

Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail & Hoffman Hills Newsletter



Number 70 - Spring 2021

~~Trails Day on Red Cedar Trail~~

~~Saturday, June 5, 2021~~

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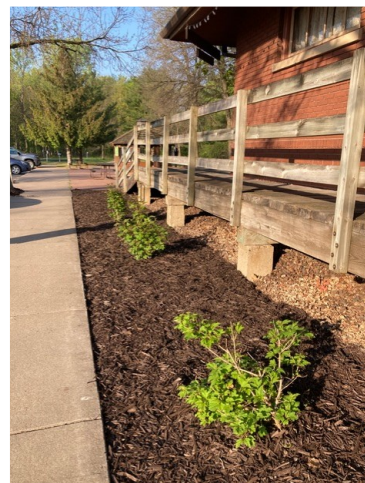
Dave Hladilek
Calvin Kunkle
Penny Thiede-Klish

Website:

redcedarhoffman.org

Second year in a row! It would have been a fun day. There still is a National Trails Day this Saturday but not for us. Note, however, that the trail and Hoffman Hills are open and have been busy with bikers and walkers.

- You can buy WI Trail Passes, make donations and renew your Friends membership online [HERE](#)
- The Menomonie Chamber is now open in its new location and will also be selling trail passes.
- Here is the new [Three Trails Map](#) for the Chippewa Valley which includes the Red Cedar Trail



Hello Friends,

It's been a quite a while since I did a report. The last time I did a report was in early 2020 I believe. So many things have happened since Covid it's hard to even think about it. I won't dwell too much on how Covid has affected park operations though. I do know we have a lot of folks to recognize for all their volunteer work that has done over the last year, even with all the safety precautions. Lets also look forward to what we can get done for this year.

Good news is some of the park restrictions have been lifted recently. The observation tower is now open at Hoffman Hills and we can now have small groups of volunteers do projects. We have also installed a walk-up service window at the Depot Visitor Center since in-building services remain closed. The visitor center will be staffed intermittently throughout this summer. There are also many other options to get trail passes now. The two self-registration boxes along the trail are still an option if the service window isn't open but folks can also go to the new Chamber office for passes or buy them online from the Friends website.

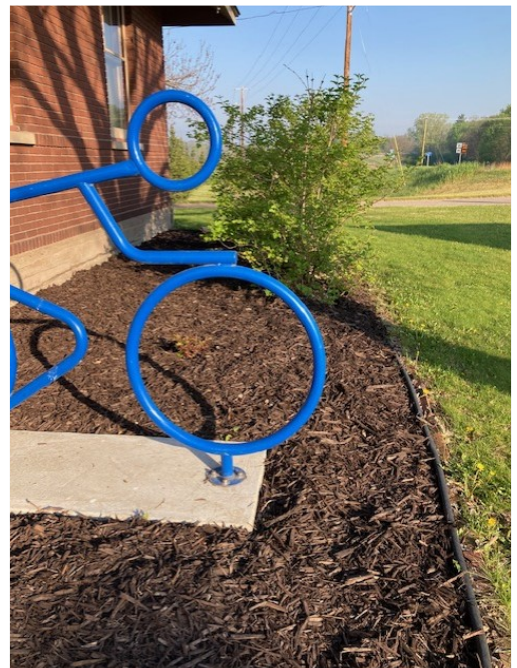
Since last year we were not able to hold any volunteer events. However, we were able to still work with our regular volunteer groomers who kept the ski trails open and in good condition. We had a bit of a short ski season, but we were a host site for the Virtual Birkie at both Hoffman Hills and at the Red Cedar Trail. I know of a few folks that took advantage of this opportunity and really enjoyed saying they accomplished their Birkie locally. I really want to thank Bill Kryshak, Dave Gorman, and Dave Challe for doing a lot of the grooming this year as well as prepping the trails for the Virtual Birkie. Having a dedicated group of volunteers like these folks has been vital to maintaining our trails and getting projects done.

