

Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills Newsletter



Number 55 - Winter 2015

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Candlelight Ski - Friday, January 30th

The annual popular winter event, the Candlelight Ski, will be held on January 30, 2015 from 6 - 9 P.M. The Red Cedar State Trail and the Stokke Trail will be lit with luminaries. Also again this year, there is the opportunity to snowshoe on an illuminated trail at neighboring Riverside Park. With some good snow and decent temperatures it should shape up to be a great night to enjoy these winter activities. The Red Cedar State Trail will be open for skiing from the Depot to the illuminated ice wall, about 1.5 miles. We ask walkers to be respectful of the groomed Red Cedar State Trail and refrain from walking on it. For those wishing to ski, it is advisable that you bring your own skis. Limited ski rentals will be available from Stout Adventures by calling at 232-5625, in advance. The Stokke Trail will be cleared to provide the opportunity for those wishing to take a candlelight walk. For those interested in snowshoeing, either bring your own snowshoes, or free snowshoes will be provided by the Menomonie School District for everyone in the family to snowshoe at Riverside Park.

The Depot will be open and staffed with volunteers who can provide information about the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills. Of interest are the many displays in the Depot. Passes will not be required that evening; however, yearly trail passes will be available for sale. Also, for sale, will be Red Cedar State Trail merchandise.

After skiing or walking, warm up with a cup of hot chocolate provided by Swiss Miss and join everyone around the glowing bonfire. It is a fun time for the whole family to experience the joys of winter. This event is organized by the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills, ConAgra and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

A Free Night of Fun for All!!

Hello to all our Friends and volunteers.

It's been another busy and yet successful year for the trails. It's been a while since we had an update and looking back there is so much to report on. Not only did we have our unofficial start to the summer biking season with our annual National Trails Day event but now we're fully into the start of the winter season.

DNR staff was very busy again trying to keep up with the grass that never stopped growing this year but also doing a lot of storm damage cleanup. There were more than a dozen landslides that occurred along sections of the Red Cedar and Chippewa River State Trails from the heavy rains we received throughout September. The largest landslide filled 20 large dump trucks. The September floods also washed out a large section of shoreline near mile marker 10 on the Red Cedar Trail. We just completed the emergency shoreline stabilization repair but we are now taking a system wide look at all potential shoreline stabilization work as we have experienced heavier rain events and increased erosion along our trail network. This may result in additional rip rap projects all along the trail network in the future. Just one of the unique challenges we face when the trail system is next to a scenic river way.

On another, sad note, the Red Cedar Trail lost a unique historical feature over the summer. One in which has ties to the Mabel Tainter Center and the St. Thomas Church in New York. The last known remaining standing sandstone quarry spar fell over during a storm this year. This structure was the mast portion of derrick system that moved the large stone blocks that were used to create some of our most iconic local landmarks including the Mabel Tainter Center. Remnants still remain of the sandstone quarry between mile marker 10 and Highway Y. In fact most of the cliffs in that area are actually the quarry wall itself.

The wet summer also put us behind repairing trails at Hoffman Hills. Maintenance staff could not even access the trails due to the wet conditions until mid-July. However, DNR staff was able to setup another timber sale, which is planned to occur in the summer/fall of 2015. This will widen existing trails for a better skiing experience while promoting forest regeneration and species diversity. By the way, just in case you noticed, those trees are painted on purpose.

The skiing experience should be much improved this season as it will be the first full year that we will have our new Ginzu ski groomer! Although we won't have a lot of trail changes out at Hoffman we did find enough time to widen and flatten a couple sections as a nice surprise for this year. Hope you all get out and enjoy them!

