

Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills Newsletter



Number 57 - Winter 2016

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Candlelight Ski - Friday, January 29th

FREE EVENT. TRAIL PASS FEE WAIVED.

The annual popular winter event, the Candlelight Ski, will be held on January 29 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.

Event sponsored by the Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills, Wisconsin DNR, ConAgra/Swiss Miss, and Mayo Clinic Health System.

Trail Manager's Report

Cal Kunkle

The snow has arrived!

Ski season started out slow but we are in full swing at both properties. DNR staff and volunteers have really worked hard to improve trails and get them groomed for the first snow fall. We improved another 2 miles of trail at Hoffman Hills by widening and leveling them out. If you haven't been there check out the trails on the south side of the property.

2015 has been another wonderful year, all thanks to hardworking, dedicated community members! Volunteers put a lot of hours in cleaning up after the timber sale at Hoffman Hills that expanded the oak savanna behind the maintenance shed and installing tree shelters on the existing oak planting. Hats off to all the folks that put extra time in clearing the trails before the ski season too, especially the Elk Mound cross country team, Roger Magnuson, and Jonie Dulin! We also can't forget the great efforts by the Friends Group who staff the Red Cedar Trail Visitor Center, who also helped pay for the new visitor service window and got the parking area resealed and painted.

Plans are in the works to do additional trail work at Hoffman, replacing culverts on the Red Cedar Trail, and improving the visitor center. Let's make 2016 even better!

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Treasurer's Report

Nancy Flyen

Our 2015 total membership collections amount to \$835.00. Of which \$150 is from corporate donations that were split between Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills Grooming Account. Although, donations are down from 2014, we will continue our effort to grow membership. The Friends of the Red Cedar Trail took over running the depot in 2015 and trail pass revenue increased from \$1885 to \$2280. Donations in 2015 for grooming Hoffman Hills fell to only \$75. As you know, we rely on donations of both time and money to keep the trails in excellent condition.

As of December 31, 2015 we have an operating balance of \$3,870.68 and a Hoffman Hills grooming balance of \$4008.77; resulting in total funds available for operations of \$7879.45. The 2014 Steward Grant account for depot remodeling is still open. So far this grant has provided funding for remodeling the depot window, striping the parking lot, and a new sandwich board. The grant remains open, we are hoping that we have enough funds to replace a door at the Depot. Since this is a historic building the cost may exceed the \$1700 we have remaining through the grant. We completed and closed the Burr Oak Savannah/Hoffman Hills steward grant which was used to restore land to support the planting of Burr Oak at Hoffman Hills. The Friends group continues to work in cooperation with the DNR by purchasing and planting trees which will grow into a beautiful Oak Savannah in the future.

President's Report

Bill Kryshak

I hope everyone has had a good start to the new year and the we would like to thank you for your support as members. We hope that you will continue to support us with both memberships and volunteering as we help maintain the wonderful trails that we are fortunate to have in our area.

It was a busy year for the Friends group that started with our annual Candlelight Ski which turned out to be a great success based on the turnout and positive feedback we received even though we had a minimal amount of snow to work with. Adding the candlelight walking section, the candlelight snowshoe trail, having hot chocolate with the bon fire along with the skiing makes for a great evening. National Trails Day in early June was another success as we were blessed with good weather and a nice turnout. The eagles from the Rapture Center, the reptile exhibit, free fishing along with other activities continue to be a popular way to promote the trail and show our community members the great natural resource we have.

This fall for our annual meeting we had Arlyn Colby as a guest speaker. Arlyn has researched and written books on the railroad history within the Chippewa Valley and Wisconsin. It was a fun night to hear about how our trail was started along with many other trails that we have access to in Wisconsin.

The efforts to restore and expand the oak savannah at Hoffman Hills continue to be a priority along with the constant improvement of the cross country ski and walking trails. If you have not been out there recently I think when you do go you will be amazed of the changes which have helped make the trail more use friendly.

A few of our other projects included installing a new window in the Depot which allows visitors to be greeted when they walk in the door and the repainting of the lines for the parking lot. We hope to add better lighting in the future for the parking lot along with numerous other small projects that just make your visit to the Red Cedar Trail or Hoffman Hills more enjoyable.

