DNR**

Thanks to our Friends groups and many other supporters throughout the state the reductions to the parks budget were not as drastic as originally proposed last winter. However we will still be looking at some cutbacks as government continues “streamline and get more efficient”. (The price of gas does not help much either.) One of the things that has been very heart warming through this last budget process (which for some was very heart burning) is the amount of interest many of you had to get involved and help out in so many ways. Thank you. And I believe this to be very important because it appears that local help will be a key to preserving the recreational opportunities we have become accustomed to in this area and statewide. I recently read an article about the budget cuts and Paul Heinen, the DNR’s legislative liaison, was interviewed. I do not have the complete quote unfortunately but he made it clear in his statement that until “the economy, state budgets and the political atmosphere” changes parks and other recreation properties will have to depend more and more on partnerships with Friends groups, service organizations and local units of governments to maintain services. Fortunately we just happen to have some great relationships with the city, the county and our local chamber of commerce as well as other organizations. We are also ahead of the curve because our Friends groups have formal agreements with the DNR already. One of the benefits of these agreements is access to information, funding and other resources not available through the usual property operations. It is probably time to take a closer look at these resources.

As I look over some of the old files I am reminded that it has been almost 15 years since the Friends of Red Cedar State Trail first started to organize. It took a year or two to get the formal structure and organization in place. Then the group started to put together recreational social outings and develop the interpretive program. They built many of the Depot displays and provided funding for others. Then came the outdoor education classes and outdoor skills events. The tradition of Candlelight Skis began. They have provided for ski grooming equipment (and the last couple of years, the actual grooming on the trail). The last few years they were an important part of the development of the trailhead area around the Depot and provided new maps, signs and mile markers along the trail. Among other things they have sponsored the Department’s Great Wisconsin Birding Trail and, most recently, WBCI’s bird mentoring program (See article on page 7). And now this year the Friends, in partnership with the Chamber and Swiss Miss, created a volunteer coordinator position for the summer. Damon Anderson was hired on and he has worked with many volunteers on quite a wide variety of projects already including some maintenance projects around the Depot area, new rest area development along the trail, research for interpretive displays and the formation of a trail host program (See page 8 for more details). Having this extra assistance has been great and Damon has done an excellent job in coordinating and implementing these projects. Unfortunately we will not always have someone in that position. If we are going to continue with these and other projects we are going to continue to need help to lead them.

Many families still ask about outdoor education programs. Some folks have expressed concern and an interest in controlling the spread of invasive plants. And I know that there is a strong interest in having the ski trails at Hoffman Hills fully groomed like they used to be. These are just a few of many things that can be done with the help of the Friends and others in the community. So as we look toward the future I would like to encourage everyone to consider what they can do to strengthen the Friends group organization and develop a more pervasive leadership. Working together these properties will be able to provide for many great recreational opportunities now and well into the future. And on behalf of the trails and Hoffman Hills, as well as thousands of visitors, I would like to, once again, thank everyone for all that has been done over the years. We could not do it without you!

**Trail Pass Fees**

- Daily.....\$4
- Annual.....\$15
- Required for all Wisconsin state trails.
- Same fee for residents and non-residents.
- Available at Depot, DNR office, businesses, and self-registration stations on the trail.

**Available in the Depot Visitor Center**

- 100% Cotton T-Shirts.....\$10 - \$18
- Red Cedar Trail Patches.....\$5
- The Red Cedar Suite.....\$7
- Wisconsin State Park Passports .. \$15

Sales benefit the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail

## HOFFMAN HILLS NOTES

This fall and winter, the West Wisconsin Land Trust (WWLT) will be offering free outdoor education programs for families in western Wisconsin at a number of locations including Hoffman Hills. Classes are designed for families (age 5+), and will take place throughout western Wisconsin year-round. Children must be accompanied by adults. Programs will be lead by Education Director, Bill Dingwall, who has 10 years of experience teaching outdoor and environmental education to regional residents. Programs range from “Nature Exploration” to learning “Outdoor Skills”. The next programs scheduled for Hoffman Hills are as follows:

9/25/05 – 1:00 – 3:15 PM. **Arthropod Squad:** Investigate the world of insects, spiders, and other boneless creepers, crawlers, swimmers, or fliers. Discover their cool adaptations, basic biology, and why different creatures live in different areas. Maybe they even live in your backyard!

