



PEN FRIENDS

2011 Spring Newsletter

www.PeninsulaFriends.org

Friends of Peninsula State Park – PO Box 502, Fish Creek, WI 54212 – Issue number nine – November 2011

MEET PENINSULA STATE PARK'S NEW SUPERINTENDENT, KELLI BRUNS

Dear Friends,

I would like to introduce myself as the new Superintendent at Peninsula State Park. I began my new position on September 1st, 2011. Natural resource stewardship has been an integral part of my life starting at an early age while spending my summers in the Canadian Province of Newfoundland and continuing today. I am a native of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where I attended high school and then continued my education, earning a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. I hold a double major in Forest Recreation and Forest Management.

I began my career with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as a Limited Term Employee (LTE) in the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Northern Unit, primarily working on multiple use trail systems as well as maintenance and visitor services. In January 2003, I was hired full time as a Park Manager Trainee and continued training at the Kettle Moraine State Forest and at Kohler-Andrae State Park. In July 2003, I became the Park Manager at Kohler-Andrae State Park in Sheboygan and remained there for eight years. In 2010, I became the Superintendent at Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks in the Hudson area. Today, I look forward to my new role as superintendent of one of Wisconsin's most treasured gems, Peninsula State Park.

I am honored to begin my new journey at this amazing property. My husband John and my three sons, Ben (14), Jack (4) and Patrick (2), have been very supportive of my career. My husband, a chiropractor, hopes to practice in the Door County area in the future, and my sons are thrilled that they are able to live in the park residence with Mother Nature in their backyard. They are quite familiar with park living as we lived at Kohler-Andrae for six years.

My career with the Wisconsin State Parks System is very important and I want to share that I will remain dedicated to the mission of protecting this resource and working cooperatively with the Friends of Peninsula State Park and all the partners in our community. The park has seen several years of transition with budget reductions and staffing vacancies impacting the park in a variety of ways. Today the Wisconsin State Parks System is dedicated to infrastructure improvements as well as committed to filling vacancies at Peninsula State Park. Continued.....

Kelli Bruns continued.....

I have met many new people over the past few weeks, and all have been very welcoming. Acting Park Superintendent Erin Brown spent a few weeks working with me in transition and I am very thankful for that opportunity. One event that I was not anticipating was the windstorm September 29th. The night of the storm we spent many hours cutting trees off park roads trying to ensure that campers were safe. I realized around 1:00 a.m. that the mounting devastation was overwhelming our crews, and we cleared a section of roads so campers could leave, and then stopped for the night. When daylight returned a few hours later I realized the park had sustained significant damage, including the loss of electricity. At this point the DNR made the decision to close all Door County State Parks until the damage and hazards could be assessed. Almost immediately Wisconsin State Park employees and other staff began to arrive from around the state, and the huge cleanup effort was underway. The park reopened to the public one week later after many days of hard labor. I was amazed at how dedicated employees, camp hosts and other volunteers were, and the level of teamwork they displayed. I hope the next few months will be a little calmer than the first month, and I can start to learn about park history and plan for the future management of this world-class state park.

Please feel free to stop at the park office and introduce yourself as we begin the transition into the slower part of the year. I look forward to working with the Friends of Peninsula State Park and want to thank you for all you do to support this magnificent resource. There are many exciting projects underway including the Nicolet Beach Shelter, which should be complete by Thanksgiving. Be sure to spend some time at the park this fall and over the holiday.

Kelli Bruns

A Note From President Chris Holicek

First I would like to thank all the Friends and volunteers who have helped Peninsula Park this season!

This summer I was working at the Nature Center on August 1st. Two youth volunteers, Emily Davis and Kelly Emery, walked in and offered to help. Both girls knew exactly what to do and were very outgoing and friendly. Emily even brought out the snake to interact with the visitors. Both Emily and Kelly were a delight and I thank them for all their efforts! It was a true pleasure to meet them.

Kelly and Emily are not the only youth volunteers we've had at the Nature Center this summer and in the past several summers. So, thanks to Gwen Sweeny; Adrienne Bain; Hannah Gibbons; Ben Brandt; Hannah Koss; Christine Baun; Haley, Hope and Evan Gibbons, Marisa Tisler; Ryan, Lauren and Matthew Zauske; Beth and Jenny Wawszaszek; Maylee Kok; Taylor Jankowski; Emily Behnke; Caitlin Truedupp; Samantha Morrow; Amanda, Nathan, and Brianna Laurent; Emily Bryne; Marlee Wendt; Erin and Reagan Walsh; Kelsey Melchevlt; Simon Sterling; and Anika Bubolz. All of the above volunteers signed in the Center Book with their pictures. Thanks to Kathleen Harris for mentoring these great kids who helped with the register, the snake, geocaching, the cloud project, the bear hunt, face painting and many other activities. Hats off to you all!!

