

# FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL NEWSLETTER



Number 32

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## National Trails Day Celebration

To commemorate National Trails Day (NTD), an Open House at the Depot Visitor Center was held on June 3, 2006. 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).

To start the day Lori McNown and Bob Heagle co-lead a Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) bird hike, the first of the three RCST/WBCI bird hikes on the trail this summer. Later at the depot, attendees heard from Ruth Goetz-Department of Tourism Regional Coordinator, Susan Foote-Martin-DNR statewide Coordinator for the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail, Mayor Dennis Kropp of Menomonie and Debbie Labs-Greater Menomonie Area Chamber of Commerce President. Adults and children were treated to entertaining and enthusiastic programs by Bill Dingwall of the West Wisconsin Land Trust. Jeff Hayes, a falconer, presented an impressive program involving demonstrations with his Harris hawk. Lori McNown gave a very informative WBCI PowerPoint presentation on bird conservation issues. All were available to answer questions about their programs throughout the day. Representatives from the Friends Groups of both the Red Cedar and Chippewa trails were available to discuss the trails and volunteer opportunities. Local bed & breakfast owners, Maggie Foote of Oaklawn B&B and Julianna LaBouliere of Hansen Heritage House, represented the area's hospitality industry. The DNR provided booklets, pamphlets and posters on a number of related subjects.

To top things off, the weather was perfect and trail fees are waived for the weekend. Also, everyone was treated to lemonade and a piece of the commemorative cake for the occasion furnished by the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail.

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

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

Another busy year with plenty to do. Budgets have been reduced by about 25% this year but thanks to the many volunteers we have been able to keep up fairly well with maintenance and have even worked on some new minor developments. A few folks have called or emailed with concerns about maintenance items such as getting the Chippewa River Trail swept, mowing the trails at Hoffman Hills and the encroaching vegetation on Red Cedar Trail surface. It is nice to know that people are concerned and many have had suggestions or offered to help. We will continue to incorporate these ideas where possible and expand the use of volunteers as time goes on. Doug Voy, the Friends volunteer coordinator, has put together quite a few work days for special projects this summer. He has done a great job with the volunteers and made good headway repairing the Depot ramp, reducing the spread of invasive species, rebuilding trails and maintaining prairies.

Thanks to the Friends volunteers that did prairie maintenance at Hoffman Hills. By clearing out the encroaching poplar trees prairie forbs such as the White False Indigo (pictured) will continue to thrive and spread. These forbs did not show up for the first few years after this 1997 prairie restoration project was initiated. However this year they really started to show despite the lack of rain in July. I guess there's something there to learn (or remember) from the prairie. Even in a drought, whether economic or lack of rain, something beautiful could bloom that we've never seen before. We just need to keep our eyes open.



Some of the most exciting developments on the horizon are with our partners in the trail business. The Friends have agreed to cost share a project with the city that will provide for a nice set of durable low maintenance steps from Riverside Park up to the trail by the Gilbert Creek Bridge. The city is also planning on stepping up the development of the old Union Pacific railroad bed to North Menomonie this fall with a state grant they received. This is an essential link in the city's long range trail plan. The Lakebank Nature Trail has finally been reestablished and had its grand opening last month. Our neighbors in Pepin County have received unofficial word that they are in line for a cost sharing state grant to pave their section of the Chippewa Trail (Hopefully the county will be able to come up with the votes it needs for matching funds). And last but not least is the new marketing/branding initiative that the Chamber is heading up for the Menomonie area. Since Red Cedar State Trail is the main outdoor recreation destination for the area we plan to be an important part of this initiative. With 50,000+ visitors each year the trail contributes nearly 4 million dollars to the local economy in sustainable tourism dollars. Trails add value not only in the quality of life but also in dollars and cents.

It is important to remember all we have to enjoy and be thankful for in our area. Every generation goes through a tough time or two in their life. The parks program in Wisconsin is going through a tough time now. (Along with many other tax supported programs unfortunately.) However we'll get by...with a little help from our Friends...gonna try with a little help from our friends. Thanks everybody!

