

FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL & HOFFMAN HILLS NEWSLETTER



Number 34

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National Trails Day – June 2, 2007

Activities are being planned to celebrate National Trails Day (NTD) on June 2 this year. 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. In the afternoon, Dennis Weibel will be leading nature walks. Bad Cat Bicycles will be checking bikes for safety. 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).

Of interest are the many displays in the Depot. Added this year is a mounted 10 year old albino buck deer. Also, Red Cedar State Trail merchandise will be for sale at that time. The DNR will provide booklets, pamphlets and posters on a number of related subjects.

Trail fees are waived for the day; however, yearly trail passes will be available for sale. Free lemonade and cookies will be provided. 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 Jim Janowak at 715-232-1242 for details.

TRAIL MANAGER'S REPORT JIM JANOWAK, DNR

As I write this it is 85 degrees and the Trilliums are in full bloom along the trail. It would be a good day for a ride but...oh well. The trail is in pretty good shape since we were able to get it rolled and dragged finally. It got pretty rough this spring. People were anxious to get out in the nice weather even though the trail was still thawing out and mucky. All the ice on the trail made it difficult to get out in a timely manner and get things smoothed out. (It didn't help that our tractor was in the repair shop for more than a month either.) Our apologies and thank you for your patience.

Thanks to the Friends, Chamber, Liberto Painting and chief volunteer Doug Voy we were able to get the Depot Visitor Center interior painted before the new season. It looks very nice once again. Our friends in the wildlife program recently acquired an albino buck deer mount and have loaned it to us for the year (see page 7). It's one of the new displays at the Depot Visitor Center and quite impressive. You may want to stop by sometime to see it. Maybe on National Trails Day, Saturday, June 2, when the Friends have some other festivities and free refreshments planned. Trail fees are waived for that day and Sunday which is the Statewide Parks Open House. Another item of interest just south of the Depot near the old roundhouse building will be the new interpretive wayside signs with historical information on the railroad and Menomonie.

The Pepin County extension of the Chippewa River Trail is in the process of being paved and should be open by Memorial Day. And the city of Menomonie expects to start working this summer on the city's trail extension. It will use the old Union Pacific railroad bed that goes past Wolskie Bay up to north Menomonie. Both of these projects were first talked about 15 years ago and the Friends group took an active interest from the beginning. It's great to see them become a reality finally. We need to thank the patience and persistence of Pepin Tourism coordinator Terry Mesch, Cedar Corporation and our friends at city hall for these important additions to the regional trails system.

The Friends have been around a long time and if it wasn't for them many of the new developments and old partnerships wouldn't exist. The Depot operation is just one example. When it was renovated back in 1990 funds were never allotted to staff it or pay the bills. Yet through a partnership with the Chamber, Friends and Tourism Commission the Depot has been open 7 days a week during the summer and weekends in spring and fall. That's quite an accomplishment. The group continues as strong as ever and I want to thank everyone that has worked so hard to make it so.

Well it's time to let the summer begin. Have fun and be careful. We'll see you on the trails!

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.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

A number of projects have been completed in recent years. The success of the number of projects completed has been facilitated because of the establishment of the Volunteer Coordinator Position. Therefore, it was decided to continue that again this year. For 2007, Dennis Weibel has been hired as the Project Volunteer Coordinator. He will begin working with Jim Janowak (DNR) and the Chamber in the next month. Dennis recently retired from teaching. He has taught for 30 years in elementary schools in Black River Falls, Dodgeville, Waukesha, and Menomonie. He has a master's degree in Environmental Education, and has always worked hard to make "the environment" a cornerstone of his classroom. As he says, "If it is out there in nature - I love it". He is married to a not-yet-retired teacher, Lynne Krueger. They live out in the wonderfully peaceful Knapp Hills. They have two sons, Noah and Jordan. When they moved up to this area in 1985 they immediately fell in love with the Red Cedar State Trail. They enjoy jogging, skiing, biking, walking, birding and contemplating on the trail. Quoting Dennis, "I am excited to use this opportunity as volunteer coordinator to help maintain this wonderful natural area". Recently, you may have come to know Dennis from his very informative articles which have appeared in the Dunn County News.

