

Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills Newsletter



Number 65 - Winter 2019

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Website:

redcedarhoffman.org

Candlelight Ski

Friday, January 25

FREE EVENT TRAIL PASS FEE WAIVED

The annual popular winter event, the Candlelight Ski, will be held on January 25 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 cookies provided by Subway 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!

Since the last report we have finished up a couple projects. We did get 7 culverts replaced and cleaned up some plugged ditches near mile 1 and 2. Hopefully that will keep the ice buildup down this winter around the ice wall. All the buckthorn between Riverside Park and the trail was cut and treated through the help of multiple volunteer groups. This will give us a better view of the park and river this winter. Groups that helped on this project were the Menomonie Chamber of Commerce, Andersen Logistics Team, Fred Ochs, Penny and Gene Thiede, UW-Stout Ecology Restoration Class, and others from the community. The folks from Andersen Logistics enjoyed the chamber work day so much they have sponsored a section of the trail from mile 3 to 5. We look forward to working with this partner group to improve the trail.

Improving our trail network is definitely a priority for me and it's always great to get new equipment to accomplish that work. Thanks to the Friends, business members, as well as other donors with helping to purchase a new Tidd Tech Ski Groomer this year. It's all setup and ready to go. It should be a big improvement really for grooming the trail, especially to help renovate those icy spots we get along the trail. Our volunteer trail groomers got to see it at our preseason groomer meeting held in mid-December. I think Bill Kryshak thought Christmas came early for him this year. Bill looked rearing to go and try the new groomer. I think all of our volunteer groomers are excited for the season, which I sure am. I am also very thankful we have a very dedicated group of volunteers. Grooming ski trails is a lot of work and it wouldn't get done with them. If you see the groomers on the trails give them a big thanks, our winter trails would not be the same! Talking about winter activities don't forget the 2019 candlelight event on January 25.

Enjoy the season and see you on the trails.

Happy New Year and I hope 2018 was a good year for you. The Friends thanks you for your past support of our two beautiful trails and I hope you can continue to help us whether by membership, volunteering and if possible, both.

The Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills are off to a slow start this winter as we need a little snow to get the season rolling. Hopefully by the time you are reading this it is no longer an issue as we are anxious to try out the new groomer we recently help purchase for the Red Cedar Trail. This specific purchase would not have been possible without the dollars we raise through our business memberships as 50% are designated for ski trails, some additional designated ski trail donations from our individual and family memberships and finally a grant from the Walmart Foundation. Support of our trails with state dollars has continued to decrease as parks are being forced to become much more self-sustaining and organizations like the FRCST/ Hoffman Hills along with all the partners noted above are needed more than ever to help maintain these fabulous resources.

The Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills continue to have a tremendous economic impact to Dunn County as we draw visitors not only from Wisconsin and Minnesota but from all over the country. People love both properties and we constantly hear how impressed they are with the natural beauty and the overall cleanliness and maintenance of the sites. This is a tribute to the work of our local DNR and the many volunteers that help in their effort.

Our focus will be to continue to help make both properties as user friendly as possible. 2018 was a great year for the group as along with our partner the DNR we helped host the candlelight ski and the National Trails Day gathering - both very successful. In addition our dedicated group of volunteers who help at the Depot throughout the summer allowed the many people who visited the trail to get their questions answered, purchase trail passes and walk away with that personal touch which helps bring them back. We received a wonderful donation from Conagra which will allow us to install a couple of efficient water dispensers on the Red Cedar Trail next spring and we received another grant that was a joint effort with the State, the Hoffman Foundation account and the Friends that will allow us to put in new signage and kiosks at the properties. UW-Stout Professor Jim Burritt was our guest presenter at our annual meeting held in November and he talked about what has been killing our bees. Jim was a hit as he did a great job and certainly had the crowds interest based on the number of questions that he was asked. We also want to thank the Raw Deal which allowed us to host the event at their location.

A special thanks to Calvin, Penny and the rest of the DNR staff for all they do for the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills. We are very fortunate to have the group we have.

I will end by asking for your continued support to help us with our mission and wish you all the best in 2019.



If you missed the **First Day Hike** at the Trail on January 1st, put it on your calendar for sure for NEXT January 1st, 2020! Some 30 warmly-dressed people gathered at noon at the Depot to walk up the Junction Trail with Calvin Kunkle and Penny Theide-Klish. Snow was lacking for skiing, and the Red Cedar Trail is very icy and uneven right now for walking, so the Junction Trail was a good choice. We walked as far as the dam,

enjoying the sunshine and views of geese, ducks, and a couple of midget ice walls. Cal talked about the historical brickyard/railroad relationship, pointing out some evidence still visible. Then back to the depot for hot chocolate and cookies! It was a great way to start out a new Year on the right foot!