12/08/05 – 6:30 – 8:00 P.M. **Night Hike:** Discover the nocturnal world by seeing with your feet, echolocating a moth, or finding a friend with your nose. Maybe even look at the stars and learn why pirates wore eye-patches. Leave with your breath Wint-O-Green fresh and new activities for sleepovers.

12/11/05 - 1:00 – 3:15 P.M. **Magnificent Maps:** How are maps and your fist related? Which way is up? What are the four basic elements of a map? Learn the answers to these questions and some orienteering tricks, then head out and test your skills on a small map navigation course.

For a current schedule of classes or for more information, contact West Wisconsin Land Trust’s Education Director at (715) 235-8850 or [bdingwall@wwlt.org](mailto:bdingwall@wwlt.org), or visit [www.wwlt.org](http://www.wwlt.org).

### **BIKE TUNE-UPS**

Add to your enjoyment of your biking experience by making sure that your bike is in good working order, the tires are properly inflated, etc. Also, for safety sake, it is important to ensure that the brakes are properly adjusted and in good working order. In Menomonie, there are two bike shops to serve you:

- 1) Brickyard Cyclery  
(next to the Depot)
- 2) Simple Sports  
(on Main Street)

### **Young Pedalers**

They love to ride  
 A new found thrill, their first freedom, out on their own,  
 To move those legs, to push their feet round and round,  
 The pedals spinning, faster, faster.  
 Pop a wheelie, skid, crash a few times, skinned knees, “look, no hands”.  
 The kids riding with happy faces, laughing and screaming as they go,  
 Never wanting to end their ride.  
 Never caring if it’s raining or snowing out, too hot or too cold.  
 They are content in their own small world.  
 Nary a worry about the price of gas, a day at work, stock prices or the evening supper ahead.  
 A mother’s call comes out of nowhere, “Time to come home”.  
 The legs slow down, bike wheels turn to the voice in the distance,  
 A biker’s day has ended.  
 Oh, the magic of childhood!

The Happy Biker

“BIRDS HAVE SCARY DREAMS”  
 -- SNOOPY (FROM PEANUTS)

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S REPORT** DAMON ANDERSON

This summer there have been a lot of things going on with the Red Cedar State Trail. We have been lucky to have great weather. Sometimes the weather was a little too good...really hot and humid. We have also been fortunate to have a lot of enthusiastic volunteers.

For starters, the gazebo at the head of the trail was refinished. This project took two days to complete. On day one we pressure washed the gazebo and scrubbed all of the dirt and grime away. The second day was committed to re-staining. The project was a success. The volunteers that completed the project were Doug Voy and Dave Gorman.

Another project that was started this summer is the "Trail Host" position. Dale Seppa and Harlyn Larson suggested this volunteer position. A trail host is someone who is familiar with the trail, familiar with Menomonie and surrounding areas, wants to help others and is willing to answer questions. The following are the guidelines for the position:

Trail Hosts set an example by being model trail users, practicing excellent trail etiquette and obeying all rules and regulations. Hosts can ride or walk the trail a few hours a day.

As a Trail Host you will be responsible for:

- Wearing the volunteer vest to identify yourself
- Greeting guests of the trail
- Answering questions about the trail and the local area
- Assisting other trail users as needed
- Being alert to guest's needs, comments, complaints, etc.
- Reporting maintenance concerns, i.e. fallen trees, debris on trail , etc
- Helping keep the trail neat and clean

If you are interested in being a trail host please contact me (Damon Anderson) at 309-9364, Dale Seppa at 233-5624 or Jim Janowak at 232-1242.

The next two projects kind of went hand in hand. Two new rest areas have been created on the trail. Many of you probably read about them in the Dunn County News. The first is located a little over a mile down the trail. The second, a waterfall site, is located at the eleven and a half-mile mark. These projects took about a month to complete, working one to two days per week. On the first day of work we cleared all of the brush and weeds from both sites. I thought that this might take a couple of days. Everyone that turned out to help proved me wrong. They completed all of the clearing in just one day.