Dennis will need the help of our very dedicated group of volunteers to complete the anticipated projects for 2007. There are volunteer opportunities that involve somewhat physically demanding tasks and others that aren't that physically demanding. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact any board member.

Some of the anticipated projects/activities where volunteers are needed for 2007 include:

Depot Visitor Center - There's always a shift or two available during the summer months for greeting visitors, selling passes and doing minor maintenance.

Trail Ambassadors – We would like to expand the Trail Ambassador program. Trail Ambassadors ride the Trail, and as they do so, their duty 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 Ambassadors are not responsible for enforcing DNR regulations. As there is less budget available for trail attendants, the ambassadors are increasingly important for visitor services.

Invasive Species - As a continuing effort from last year, we plan to remove invasive species such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, honeysuckle and prickly ash along the Trail.

Trail and Prairie Maintenance - Hoffman Hills will need some additional attention this year. Brush cutting, weed pulling and maybe even some mowing help would be appreciated.

Ski Groomers – In the winter, additional ski groomers will be needed to help with the fine work done by Bruce Jordan and Ron Pfiffner the last couple of years.

Annual Activities - Volunteers are always needed to help with the regular annual activities such as the Candlelight Ski, National Trails Day, etc.

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 in 2006. **THANK YOU!!!**

Candlelight Ski

On a nearly a perfect evening, January 26, 2007, 400 people turned out to either ski the Red Cedar State Trail or hike the Stokke Trail. Snow conditions were not ideal, but we had enough snow this year to ski. Swiss Miss provided hot chocolate for everyone to enjoy around the warming fire. The Friends and other volunteers took care of setting up the candles and cleaning up afterwards. Thanks to everyone for your help.

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

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.

ANNUAL MEETING – June 5, 2007 – Featured Speaker: Sam Thayer, Forager

The Annual Meeting this year will have Sam Thayer as the featured speaker. Sam Thayer began foraging at the age of 4, when he learned from his older siblings to eat wood sorrel growing in the yard. A hungry child, he thereafter kept a keen eye and ear for every clue to free food. Within a few years his foraging repertoire expanded to include many common plants, such as wild strawberries, raspberries, walnuts, butternuts, dandelion, and dock. He began to seriously study botany at the age of 12 and over the years tested and refined what he learned in books. In 1995 Sam began teaching about edible wild plants. In 2000, he won the Hazel Wood National Wild Food Cooking Contest and began teaching more seriously, launching, "The Forager", a wild food newsletter that he edited and published for three years. 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 book, The Forager's Harvest: A Guide to Identifying, Harvesting, and Preparing Edible Wild Plants, released in 2006, met with commending reviews and has quickly become a favorite among foraging enthusiasts. In 2006 he was inducted into the National Wild Foods Hall of Fame. Sam still lives in the North Woods of Wisconsin and makes gathering and eating wild plants the focus of his life.

Prior to Sam's presentation there will be a social time at 6:30, and at 7:00, there will be a few brief presentations by Board Members. The Annual Meeting will be at the Holiday Manor Inn & Conference Center.

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

BARB GORMAN

Business Memberships

Since the last newsletter, the business memberships continue to grow. Memberships were received from Dan Wood, D.D.S. and Bad Cat Bicycles. The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills sincerely appreciates their memberships and the support of all the area businesses. Thank you business memberships!

**Bad Cat Bicycle
Cedar Corporation
The Creamery
Conagra
3M Corporation
Phil Steans, S.C.
Dan Wood, D.D.S.
Dunn County Energy Cooperative
Gary Welch Construction
Silver Dollar Saloon and Brick Co.
Gentle Dental Care, Lisa Joyce, D.D.S.**

**Legacy Chocolate
McCoy Development
The Medicine Shoppe
Vets Plus
Heritage Builders**

The Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills are resources unique to Menomonie and Dunn County. They contribute to a healthy quality of life. Each year the Friends' group works on projects that enhance these resources, benefiting both the users and the business community. These two resources provide a successful tourism base for the area. People from throughout the community and the State use both sites for nature and physical fitness activities. Sponsoring business members can be recognized by a decal displayed on their door or window. If you are interested in becoming a business member, see any Friends board member.