**THE DEPOT VISITOR CENTER HOURS OF OPERATION**

May 1 until Memorial Day, Labor Day through Oct.	Memorial Day through Labor Day
Weekdays .....Closed	Weekdays .....10 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.**

**PROJECT VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR DOUG VOY**

Projects completed by the Friends volunteers this summer included:

- Staining the Gazebo at the Depot was a two-day one-person effort which included power-washing one day and staining the next.
- Filling holes with about 8 cubic yards of fill, seeding and covering with straw at the Hoffman Hills pond site. This project included cutting volunteer popple trees at the prairie site at Hoffman. This project was a two-day effort by Joel Toms, Dale Seppa, Joe and Margy Hagaman, Jane Butsic, Dave Gorman, Jean Husby and Jim Janowak. Jim and his staff provided much assistance by getting the “Mules” and other equipment to the site.
- Painting the fence around the Quarry site derrick and trimming some brush was a one day project with Joel Toms and Rich Malen.
- Garlic Mustard pulling near the depot was a one day effort with impressive results. Katie Harrington, who mentioned the need on the National Trails Day, was instrumental in helping identify the invasive plant and organizing volunteers to help pull several truckloads of it.
- The Prairie site at the Depot had a one-day facelift by a group of five energetic and hardworking middle-school girls and two adults organized by Kristin Hildebrand of Our Saviors Lutheran Church of Menomonie. The volunteers included Bit Ohvall, Karen Thoner, Larissa Hacks, McKenna Vinall, Becky Meyer, Mariah Schrock and Kelly Brinker. The project included pulling a truckload of “smartweed”. Special thanks to Lori McNown for identifying the invader and for much encouragement throughout this summer.
- The Buckthorn/Honeysuckle removal has been a much bigger project than first envisioned. Four two-day efforts totaling approximately twenty-five truckloads of these invasives were removed from within 200 yards of the Depot. Much thanks to Joel Toms, Dale Seppa, Jane Butsic, Myrna Berg, Joe and Margy Hagaman, Sue Carlson, Lorene Vedde and Katie Harrington.
- Replacing planks on the ramp at the back of the Depot seemed like a fairly straight-forward project - until getting into it of course. Joel Toms endured a twelve hour day in the installation of twenty-one new 3” by 8” by 8’ white oak slabs. There was much “adjustment” of the final position of the lumber. Jim and Bob (DNR) were very helpful in providing equipment and advice on how to ensure minimum trip hazard of the installation.

The Friends group and other volunteers provided over 200 working hours to help maintain and improve the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills State Recreation Area this summer.

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

## ANNUAL MEETING – JUNE 6, 2006

The annual meeting of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail (FRCST) was held on June 6, 2006 at the Holiday Manor Inn & Conference Center. 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 with the help of volunteers. With State funding cut-backs for trails, the role that volunteer groups play is becoming increasingly important. Again this year, the FRCST 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 2006. It was announced at the meeting that Doug Voy was chosen as our volunteer coordinator for 2006. A number of attendees took the opportunity to sign-up to help for the various projects. The FRCST 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. There will be more information on this in the future.

The highlight of the evening was a presentation by Harriet Brown, editor of the Wisconsin Trails Magazine. Her Presentation was on the 10 things that she most liked about Wisconsin. This proved to be very interesting since Harriet is not a native of the area having moved here from New York City some years ago. The presentation renewed our appreciation of what we have here in Wisconsin. We, indeed, do live in a beautiful part of the world. The FRCST would like to thank the Staff of the Holiday Manor Inn & Conference Center for their part in making the evening an enjoyable one.

## CROSS COUNTRY SKI CORNER

BARB GORMAN

As summer fades away and the sights and smells of fall embrace the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills, it is not too early to think of the trails being covered by the white protective blanket of . . . SNOW! The Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills will once again need to look to fundraising to keep the trails open and groomed. Skiers met twice in the past year to begin discussions on how to meet the funding need for grooming. The interest has been strong to keep the trails open and groomed and it is hoped plans can be implemented in the next year to meet the associated costs. I have been coordinating a database of e-mail addresses for skiers. If I have missed anyone, or if you are interested in working on fundraising, please let me know. A meeting on this issue will be held again in October 2006. I will send an e-mail to all of the skiers in my database as to the day, time and place (I can be reached at 235-1725). Looking forward to a good season of cross country skiing on the beautiful Red Cedar State Trail and the heart raising terrain at Hoffman Hills.