I hope all the Friends had a great summer and fall season and I hope you have the chance to visit the park in the winter. If not, we hope to see you next summer! Wherever you go, I hope you keep the park close to your heart!

Chris Holicek

Friends 5th Annual Meeting, August 27, 2011

Gail Anderson, Secretary

The Friends gathered at the Weborg shelter for a festive and lively annual meeting. Friends, both old and new, enjoyed getting together outside on a beautiful day and then having a delicious potluck lunch inside. Tom Young, owner of Gibraltar Grill and a business supporter of the Friends, shuttled guests from the parking area to the shelter at Weborg Point.

President, Chris Holicek called the meeting to order. In accordance with our by-laws, the terms of three members of the board were up for election each year. This year the terms of Chris Holicek, Michelle Kemp and Bob Bultman were up. All three agreed to serve another term. There were no nominations from the floor.

State of the Park – Acting Superintendent, Erin Brown, said she has enjoyed her time working with staff and the Friends. There have been many challenges with budget constraints and less than a full staff. She noted that our new superintendent, Kelli Bruns, would officially take over in early September. Kelli was park manager at Kohler-Andre State Park for eight years and spent this past year at Willow River and Kinnickinnic State Parks. (See Kelli's article in this newsletter.)

Park Naturalist – Kathleen Harris reported that she has had an extremely busy summer and fortunately has had very talented people to assist her. She said she has been teaching kids about the out of doors for thirty years. (Read highlights of her inspiring talk in the newsletter.)

Other members of the board gave reports on activities of the Friends over the summer. Many volunteer hours have been spent working on invasives such as garlic mustard and honeysuckle and helping at the Nature Center. Our membership continues to steadily grow.

The featured program followed our business meeting. Autumn Sabo presented a delightful and informative program entitled "Oh Deer." She is the first recipient of our research grant and has been studying the effects of deer on the forest. She had lots of interesting information on what deer most enjoy eating and what is less appealing to them. This information will be very useful to those dealing with choosing plants for different environments and will save money by highlighting what not to plant in deer habitat. We look forward to her final report next year.

Deer Enclosures : Valuable Resource for UW-Madison Researchers

Autumn E. Sabo, PhD student in Forestry (aesabo@hotmail.com)

Did you ever notice the round fence behind Peninsula State Park's nature center? That fence is a deer enclosure! Door County volunteers built it in 1992 to demonstrate how forests look without heavy deer browsing. Deer can change forest composition because of their selective feeding habits. Just like us, they have favorite foods and ones they leave behind unless they are very hungry. Many of the Peninsula State Park plants that deer like best are in the lily family such as Canada mayflower, trillium, bellwort, and false lily of the valley. Of shrubs and vines, deer prefer bush honeysuckle (a native honeysuckle), rough dogwood, and river grape. Choice tree species include white cedar, trembling aspen, choke cherry, and hemlock.

Next spring, take some time to peer inside the enclosure and compare it to the adjacent forest outside of the
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Deer Exclosures continued

fence. Even if you don't know how to identify any of the plants mentioned above, you'll still be able to notice differences in how thick the understory is and how many plants are flowering or fruiting. While many of the effects of deer exclosure are obvious, some are subtle, requiring close examination of areas that are fenced and unfenced. To learn more about the long-term changes deer may be causing in northern hardwood forests and factors affecting forest recovery, Katie Frerker (graduate student in Botany) and I sampled vegetation and environmental variables inside and immediately outside old deer exclosures. The one near the nature center and another in the Park's beech-hemlock forest were two of the 17 exclosures we studied this summer with funding from the Friends of Peninsula State Park, as well as from the DNR and UW-Madison Botany Department. We look forward to sharing more detailed results of our project in a later issue of the newsletter

Naturalist Kathleen Harris Addresses Friends at Annual Meeting

I took a few days off recently and had time for reflection. I realized that I'd been teaching in nature's classroom for 30 years. Thirty years ago I took a job at a private camp in the Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes National Lakeshore. The camp catered to kids in need of social work help; that's what caught my interest. I'd just graduated with degrees in sociology and history, with a minor that was brand new at the time – environmental education. So, I worked with tough kids from cities like Flint, Michigan. I expected to learn a lot, and I did, but what surprised me was the joy – the surprising possibilities - of teaching within the context of landscape.