President's Report

Bill Kryshak

It is hard to believe that by the time you receive this winter newsletter our days are getting longer and many are thinking of activities that will occur in spring or summer. To introduce myself, I am Bill Kryshak and I have the pleasure of serving as the current president of this fine organization. I am a long time member of the Friends group and I have previously served on the board as the treasurer. At the annual meeting in September we had a bit of a reorganization of the board which consisted of some changes in the officers of the group, and more importantly, adding a number of new board members. We hope this allows for a growth of ideas on how we can make the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills even a greater recreation spot for our vast number of trail users. There are a number of things in the works including our annual Candlelight Ski, a window project in the Depot to allow better access to information for visitors, a repaving of the parking lot at the Red Cedar Trail head and future projects such as looking at improving the lighting in the parking lot along with hopefully adding some new grooming equipment for the Red Cedar. We need your help on much of this which is why memberships are so very important to us along with volunteering when you can. Our sole purpose is to make the fabulous resources that we have been blessed with even better so I hope you will join us in this effort. Lastly I want to thank our past president, Doug Voy, for his service and dedication to the Friends group over the years. Think snow and see you on the trails.

Treasurer's Report

Nancy Flyen

Our 2014 total membership collections amount to \$1450.00. Of which \$150 is from corporate donations that are split between Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills Grooming Account. Great thanks to Joe and Ellen for working hard to increase individual and family memberships over the past year. We have received the 2014 trail pass revenue from the chamber in the amount of \$1364.40. As of December 15, 2014, individual donations for Hoffmann Hills Grooming totals \$125.

As of December 15, 2014 we have an operating balance of \$3,348.50 and a Hoffman Hills grooming balance of \$3,908.77; resulting in a total amount available for operations of \$7,257.27. The Steward Grant account has a current balance of \$1,250 which is designated toward remodeling the depot and striping the parking lot. The previous Steward Grant balance was closed, with the amount of \$25.61 transferred to the operations account. The Burr Oak Savanna/Hoffman Hills account has a balance of \$1,125.64. We have now completed the signage for this project and we will work with the DNR to close the project in January 2015. On December 15, 2014 the FRCTHH has operating and grant dollars totaling \$9632.91. This is balance is not expected to change for the balance of January.

Membership Report

Ellen Ochs

Friends enjoyed a Membership Event at the Russell J. Rassbach Museum on October 26th. Museum director Matt Carter gave a "TRAINS TO TRAILS" historical presentation, amplified by information added our members! We then had light refreshments and discussion about improvements to the trail and Hoffman Hills, some ongoing and some proposed. The Board shared its ideas about potential lighting for the depot parking lot, bike pump/repair stations, and events like foot races, guided birding, an annual bike ride, geo-caching, a photo contest, and perhaps partnering with the library with a storybook connection.

In turn, attending members offered more ideas: porta-toilets in April, getting more young persons and families involved with the Friends, opening up vistas along the Trail in some areas, & perhaps putting a "donation tree" at the depot, honoring donors. Some brought up getting on WEAU CH13 interviews (CH18 too) for events, and Matt Carter said he could help us with that!

A sign-up sheet for volunteers circulated, (but the planned attack on invasive species was later thwarted by the weather!) Members were given a fascinating museum tour after the meeting. The two 2015 Trail Pass door prizes went to Bill Butsic and Marie Koch - the actual passes just came in, and will be mailed to these winners.

Menomonie Winter Events

Joan Friedenfels

Winter is upon us, and The Dunn County Fish & Game will be hosting numerous ice fishing events. For all of the fun activities happening in Menomonie this winter, log on to www.menomoniechamber.org and view our community calendar and like our Facebook page, "MyMenomonie".

January 9, 2015 - "Operation Tip up" - Veteran's from all over the state can fish and learn the newest techniques from area pros and the public is invited to meet and thank our veterans.

February 22, 2015 - Team Extreme Ice fishing tournament.

March 8-10, 2015 - The North American Ice Fishing Circuit returns for the 4th year with a three-day ice fishing event: Friday night seminar, Saturday Kids ice fishing camp followed by the tournament on Sunday.