After all the brush was cleared away, we decided that we might need some help with the waterfall site. We called on Curt Bryan's excavating to help. They came in and leveled out the site and built a platform and a path to this site. After that was completed, the volunteers came back and cleaned up the site. This involved pulling out stumps, roots, and cutting down some trees. After raking the site, grass seed was planted. Within a week we had a nice green lawn.

While all this was taking place benches were being built. Chuck Brenner volunteered his time and expertise to build three very sturdy and heavy benches for the new rest areas. We took a day to install the new benches. One bench went to the 1.3-mile rest area. It is in a nicely shaded area facing the river. The two other benches went to the waterfall site. One bench faces the river and the other faces the waterfall.

The last part of these projects was to install stairs at the 1.3-mile site. This was completed in about an hour. The volunteers that worked on these projects were Doug Voy, O.K. Hedlund, Bill and Jane Butsic, Julie Anderson, Harlyn Larson, Ron Welsh, Dale Seppa, and Jim Janowak.

(Continued on Page 6)

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S REPORT (CONT)**

Plaques are going to be installed on the benches recognizing the people or organizations that helped make these projects possible. Glad Meyer donated the materials for the first rest area. It is in memory of her husband who passed away last year. The waterfall site was made possible through a grant from ConAgra Foods and The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail. The plaques will read as follows:

**"Downhill and With the Wind"  
Rest Area Donated in Memory of  
James "Clyde" Meyer  
1938-2004**

**Waterfall Rest Area Provided  
Through a Grant by  
ConAgra Foods  
&  
The Helping Hands of  
The Friends of the  
Red Cedar State Trail  
2005**

A couple of other projects that are still in progress are opening up the back room of the depot visitor's center and updating the signage at the derrick interpretive site. The back room of the depot has been cleaned up and has some historic railroad artifacts that people may be interested in seeing. We will be building a fence and updating the signage for that room. At the derrick interpretive site, we are looking for new pictures and will be putting in the new style of interpretive signage.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to everyone that has helped out this summer. Without all of the volunteer efforts that were made, none of this would have been possible.



**Some of the Volunteers who worked on the new rest areas**

**NATURE**    **LORI MCNOWN, NATURALIST**

The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail recently provided funding to bring the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) Mentor Program to the Menomonie area. Developed by WBCI in partnership with the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and modeled after a similar effort in Minnesota, the goal of this new program is to help young people and adults develop an interest in birds and habitat conservation. The extensive wetlands, wooded hills and prairies of Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills will offer an excellent opportunity for the observation of birds in a variety of settings.

The Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative is comprised of over 100 organizations around the state, including bird clubs, hunting and fishing groups, land trusts, nature centers, environmental groups, businesses and others. The Bird Mentor program will promote bird-based recreation and enjoyment of birds in both rural and urban settings, emphasizing bird habitat and conservation. To accomplish this mission WBCI hopes to eventually place bird mentor programs throughout Wisconsin. The Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills sponsored mentorship will be the first available in this area of the state.

The program consists of a volunteer trained to give introductory bird programs to students or adults and lead field trips to observe birds in their habitats. Each mentor is equipped with a kit containing audiovisual materials, field guides and optical equipment. Presentations will typically be followed by a bird walk where participants can enjoy hands-on practice using binoculars or a scope.

Former Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills Naturalist and WSO member Lori McNown is mentoring the project locally. Schools and groups are encouraged to take advantage of this new opportunity to learn more about birds, habitat and bird conservation in our area.

For more information or to schedule a presentation, call Lori at 715-664-8778.



**Waterfall at the new Rest Area at Mile 11**



**Volunteers enjoyed a rest after installing a bench at the new Rest Area at Mile 1 1/2**

FRIENDS OF THE  
RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL  
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)

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## *FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL*

### Join Today!

(or renew your membership)  
Dues for 2005 start January 1<sup>st</sup>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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    |  |

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