It was a fabulous job and laid the foundation for what I believe to be true about meaningful education:

It is creative, and creativity is welcomed.

It is willing to take risks.

It asks questions.

It knows children are not empty vessels but real people with real stories.

It recognizes the power of context – in this case, landscape – to nurture, to prod, to heal, to play, to do nothing, to be, to wonder, to want to do your share.

A couple of years later, I found myself in Keene, New Hampshire. I'd driven across the country in my green Rabbit. Another private camp. We'd take kids on all day hikes in the low mountains. We had no cell phone. No GPS. Just compass and one bearing, and sack of pb & j sandwiches. We'd follow the compass bearing and end up where we were supposed to be. Trust – in our abilities as teachers and in the young students' abilities as problem solvers--was another lesson.

My boss was named Kate and her style, at least to me, was abrasive. But she said something I've never forgotten, complaining about the unattractive (dare I say obnoxious) side of students, "For some of these kids, this is their one and only."

Years later, at a teachers' conference I attended, I heard a poem by Ina Hughes that expressed the same sentiment:

We pray for children who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,

Who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money.

And we pray for those who never get dessert, who have no safe blanket to drag behind them, who can't find any bread to steal, who don't have any rooms to clean up, whose monsters are real.

We pray for children who want to be carried and for those who must,

For those we never give up on and for those who never get a second chance.

For those we smother and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.

Once in a while, I think about this favorite poem, and Kate's words – even at picture perfect Peninsula. When families walk into the Nature Center, hike Eagle Trail, or watch the sun blaze gloriously from Welcker's Point, I think "This could be their one and only." Their one and only time seeing a *real* monarch butterfly or watching stars
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Autumn Sabo,
speaker at Annual
Meeting



Superintendent
Kelli Bruns
with her sons,
Jack and
Patrick



Storm of the Century



Friends volunteer
at Fall 50 Run



10th Annual Spooktacular
Hike raised funds for
nature programs



Runners show team spirit

(Naturalist Kathleen Harris continued)

shimmer overhead, or maybe simply their annual respite from life's messiness. In turn, it may be our one and only chance to say, "You are welcome here. You are needed, as well, to help care for this beautiful park." Just a spark can ignite a lifetime love affair with Mother Earth – or at least a place on Earth.

I applaud you for sticking with Peninsula's choir: for staffing the Nature Center, for spraying garlic mustard, for not letting the background noise of change drag you down. Eyes on the prize, people, in this case the prize is preservation of landscape, story, family, self. Peninsula's education program teaches people why this place and all it offers to both the two-leggeds and the four-leggeds, is worth saving and how to do it.

Did you know that we are the ones now holding truffula seeds? Do you remember how the end of the story of The Lorax [Dr. Suess] is really the beginning?

"UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not.

"So catch says the ONCELER. He lets something fall. It's a truffala seed. It's the last one of all. You're in charge of the last of the truffala seeds and truffala trees are what everyone needs. Plant a truffala seed. Plant it with care. Give it clean water and feed fresh air. Plant a forest. Protect from axes that hack. Then the Lorax and all of his friends may come back."

Friends Volunteer Activities

Michelle Kemp, Volunteer Coordinator

On March 31st the Friends hosted the 40 Fox Valley Technical students who were mapping the park under the guidance of their instructors. The students spent two days mapping trails, roads, sewers, campsites, sewer covers and all boundaries as part of the Surveying II course. The Friends made sure they were well fed during their visit by supplying them with all their meals. (Thanks, Jay Kita, manager of the Piggly Wiggly deli, who helped us out.)

A new year of fighting the "Battle of the Invasives" began in May and continued through October. In spring Friends volunteers sprayed young garlic mustard plants. Then, throughout the summer, volunteers pulled mature plants and stuffed hundreds of bags to be destroyed. Truckloads of Eurasian honeysuckle were cut and treated, and spotted knapweed was hunted and destroyed. Overall it was a very good year for our Weed Warriors and a bad year for invasives. Kudos to all the Friends volunteers who spent their Tuesday mornings in the park helping to fight this ongoing battle.

Once again volunteers staffed the Nature Center on Mondays. They helped out with educational programs, greeted campers, answered questions and sold merchandise. Without the help of the Friends volunteers the Nature Center would have to close on Mondays and many visitors to the park would miss out on this unique educational opportunity.