## TREASURER'S TIDBITS

TOM KILGORE

Trail pass sales through July 25, 2006 were summarized by the Chamber of Commerce and DNR was paid \$8,250.00 for 568 annual passes (\$15 each) and \$4,764.00 for Daily passes (\$4 each). The Friend's received \$792.00 for the annuals and \$426.40 for the daily's, totaling \$1,218.40 to date. We receive from 5 to 10 percent of each pass sold, depending on the seller. We have received \$2,455.00 in memberships with seven business memberships. Those are: Cedar Corporation, The Creamery, 3M, McCoy Development, Sanna Dairy/ConAgra, Silver Dollar Saloon and Brick Co. and VETS PLUS, Inc. Please support or put in a favorable word for these members. The Trail Signage Grant Account was closed. DNR matched our monies, each paying \$4,115.44 with the resulting \$8,230.88 spent on the new signs marking the trail. These signs went up in 2004 and 2005 with the account just now closed. Wal-Mart had also contributed \$500.00 to that Grant so the Friends share included that money.

## ALONG THE TRAIL

LORI MCNOWN, KNAPSACK NATURALIST

Local bird expert Bob Heagle, now residing in rural Mondovi, has generously given his time and knowledge in support of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) Mentorship program sponsored by the Friends of Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills. A group of birders headed down the Red Cedar Trail from the Downsville rest area with "Bob the Birder" and me for an early morning walk prior to National Trails Day/Great Wisconsin Birding & Nature Trail festivities at the Depot Visitor Center on June 3rd. We identified more birds by sound than sight that beautiful quiet morning on the trail and enthusiastically planned to continue our birding education with Bob on future outings. Birders on our first bird walk included guests from Glenwood City, Irvington, Elmwood, rural Menomonie, and Downsville.

Vacations and busy summer commitments delayed a second outing until July 8. Our car pool loaded up additional friends from Colfax, Downing and Menomonie to trek to prairie areas along the Red Cedar Trail and Chippewa River, where we eventually tallied over forty species before a brief but intense cloudburst propelled us back to shelter in the vehicles. Highlights for several participants undoubtedly were the sights and sounds of the grassland birds whose diminished habitat throughout the world threatens their future survival. Here within the boundaries of the Lower Chippewa Natural Area we watched or heard Clay-colored, Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows. An Eastern Meadowlark repeatedly treated us to her song while we caught sight of Goldfinch, Indigo Bunting and American Redstart scoping the area for breakfast. Several Sandhill Cranes were visible sharing their morning feeding grounds with Killdeer and Red-winged Blackbirds while the Kingbird looked on from his perch high above and a Red-tailed Hawk soared over all. Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Willow Flycatcher, Orchard Oriole, Eastern Bluebird – the list goes on.

As this issue of the Newsletter goes to press our third 2006 outing is getting underway. Weather permitting we will re-visit RCST from Downsville to Dunnville, on bike and foot, to wish Bon Voyage to those great bird watching favorites, referred to in several well-known bird guides as the "confusing" warblers. In spring here on the Mississippi Flyway we are treated to the sights and sounds of these intrepid tiny birds returning from the Gulf, Mexico, Central and South America. Among the colorful warbler group only the bright black, red and white American Redstart male with his yellow patched brown mate, and the charming black masked Common Yellowthroat, endlessly singing "witchety, witchety, witchety" from nearby overgrown meadows, commonly nest in our area. Most warblers treat us to only a brief visit as they fly north in the spring to traditional nesting grounds and stop even more briefly heading south to wintering grounds beginning in late August.

