

Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills Newsletter



Number 62 - Winter 2018

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Candlelight Ski

Friday, January 26

The annual popular winter event, the Candlelight Ski, will be held on January 26 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. The Red Cedar State Trail will be open for skiing from the Depot to the illuminated ice wall, about 1.5 miles. Skis are required for the Red Cedar State Trail, there is no walking/hiking or snowshoeing on the ski trail. For those wishing to ski, it is advisable that you bring your own skis. Limited ski rentals are available from Stout Adventures by calling 232-5625, in advance. The Stokke Trail will be cleared and lit 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 Mayo Clinic Health System for everyone in the family to enjoy. 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, walking, or snowshoeing, warm up with a cup of hot chocolate provided by Swiss Miss and join everyone around the glowing bonfire. And Lucette Pizza is right next door to enjoy good food afterwards. 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, Lucette, and Mayo Clinic Health System. The event is held regardless of snow conditions, with modifications made. Door prizes will be drawn. Come join the fun!

Whew! Another year in the books and I can't even think how we got to January. 2017 went by pretty fast with all the work we got done with an amazing list of accomplishments. Here is a recap of events and accomplishments to be proud of for being a Friend to our parks system.

We hosted close to 700 people at last year's winter candlelight event back to last. Our second event of the year we welcomed close to 200 people to the Red Cedar Trail for the National Trails Day event in May. Besides the special events, an estimated 61,000 people visited the Red Cedar Trail and an estimated 52,000 people visited Hoffman Hills Recreation Area respectively for the 2017 calendar year.

Volunteer time is essential for supporting these events and to provide great customer service to our park visitors. When I added up all the volunteer time the community donated it totaled nearly 800 service hours! That is like having a full time person for 20 weeks out of the year. That time investment from the community gets a lot of projects done. Thinking back to last year we planted another 100 oak trees at Hoffman Hills, harvested 50 pounds of prairie seed, groomed 14 miles of ski trails, planted flower beds along the trail, helped staff the visitor center for the entire summer season and part of fall, replaced boards on the Depot Ramp, and various other tasks that are too many to mention let alone the investment in Friends Board meetings, activities, planning or the other tasks involved in being a Friends Member.

It is very evident that volunteers are essential to supporting these properties not only in what people accomplish but that additional volunteer time allows DNR staff to complete other essential work on the properties. Park staff completed multiple maintenance projects and we were able to complete 3 special capital development projects. This included grading and patching the trail, renovating additional hiking trails at Hoffman Hills, replacing decking and railings on a bridge, installing a new drinking fountain at Hoffman Hills, replacing 17 culverts, and clearing nearly half a mile of plugged ditches.

We still have a lot of maintenance backlog to accomplish but as long as we have support from our Friends and the community we will continue to have quality recreational trails. Thanks again for another great year and I'm looking forward to spending time and seeing folks on the trails!

President's Report

Bill Kryshak

Happy New Year and we hope your year is off to a good start. As I write this the weather people are forecasting snow which hopefully happens as the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills are very special after a new snowfall. The wildlife seems to enjoy it as much as we do and there is always something that I see on the trails that makes it a new experience. We hope you can get out and enjoy the properties at some point this winter.

We thank all of you for your support both financially and with your volunteer work during the last year. Your efforts allowed us to continue to focus on maintaining and improving both the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills in a time where state support is diminishing. You will see in the newsletter that we had an active 2017 and with your continued support we have many things that we would love to accomplish in 2018 including improving the lighting in the Depot parking lot, upgrading our grooming equipment and adding an educational component to the visits especially geared toward children.

A special thanks goes to Calvin as Trail Manager. Please thank him when you run into him as his efforts and abilities to accomplish what he does with the budget he has is remarkable. That being said there will be many challenges for us in the future and I want to ask that you continue your support so that our two beautiful properties continue to be a destination not only for us but for the many visitors we have coming from so many places. Thank you again for all you do to help and we look forward to another great year.

Vice-President's Report

Ellen Ochs

Summer Depot Staffing: We had a very successful summer season at the Trail Head, with great volunteers, good trail pass sales, and a fun Volunteer Recognition Picnic in September. We recruit and train volunteers to staff the Depot on weekdays from Memorial Day to Labor Day (The Chamber has been staffing the weekends). This year we also kept the Depot open on weekends in September. Our big new adventure was to learn how to accept credit and debit cards for payment at the Depot, by means of a donated iPad & a HotSpot! We made it work, which was much appreciated by the public!

Attention: New volunteers are always welcome, for the coming summer season! Three hour shifts, only. Also, we are looking for help with volunteer coordinating for 2018 - please contact me (ellenbochs@yahoo.com) or any board member if you are interested in either opportunity.

2017 saw some important financial news for the Friends of the Red Cedar Trail / Hoffman Hills.

The most encouraging story was the success of the business membership drive which resulted in \$2150 in contributions -- over ten times last year's total of \$200. Let's all remember to thank and patronize these sponsors! Another improvement in the past year was the introduction of electronic monetary transactions at the Depot to allow sales by credit/debit card. Although poor weather last summer created a slight drop in overall pass sales, e-payment was a popular option and may have been part of the reason for merchandise sales that were more than double those of 2016.

A little less encouraging was the change in individual memberships and donations. Both were lower than in 2016 with memberships going down 37% and donations dropping 65%. We appreciate every dollar and look forward to expanded contributions in 2018!

As of December 31, 2017 there is \$4434 in the operating fund and \$5409 in the Hoffman Hills grooming account for a combined total of \$9843 in the checking account. We were able to use over \$2400 in grant money for improvement projects along the Red Cedar Trail. The final expenditures on the bicycle pumps resulted in the closing of the Bike Station Grant account. We also applied the remaining funds of the Stewardship Grant to repair the Depot door. The Burr Oak Savanna account, which funds restoration and planting projects at Hoffman Hills, has a balance of \$861, bringing our total balance to \$10,731. This is still slightly higher than last year's total of \$10,704 despite having to pay for a portion of the bicycle station project and provide matching funds for the Stewardship Grant.

Thank you for your continued support of the Friends!

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 and our Facebook page has 299 "Likes", up by 100 over the previous year. Previous newsletters are also on the site and a listing of all the board members.

Friends website: redcedarhoffman.org

Friends Facebook Page: search for Friends of the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills and click the "LIKE" button.

Three County Bike/Pedestrian Planning

The counties of Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire are planning for the future of bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The individual county bicycle and pedestrian plans will focus on creating a greater array of transportation options while promoting connectivity, safety, health, economic and tourism opportunities within and beyond each county. This planning process will also be used to identify priority bicycle and pedestrian enhancements for the upcoming years in each of the counties.

Citizen input is essential to the county plans and we need your help to identify opportunities and challenges! Please share your thoughts through points, lines, and comments on the map. You can even add photos of favorite destinations, unique challenge areas, or anything else. This input will guide recommendations and priorities for improving walking and bicycling across the county. (*Hint: You must enter your email or click "anonymous" at the bottom of this pop-up to create your own routes and destinations.*)

<http://wikimapping.com/wikimap/Three-County-Bicycle-and-Pedestrian-Plan.html#.Wl1vLiOZPUI>

If you want to provide additional input, please contact:

Bob Colson , County Planning and Zoning Administrator rcolson@co.dunn.wi.us

Important Dues Reminder for 2018

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. You can also go to the Friends website and join on-line with your debit card.

<http://redcedarhoffman.org/membership/>

**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 2018 (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"/> \$20 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Small Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Large Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Sponsoring Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Lifetime | |

Special Contribution to the CC Ski Grooming Fund _____