Due to the reduction in park personnel this year the Friends played a larger role in putting on the annual Spooktacular hike. Volunteers packed 500 goodie bags for children, helped camp hosts set up the "educational stations," then, the night of the event, dressed in not-too-scary costumes to monitor kids' games and staff the information and donation areas. Five volunteers assisted Park Ranger Jamey Koles with traffic control and parking. The dedication and hard work of Spooktacular volunteers made this event a resounding success.

The Friends were once again asked to host two of the relay stations for the Fall 50 Run. Volunteers parked cars and handed out refreshments to over 1500 runners. The donation made to the Friends for this effort will go to benefit the Park.

Battle of the Invasives – The Sequel

Gary A. Kemp, Invasive Species Coordinator

Well, Friends, another year in the park has come and gone and once again I am very happy to report that we had a great year. In only our fourth year we are making great inroads reducing the spread of both garlic mustard and honeysuckle.

By definition an invasive species is a “non-native” plant that adversely affects the habitat they invade. They cause economic, environmental, or ecological damage and typically are only controlled and not eradicated. I think this pretty much sums up the situation in Peninsula Park. As we go forward we hope to increase control and reduce all forms of damage.

Once again, this spring, we revisited the lighthouse and triangle areas to both pull and spray garlic mustard. Unlike last year the weather was much more conducive and we were able to disrupt the growth of both first and second year plants. Also, this fall we were able to re-spray first year plants, which should further reduce growth next spring. With ongoing annual maintenance we should be able to dramatically reduce the spread.

This season we had good success reducing the growth of honeysuckle in the park. Our mission was to clear a six-foot buffer along Shore Road from Headquarters to Eagle Lighthouse. This effort cleared the bike lanes of obstructions, which has made biking along the road safer. Next year we will re-visit this corridor and work to expand the clearing effort.

As I have said in the past, the success we have had is directly attributable to the hard work of the Friends. Once again, I want to thank everyone who helped. I look forward to continued success next year and encourage everyone to invite others to join our group. Where else can you have fun, make great friends, and make a real difference?

Endowment News

In the last two years Friends have established three endowment funds to benefit the park.

The first is **The Interpretive Nature Center Fund**, which will support the construction and maintenance of a new interpretive nature center to replace the current one which is overcrowded and outdated.

The second is the **For Now and the Future Fund**. The purpose of this fund is to support the ongoing efforts of the park, an increasingly important undertaking considering state budget constraints.

The third (and most recent) is **The Research Endowment Fund**, which will provide funds to college and graduate level students who conduct research that informs Peninsula management decisions. The first grant recipient, Autumn Sabo, is investigating the impact of deer on the environment. (See her article in this newsletter.) A second recipient will be selected in January.

Please consider contributions to these funds, either at present or as part of your estate planning. For more information, contact the Door County Community Foundation (920-746-1786), the park office, or any member of the Friends' Board.

Thanks to: Jim and Pat Arnold who donated an EZ-UP tent to the park
Dan and Jean Engelke who donated a banquet coffee maker to the Friends

Spooktacular Event Raises Funds for Nature Programs

Thanks to all who supported the 10th Annual Spooktacular Hike. At least 1,600 people walked the mile-long candlelit trail, meeting Batina the Bat, Vinni the Vulture and Spider Woman along the way. Shaking paws with Smokey Bear (a.k.a. Scotty Weborg) was the highlight for most attendees.

Friends members packed 500 goodie bags for kids ages ten and younger. Donations received at the event for kids' games, cider, cookies, individual s'mores packs and for the hike itself totaled \$2225. These funds will provide for the 2012 summer naturalist and may also be targeted for taxidermy of a Bufflehead duck.

"We enjoy the satisfaction of helping to make this a successful fundraising event for Peninsula's nature programs," said long-time Nature Center host Arlene Brandt, "and it is fun working with the other volunteers." Volunteers (who donated at least 321 hours in total to make the event a success) include Friends members Pat and Jim Arnold, Chris Holicek, Gail and Nick Anderson, Jo and Bill Schaars, Jean and Dan Engelke, Sandra and Rich Dirks, Bev and Gary Schulze, Barbara and Gene Jarvis, and Sue and Steve Klopfenstein. Camp hosts were on hand, as well, for both set up and the event.

.Special thanks to those who played various characters for three hours straight: Martha Baker, Emily Bley, Trissa Crowley, Charles Dickson, Joann Metzel, Gibraltar graduate Jade who played Cookie Monster, the Konitzer's daughter, Nancy Noel, Nick Meiers, and Kathy Whalen and daughter.