To add a bit of cultural flare to this issue of the *Friends of RCHH* newsletter we're offering a piece of poetry by long-time member and "friend" Robert Schuler who is a retired professor emeritus at UW-Stout in the English Dept. Bob has written and published 14 collections of his works and has given readings throughout the US. He is an avid all-season trail use participant. One of his works, *Red Cedar Suite*, based on his images and sense of place on the trail, is available at the RCT depot. This piece, *Early Thaw*, from the above book, evokes special images of scenery and wildlife I've encountered along our beloved trail. Let us know if you enjoy this inclusion and we can provide more in future issues:

Early Thaw

*skiing down river south
under royal blue sky
along the foaming gray river
icy-snow crackling and hissing
under my skis
icicles exploding
blue off the bluffs
the dust and flakes of rocks
shattered
golden-brown over snow
the red-bellied woodpeckers
splintering
the black galls of willows*

Cross Country Skiing

Barb Gorman

Although Mother Nature is not exactly cooperating in providing skiable snow, grooming is ready for both the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills. As has been mentioned in other articles, Hoffman Hills received new grooming equipment last year. The new ginzu groomer arrived near the end of ski season, so it did not get a full season of use. Groomers are looking forward to putting the new ginzu to good use this year, and in years to come. For a few weeks last year, the snowmobile used to pull the grooming equipment on the Red Cedar State Trail was broken. During the time the snowmobile was being repaired, the gator that is used at Hoffman Hills to pull the ginzu was used on the Red Cedar State Trail. The groomers for the Red Cedar State Trail liked the comfort and safety of the gator. It is time to plan to obtain a second gator,

Grooming continues to be done by volunteers. The FRCST/HH has been fortunate to have a group of groomers that has been consistent over the past many years. Groomers learn from each other and share their experiences and skills. Grooming is long, hard work. If you see a groomer when you are out enjoying a ski, give them a thanks. The groomers are dedicated to giving skiers a well groomed and safe trail. They can't control the snow conditions, but they do a great job of turning the conditions into great skiing. Hoffman Hills and the Red Cedar State Trail have a reputation for excellent grooming. It is amazing and rewarding how many skiers come from the surrounding area to ski at Hoffman Hills and the Red Cedar State Trail because of the grooming. Providing the excellent grooming would not be possible without the work of the volunteer groomers and the equal importance of the work and support of Calvin Kunkle, DNR property manager.

Webmaster Report

Joe Hagaman

Check out the Friends website for more information about two of Dunn County's favorite recreational areas.. The website averages 200 to 300 unique visits per month. At this time of year the link to Ski Conditions will take you to "Skinny Ski" which gives cross-country ski conditions for the trail and for Hoffman Hills. Previous newsletters are also on the site and a listing of all the new board members.

[HTTP://redcedarhoffman.org](http://redcedarhoffman.org)

The Red Cedar Watershed Conference

The Red Cedar River flows through some of the best farmland, lake country and bike country in Wisconsin. The Red Cedar State Bike Trail follows the river. Now we are at a tipping point where both our soil and water quality threaten our growing economy and recreation. March 12th will be the fourth annual conference with an emphasis on how land, water and people come together. The conference brings in local & national speakers all day on March 12th at UW Stout Student Center. During the day we will travel vicariously down the river with Rod Olson to see the beauty and the challenges of the Red Cedar. To register or get more information go to www.uwstout.edu/profed/redcedar. Plan to Attend!

Birds, Bugs and Blooms Bash

The Birds, Bugs and Blooms Bash is Chippewa Valley's first nature festival. Mark your calendars for **June 5 – 7, 2015**. Enjoy keynote speakers both Friday and Saturday nights at UW - Stout's Memorial Student Center in Menomonie. There will be many field trips to choose from on both Saturday and Sunday. The field trips will be held throughout the Chippewa Valley and cover topics such as bird-banding, wolf ecology, poisonous snakes of Wisconsin, kayaking, wildflowers and nature photography. Besides the field trips there will also be many opportunities to learn from other sessions and workshops. For a full list of keynote speakers, session/workshops, and field trips, watch for the Birds, Bugs and Blooms Bash website in mid-February. *{Note that National Trails Day will be Saturday, June 6 with additional events.}*

Important Dues Reminder (for 2015)

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 and National Trails Day. As a reminder, dues can be paid by using the form on the last page of this newsletter and mailing to the address indicated

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.

**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



Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills

Join Today!

(or renew your membership)

Dues for 2015 (Jan. – Dec.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Annual Memberships Include:

- Membership Card
- Newsletters
- Information on Activities

**Make checks payable to:
Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail
P.O. Box 628**

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 | |

Special Contribution to the CC Ski Grooming Fund _____