Treasurer's Report

Deb Challe

There were some significant changes in operating procedure that impacted the financial status of the Friends of the Red Cedar Trail / Hoffman Hills for 2018. Most notably, the decision to transfer responsibilities for weekend pass sales at the depot to the DNR resulted in total sales of \$3895, down from \$13,430 in 2017. Since our group keeps 20% of those sales (with the rest being submitted to the DNR), our net income from pass sales dropped by nearly \$2000.

Fortunately, the year also saw some unexpected generosity from area businesses. In particular, a \$2000 grant from WalMart helped cover the cost of our new grooming equipment and a \$5000 grant from Conagra Brands will help fund the installation of two water fountains along the trail. Individual and business memberships remained roughly the same as for last year and, while merchandise sales were down approximately \$250, donations were up by about that same amount.

As of December 31, 2018 there is \$6768 in the operating fund and \$3609 in the Hoffman Hills grooming account for a combined total of \$10,377 in the checking account. We used \$881 to purchase trees for planting at Hoffman Hills, resulting in the closing of the Hoffman Hills Burr Oak Savanna account. The \$5000 currently in the Conagra Brands grant account brings our total balance to \$15377 -- substantially higher than last year's year-end balance of \$11,507.

Don't forget to buy your trail passes and renew your memberships. As always, thank you for your continued support of the Friends!

Web/Facebook 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 and our Facebook page has 386 "Likes", up by 90 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 have developed a plan for the future of bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The individual county bicycle and pedestrian plans 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 was used to identify priority bicycle and pedestrian enhancements for the upcoming years in each of the counties.

The Three County website can be found [HERE](#).

The Dunn County draft document can be found [HERE](#).

Important Dues Reminder for 2019

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/>

Candlelight hikes give winter in Wisconsin a beautiful glow

[Chelsey Lewis](#), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Published 8:00 a.m. CT Dec. 6, 2018 | Updated 11:39 a.m. CT Dec. 11, 2018

Wisconsin winters can be miserable. By March, even some of us who love the outdoors are wondering why we live here.

If you are still living here, you have two choices: Stay cooped up inside and keep complaining, or get out and find fun things to do.

Candlelight hikes are one of my favorite things to do during a Wisconsin winter. There's something about a candlelit trail in the woods, a roaring bonfire and a cup of hot chocolate that feels magical and makes me think this winter thing isn't so bad after all.

And you don't have to travel far or be an outdoor extremist to take part — there are dozens of events at parks and nature centers around the state, and most are on short, easy trails great for everyone from toddlers to grandparents.

If there's a lot of snow, many events have snowshoes or skis to rent or borrow — all you need are warm clothes (which you should already have if you live here) and the right attitude.

These events, especially ones close to Milwaukee, are popular. In 2016, the event at Lapham Peak in Delafield caused backups on I-94 that stretched for miles. The following year the park required attendees to get a free parking voucher in advance in order to attend.

But don't let crowds stop you from getting out there — even at the popular Urban Candlelight Hike at Three Bridges Park last winter, everyone I interacted with was courteous and friendly. Usually I'm all about avoiding crowds outside, but it was fun to see so many people enjoying winter in Wisconsin.

From a casual stroll in the city to a 10-kilometer trek across frozen Lake Superior, here are some options for candlelight hike and ski events around Wisconsin this winter.

Best for seeing an icefall: Red Cedar State Trail, Menomonie



An icefall along the Red Cedar State Trail south of Menomonie is illuminated during a candlelight ski event. *(Photo: Wisconsin DNR)*

In the winter, water freezes into a giant icefall on the sandstone cliffs along the Red Cedar State Trail south of Menomonie. Skiers can make the 1.5-mile journey from the depot in Menomonie to the wall, which will be illuminated. Snowshoers can trek on a trail in nearby Riverside Park, and hikers can walk the lighted Stokke Trail that follows the Red Cedar River north.

When: 6-9 p.m. Jan. 25.

More info: Trail passes are not required for this event, but they are required for skiers and cyclists age 16 and older the rest of the 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



Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills

Join Today!

(or renew your membership)

Dues for 2019 (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 _____