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CROSS COUNTRY SKI CORNER**BARB GORMAN**

As skiers patiently waited for snow to arrive, Mother Nature cooperated just enough to provide snow for those who attended the Candlelight Ski on January 26, 2007 to enjoy the Red Cedar State Trail on skis. Mother Nature then took a brief rest and skiers again waited patiently for more snow. The patience was well rewarded with much needed snowfall in February and March. Grooming on the Red Cedar State Trail was excellent, despite the tricky conditions of ice and variable snow depths. Bruce Jordan and Ron Pffinner once again did an outstanding job keeping the Red Cedar State Trail in excellent groomed condition. A big thank you to Bruce and Ron for their time and commitment.

Skiers enjoyed excellent skiing conditions at Hoffman Hills throughout most of the winter months. A big thanks to Bob and Jim, who keep conditions at Hoffman Hills the very best in the state. Skiers continue to make donations to help pay for the cost of grooming at Hoffman Hills. Grooming of the Red Cedar State Trail is provided by volunteer hours.

TREASURER'S TIDBITS**TOM KILGORE**

Membership renewals have been trickling in – a membership list will be available at the June 5th Annual meeting—renew now to “make the list!” Our major expense in 2007 has been the \$1,500.00 payment to the Pepin County Bike Trail Project, which is a benefit to our trail users too. We also, jointly with the Chamber of Commerce, paid Dave Liberto for painting in the Depot and we renewed our liability insurance.

As this goes to the Editor, we have \$11,459.49 in our operating cash account and are holding \$1,825.00 for grooming at Hoffman Hills.

**SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE
FRIENDS OF THE RED CEDAR STATE TRAIL & HOFFMAN HILLS**

Everyone is Welcome

Annual Meeting --- June 5, 2007

Place: Holiday Manor Inn & Conference Center, Menomonie

Time: Social - 6:30 P.M., Complementary hors d'oeuvres

Meeting & Program: 7 P.M.

Program: Sam Thayer, Forager; One of North America's leading authorities on edible wild plants and author of "The Forager's Harvest: A Guide to Identifying, Harvesting, and Preparing Edible Wild Plants".

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

Silica Sand Mine

In February 2007, the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills Board submitted a letter to the Dunn County News opposing the strip mine being proposed by Proppant Specialists LLC, a company from Texas. The proposed strip mine is on land that abuts Hoffman Hills. The Board of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills also submitted a letter to the Dunn County Board of Adjustment opposing this strip mine and plans to address the Board of Adjustment when the next meeting occurs. The Board of Adjustment was scheduled to meet on April 19, 2007. This meeting was cancelled as Proppant Specialists asked for additional time, hoping to propose a “win/win solution.” As letters to the editor in the Dunn County News indicate, an overwhelming majority opposes the strip mine proposal. The primary objections include; the increase in noise, the increase in traffic and the alteration of the land bordering Hoffman Hills and how this alteration will affect the nature environment. Hoffman Hills is a unique resource in Dunn County and protection of its wildlife state is a priority. The Board of the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills will attend the next scheduled Board of Adjustment meeting.

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 for 2007 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 CENTER

SOMETIMES I LIE AWAKE AT NIGHT, AND ASK, CAN MY GENERATION LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH HOPE? THEN, OUT OF THE DARK, A VOICE COMES TO ME THAT SAYS, “WHY, SURE .. WELL, I MEAN ... THAT IS ... IT SORT OF DEPENDS ... I MEAN .. WHEN .. WHO .. WE .. AND ...

.....CHARLIE BROWN

The newest addition to the Nature Center in the Depot is shown in the picture below. It is a 10 year old albino buck deer. It is on loan for a year.



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 | |