The varied habitats provided by Wisconsin DNR and National Wildlife lands, the State Trail system, the Lower Chippewa Natural Area, civic parks, county reserves and privately protected lands in our area provide a safe haven for these brave little travelers on their annual journey. Support from the Friends of Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills for educational programs like the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative is of great value for the continued preservation of these resources. Bob Heagle and I hope you will join us on future bird outings or that you can attend other educational programs we offer on behalf of WBCI. Beginning birders are especially encouraged to join us. The WBCI "Introduction to Wisconsin Birds" program held on National Trails Day was well attended and was presented again, along with other birding activities, at Downsville Days after the morning bird bike-and-hike on August 26. This program is adaptable to a wide range of ages and is available free of charge to schools and groups in Dunn and nearby counties. Call Lori at 715-664-8778 to schedule "Intro to Wisconsin Birds", a bird walk or other conservation related activities.

**"MOLES HAVE VERY WEAK EYES .. THEY DIG TUNNELS JUST UNDER THE GROUND AND HUNT FOR WORMS AND INSECTS ..... YOU'RE RIGHT .. IT'S A TOUGH WAY TO MAKE A LIVING ."**

**- - - SNOOPY (FROM PEANUTS)**

**TRAIL AMBASSADOR COMMENTS**

**From Dale Seppa:**

As a trail ambassador, I have the opportunity to meet users of the Red Cedar Trail. I have met people from a number of the Midwest states. Outside of Wisconsin, most come from Minnesota, however, I have met biking enthusiasts from Iowa, South Dakota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and, also, some from further away, Kansas, Texas, Florida and Missouri. I'm sure that if you check the license plates of automobiles in the parking lot you will find that visitors to the trail come from all over.

It is always interesting to hear comments from users of the trail:

“Where can I dip my “toesies” in the water?” .....From a new bride of a honeymoon couple

“Your suggestion to stop at Tilli’s for an ice cream cone was a great one. How does she stay in business giving such large cones.” .....Two couples from the Twin Cities

“Are they ever going to pave the trail?” .....From a number of visitors

**From Penny Thiede-Klish**

A true delight! That’s what I have to say about this season – so far – on the Red Cedar and Chippewa River State Trails. Meeting all the outstanding guests, not only to the trails, but also to the communities they run through as well. First time visitors have mentioned time and time again, they will be back! This season has also been a season of discovering all the rich history in these communities. Retelling some of the tales sure add to the guests experience! A couple from the Twin Cities came to visit for the first time this June. They decided to start their biking adventure in Downsville. As I was telling them about the sites, it was as if the eagle was trying to say, “don’t forget about me!” There, overhead, he flew. They were quite impressed! Just hearing the excitement in young people’s voices when they tell of seeing a king fisher go after his breakfast or about the “tame” baby bunnies we seem to have running about ..... it makes you appreciate what we have right here in our backyard!

If you are interested in being a Trail Ambassador contact Dale Seppa for the Red Cedar State Trail, or contact Barb Gorman (715-235-1725) for Hoffman Hills. The duty of a Trail Ambassador is to make the visitor’s experience as enjoyable as possible by answering questions about the areas, assisting users and being alert to their needs, comments, complaints, etc.

**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**

**SOMETIMES I LIE AWAKE AT NIGHT, AND I ASK, “WHY AM I HERE?”  
 THEN A VOICE COMES TO ME THAT SAYS, “WE CAN’T TAKE YOUR QUESTION NOW .. WE’RE ALL OUT  
 ROLLERBLADING ..”**

**--- CHARLIE BROWN (FROM PEANUTS)**



## **Merchandise Available in the Depot**

Buy your Christmas gifts early, before the depot closes for the season!

Gift ideas – Books sold at the bargain rate of \$5.00 each:

Critters of Wisconsin. 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 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. This is a good gift for someone who needs to be reminded of the beauty around, or just to set out on your coffee table.

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!! This is a must for all hikers, bikers, and skiers.

Souvenir "Red Cedar Trail" patches are available for \$2.

Choose from an assortment of Friends of the Red Cedar Trail T-Shirts ranging in price from \$12 - \$15. Available are the popular new orange shirts. Also, there are the gray or beige design in all youth sizes, small adult and XX-large.



## **Volunteers Repairing Trails at Hoffman Hills**

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 3)

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## *FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL*

### Join Today!

(or renew your membership)  
Dues for 2006 (Jan. – Dec.)

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