Some volunteer restrictions have been lifted this spring and we've had a lot of interest in folks doing projects. We have had a couple different volunteer groups doing spring cleaning projects and working on the oak savanna at Hoffman. On April 22, the Menomonie School District brought out a group of students to clean trails and work on tree shelters. We were able to remove about half of the tree shelters on the west savanna field. Many of the oak trees are doing well and no longer need the extra protection from the shelters. Thanks again to the school district for providing some help during Earth Day. We also had a volunteer group from Andersen Logistics clean the trail and pick garlic mustard from Irvington to Downsville as part of the Adopt-a-Trail program. They filled quite a few garbage bags of garlic mustard. We've really been able to cut down on our invasive infestations with support from groups like this. Thank you Andersen Logistics! And most recently I want to recognize a couple volunteers that have been working around the Depot to refresh the outside area. I want to thank Vicki Ebensperger,

Tom and Jody Harris, and Gene Thiede for all their efforts in replacing mulch and painting the picnic tables. The native flower beds and picnic tables look great! And...we have one more project going on by the Depot. You may notice some work being done on the south side of the parking lot as we have an Eagle Scout project being led by Allison Falkner to revamp the prairie garden. We hope to get some new native plants established and an interpretive trail built around that area. Lots of volunteer projects going on besides what DNR staff are working on.

Our summer park staff are just coming onboard and are already working on trail repair projects. There is certainly no shortage of work out there so be aware of maintenance staff doing work. We are currently repairing bridge decking and railings on the Red Cedar Trail. We'll also start doing trail shoulder mowing in late May, hopefully before the garlic mustard seeds out this year. We had a few landslides south of Irvington besides lots of other plugged culverts and ditches to clean out that we'll be working on. On the work list for this year at Hoffman Hills is to redo some trail intersection signs, replace signs that were vandalized this spring, and repair trail washouts. A couple other projects at Hoffman Hills of note is that we'll be installing a deer exclusion fence to show off a deer damage demonstration area. The demonstration area will be on the south end of Hawk Ridge, information signage will be placed by the demonstration area. There is also a timber sale setup to be completed this year to thin the pine plantations. Expect some disruptions on property during the harvesting operations and signs will be posted around the harvest areas. Please be safe in using the property and stay at least 300 feet from equipment being operated.

Hopefully everyone stays safe using our properties and enjoys our great parks and trails this summer!



Volunteer Improvements at the Depot.

I want to start by thanking you for your continued support whether financially or by volunteering to help maintain our terrific properties. While the last event we could hold as a group was the 2020 Candlelight Ski, which drew record numbers, the Friends continued to work on not only helping maintain both the Red Cedar State Trail and Hoffman Hills Recreation Area but also by trying to improve the opportunities and experiences for all who use the properties.

Both properties have seen what we believe is record use as they provided spots where you could enjoy the outside and stay safe. As a group we were reminded that at times being forced to do something different is a good thing as evidenced by our annual meeting which was held virtually. It is always nice to get together as a group, but not always easy, and by having a virtual meeting we had a very nice turnout. It also allowed us to have a guest speaker who was not currently in the area and we thank my oldest son Nick Kryshak, who presented on owls and the owl research he is part of at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. No question I am biased but based on the questions that were asked and feedback we received after the meeting it was a presentation that people found very interesting. Our plan is to offer more virtual presentations in the future.

Ski season was short due to the minimal amount of snow but quite successful. Both properties were busy and received very complimentary reports from the skiers. We expanded our grooming of the Red Cedar to include the stretch from Downsville to Hwy Y and this section was open to skiing, hiking, skijoring, etc. Both trails were chosen to be part of the virtual Birkebeiner which meant participants could complete their race on either of our properties – this was quite an honor for us. Thanks go to Dave Gorman, my grooming partner for the Red Cedar, and to Dave Challe who kept Hoffman Hills in outstanding condition. Also a big thanks to Calvin for keeping the equipment up and running – again we are extremely lucky to have him as our trail manager.