Nature Center Wish List:

Art Supplies: pony beads, large wooden beads, wood beads from holiday garland & car seats, silk flowers, glitter, scrapbook paper, nature stickers, short light sticks for firefly craft, spinners, plaster of paris, feathers including turkey feathers, doilies.

Misc: bobbers for fishing poles, LED lanterns for candlelight events, new air pump for small tank, small snow blower, GPS units, sturdy butterfly nets, hand wipes. Birdseed, suet cakes, corncobs for squirrels.

Decaf Coffee for Candlelight Ski, cookies (can be frozen ahead of time), paper plates & cups, 8 - 12 cup coffee maker.

Woodworkers: Can you cut out items, at your own home, for use in summer projects? For example, wooden shorebirds, bug boxes, "pocket" fishing poles. Call Naturalist Kathleen Harris at [920-868-3258](tel:920-868-3258).

Winter Ski/Snowshoe Events Planned

Save these dates for two fun ski and snowshoe events:

Saturday, January 21st. 11AM- 1 PM. Peninsula State Park and Friends 3rd Annual Family Ski and Snowshoe. Join Friends and family for a leisurely ski or snowshoe and light refreshments.

Saturday, February 4th. 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM. Peninsula State Park's Annual Candlelight Ski/Hike. Enjoy the one-mile candle-lit loop and campfire.

Donations of cookies/bars would be appreciated for either/both events. Please bring them to the Park Office the day of the event. *For more information contact Gail Anderson (920) 868-3499.*

Watch for updates on our website: peninsulafriends.org

Website Season in Review

Nick Meiers, Webmaster

From June 1st to October 20th, 2011, the Friends website welcomed 1,377 visitors. Each visitor looked at an average of five pages. The average total visit length was one minute and 38 seconds. Fifty percent of the traffic to the site came from links on other websites, 37% came from search engines, and the remaining 13% came from visitors typing the www.peninsulafriends.org into their computers. 96.4% of visitors explored more than one page on the site, which is an impressive number. The Events page was the most popular (470 pageviews), followed by Member Photos (363), News (355), Event Photos (272), and Park Information (262).

Opportunities

I've identified several areas to focus website improvement efforts in 2012.

Increase awareness of the opportunity to support the Friends through a membership. No new memberships were registered at the website over the 4 month period.

Increase traffic to key pages. Photo galleries were the most popular pages, while pages containing the most content ("What We Do", "Initiatives", and "Support the Friends") received less than 5% of the pageviews across the site. These are the pages that best explain the purpose and accomplishments of the Friends, but are not attracting attention.

Increase the percentage of visitors finding the site through search engines. Search is our best opportunity to drive increased traffic to the site and raise awareness with new audiences about what the Friends do for the park.

If you have your own comments or suggestions for improving the site, please let me know!

Help Needed

Please consider contributing your photographs from the park to the website. If you take a great hike in the park, see something interesting, or have an experience to share, we can publish those stories as well.

Thank You Business Members

Our business members continue to generously support the efforts of the Friends and Peninsula State Park. Please give them your support and a big thank you.

Bay Shore Outfitters

Baylake Bank

Door County Kayak Tours

Ecology Sports

Ephraim Visitor Information Center

Fish Creek Kite Company

Gibraltar Grill

Great Northern Construction, Inc

Hat Head

Hide Side Boutique & Corner Store

Homestead Suites

Nicolet Bay Concessions

Nor Dor Sport & Cyclery

On Deck Clothing Company

Parkwood Lodge

Peninsula Pacers LLC

Peninsula Park-View Resort

Spielmanns Kid Works

The Cookery Restaurant & Wine Bar

The English Inn

The Main Course

Thomas/Pfeifer insurance

Wilson's Restaurant & Ice Cream Parlor

What Next?

Wild Tomato Wood Fired Pizza & Grille

Friends of Peninsula State Park

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Board of Directors

Chris Holicek, President
Bill Schaars, Vice President
Gail Anderson, Secretary
Gary Kemp, Treasurer
Jim Arnold
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Kelli Bruns, Superintendent
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Jane Barnowsky, VS Coordinator
Jacklyn Moeri, VS Lead Worker
Charles Smrz, Utilities Coordinator
Jeff Lange, Buildings Maintenance Specialist
*Vacancies: Asst. Superintendent, Trails coordinator,
maintenance coordinator*

Check out our website: www.peninsulafriends.org

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