I want to thank all of our volunteers as without you we cannot continue to maintain and improve our trails. We look forward to another great year and hope that you continue in your support.

Vice-President's Report

Ellen Ochs

Summer Depot Staffing - For the first time, the Friends took on the full financial responsibility for trail pass sales this year, as the Chamber of Commerce no longer has in-house bookkeeping. I worked with our treasurer Nancy Flyen and our Summer Volunteer Coordinator Candy Jordan, to establish policies and procedures along the lines of “keep it simple,” draw up updated accounting sheets for reporting, and coach all of our wonderful summer volunteers. And it worked! The Chamber still staffs the weekends and holidays, and we recruit volunteers to staff weekdays from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend. We also got volunteers to keep the depot open on weekends in September.

We are already thinking of recruiting next summer's volunteers – it's a valuable service to the Trail, and fun to do! Think about volunteering! The Friends get a percentage from the sale of Trail Passes, which helps a lot with the upkeep and improvement of the Trail and Hoffman Hills. And remember, your membership dues help too!

Cross Country Skiing

Barb Gorman

The skiers have appreciated the post-Christmas snowfall. Once again, the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills are being groomed by volunteers. These volunteers do an outstanding job- thank you Dan, John, Roger, Duane, Bill, David, and Jim. It took three days of grooming to roll, groom, and set track at Hoffman Hills. It took two days of grooming for the same on the Red Cedar State Trail. Plus, the work done by Jim Tenorio makes skiing under the two bridges on the Red Cedar State Trail easy and smooth. Jim is the snow shoveler. Thanks to Jim, you do not need to take your skis off to go underneath the bridges; you can ski right along on a smooth snow pass. In addition, another day of grooming was done on the Red Cedar State Trail to repair the damage caused by those who walk on the groomed ski trail. The damage done by walkers at Hoffman Hills cannot be repaired until more snow is received. It has been a frustrating start to the ski season due to the number of people walking on the ski trails at Hoffman Hills and the Red Cedar State Trail. The Board is exploring options to address the problem. If you have a suggestion, please contact a Board member- we would appreciate the ideas. Thank you groomers for all your hard work and time- the skiers appreciate you. Thank you also to Calvin- his work has really improved the skiing at Hoffman Hills. Calvin always makes sure the groomers have what they need and is great to work with.

Other Local Events

Menomonie Polar Plunge

Date: February 13, 2016

Time: 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM CST

Website: <http://PlungeWI.org>

A spectacular sight to see and join! Put on a wacky costume, raise money, and jump in a lake in winter to benefit 1,000 local Special Olympics athletes. Chicken? That's okay. You can still participate by registering as Too Chicken or as a Frozen Fundraiser and stay on dry land! Enjoy food, music, bonfires, beer, prizes & more. Get a group together and register at PlungeWI.org. Plunging starts at Noon, but the party goes all day! \$75 minimum to Plunge, but the more money you raise the more prizes you win. More details on the registration website. Are you brave enough to join the fun and fundraising?

Events Sponsored by Mayo Clinic Health System

Healthy Hike at Hoffman Hills

Bring your friends and family out to explore the signs of spring as you hike up and down the hills. Climb the lookout tower for a beautiful view of Dunn County. A healthy snack will be provided.

Saturday, April 30, 1-2:30 pm, Hoffman Hills Recreation Area

Call 715-233-7464 to register by April 27

Snowshoe and Winter Hike

Bundle your family for a free winter wonderland hike. Warm up by the fire afterwards with a light snack and hot beverage. Limited number of snowshoes available.

Saturday, Feb. 13, 1 – 3pm Bjornson Education Recreation Center, Menomonie School Forest

Call 715-233-7464 to register by February 5

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.

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.

Donation Information

The Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail/Hoffman Hills have 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. You can also contact Ellen Ochs at ellenbochs@yahoo.com. 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.

**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.**



Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills

Join Today!

**(or renew your membership)
Dues for 2016 (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
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 | |

Special Contribution to the CC Ski Grooming Fund _____