A major project for the Friends group in 2021 is to raise enough money to replace our current 1991 snowmobile used to groom the Red Cedar with a new, much more efficient machine. Our goal of \$12,500 is about halfway there with a few grant requests still outstanding, so we hope to have this done by fall.

Lastly, while going through some boxes of old materials, I came across the first newsletter from Friends of the Red Cedar State Trail. The group was established in 1991 so we are celebrating our 30th year as an organization. We will celebrate this event in the fall however we need to thank the people who had the foresight to understand the value of these two great properties and to know that it would take community support to maintain and improve them. I want to recognize the original board of Dennis Olson, Sarah Werner, Myron White, Virginia Klatt, Maggie Foote, Mary Jo McCabe, Wally Schultz, and finally the DNR Trail Manager, Jim Janowak.

Have a safe and happy summer.

Vice President's Report

Ellen Ochs

Now that we finally got some rain to go along with seasonably warm temperatures, the woods along the Trail and at Hoffman are eye-popping green! Trail-users report seeing herons, eagles, sandhill cranes, and all manner of ducks and red-winged blackbirds.

But no volunteers at the Depot. Wisconsin is cautious about opening – our Depot will be open, with a service window, limited hours on weekends with DNR personnel only, in 2021. Events that draw a crowd are still discouraged. Thank goodness for Zoom, which enables our board meetings and our Annual Meeting in the fall! We are grateful too for our new ability to sell Trail passes on our website and our Facebook page (Thank you, Abe Smith!) We tried to get creative this past winter, with a modicum of success, and plan to repeat “Frost Fest,” collaborating with Menomonie High School and Menomonie Chamber of Commerce. Our Candlelight Ski could be the centerpiece.

This all presents a planning problem for the Friends. We'll be looking for volunteers to operate the Depot in 2022, but after a 2-year gap, we'll have to start that staffing almost from scratch. We need ways to tell the community what's happening. We need to build membership too. (That's hard to do on Zoom.) Can you think of people you know, who use and love the Red Cedar Trail and Hoffman Hills, but who don't even know our Friends group exists? Tell them! Do you have ideas we could use? Message us! By our website, by email, by phone or Facebook!

Happy Trails!

Treasurer's Report

Deb Challe

It's been a while since a treasurer's report has appeared in a Friends newsletter! Of course, things are still not back to normal, but we've made some adjustments to accommodate event cancellations and the elimination of in-person trail pass sales, and are actually in a good place financially. Compared to this time last year, individual memberships are up 2% and business memberships have almost doubled. Trail pass revenue increased 78%, thanks to online sales and the opening of the Chamber office for in-person purchases.

We've also received some generous donations over the past year: an anonymous donation of \$1,000, a \$1,500 grant from Dunn Energy Cooperative for the purchase of grooming equipment, a \$500 grant from the Rotary Club, \$500 from the DeHoff family to restore natural vegetation at Hoffman Hills, and over \$400 in personal donations for grooming. Wow! Thanks to everyone for continuing to support the Friends of the Red Cedar. Since we're not able to sell trail passes at the Depot this season, remember that purchasing them via our website gets us a 20% return.

Summary of account balances:

Operating Cash:	\$11,638.44
Hoffman/Red Cedar Grooming Account:	\$6,466.91
Grooming Equipment Fund:	\$1,500.00
Total funds:	\$19,605.35

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 770 "Likes", up by 150 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.

Chamber News**Kim McKay**

The Menomonie Area Chamber & Visitor Center sells daily & annual trail passes along with having various visitor guides, maps of the trails, Menomonie merchandise including t-shirts & sweatshirts, and brochures on local attractions in Menomonie. Stop in before you hit the trail to get your pass and find another place to explore in Menomonie. If you haven't visited our new location, we moved in January. We are located in North Menomonie at 1125 N. Broadway St. Suite 3, Menomonie, WI 54751. We are open Monday - Friday 8-5 and starting first week of June until the last week in August we are open Saturdays 9-2.

Important Dues Reminder for 2021

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 join or renew your Friends membership on-line at <https://squareup.com/store/red-cedar-trail-and-hoffman-hills/>

**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 2021 (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 _____