Supt. Bruns Describes Park Projects: Result of Friends Fundraising

Dear Friends,
The park landscape has become a busy place as our summer season comes to a close. Campers and visitors have enjoyed our winding trails, shorelines, scenic vistas, campgrounds, nature programs, visits to the lighthouse, nights under the stars at American Folklore Theatre and rounds of golf at our championship golf course. Individuals and families continue to create memories that will surely last a lifetime. As the forest amazes us with spectacular fall colors, think about our rapidly changing world. Although the artificial indoor world that we can become immersed in controls our daily lives, the natural rhythms of the “real” world continue to beat around us. Wildlife is busy preparing for the winter season as they have for millions of years. The park also begins a transition to prepare for winter projects and recreational activities. We welcome the addition of our two new full time Rangers, Rachael Christensen and Jeff Nieling. Jeff and Rachael are excellent additions to the Peninsula State Park team. Please introduce yourselves and welcome them aboard!

The Friends of Peninsula State Park continue to be involved in many exciting projects and have taken on many new fundraising initiatives in 2013. The Friends Group continues to secure match grants with the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program. In 2013 a Stewardship grant was secured to replace the White Cedar Nature Center walkway. Park staff is working with a DNR landscape architect to improve this area with a paver brick project, to be completed in spring 2014. People will be able to purchase and personalize individual bricks. This project will allow the Friends to raise funds to support park projects and the educational program.

The Friends are also supporting a 3-phase match process with the Stewardship program to enhance the White Cedar Nature Center by adding restroom facilities and creating additional workspace. Currently the Friends are working with a consultant and the DNR regarding design plans. Discussion has also taken place regarding the construction of a deck area and adding new outdoor playscape areas. Donation envelopes, specified for the project, are available at park headquarters and the nature center, or you can donate on the Friends website. Your continued support allows the Friends to raise funds for educational and operational needs at the park. Watch for additional capital campaign information once our design plans for the White Cedar Nature Center are drafted.

The Friends continue to raise funds through a merchandise sales program which pays for the seasonal LTE naturalist and Invasive Species Coordinator. Friends not only continue to staff special events in our park and community, but for the first time have partnered with the Peninsula Golf Associates to host a golf scramble, the Peninsula Classic.

The Friends of Peninsula State Park continue to grow and embrace new challenges. 

continued
Bruns continued  Purpose drives the group to continue to move forward, and every volunteer minute provides help to protect and enhance this incredible resource. Your volunteer time and commitment is a credit to the Friends of Peninsula State Park. Please continue to share your time and ask others to join the Friends. Twenty-fourteen will surely be a great year with new ideas, committees and fundraising initiatives. We continue our resource protection commitment in the company of “good friends,” Thank you for your continued support!

Kelli

President Holicek Recaps Summer Friends’ Activities

This summer, the Friends sponsored Ron Preston, San Carolos Apache and Headman Dancer at the Gathering of Nations, who danced in full regalia on Saturday, July 20th. We had a great turn out for this event which also included a sunrise prayer ceremony and an evening campfire.

We also held our first golf outing, coordinated with Peninsula Golf Associates, to raise money for improvements at the Nature Center. It was a great success! Thanks to Dan and Jean Engelke for all their hard work! The Friends are still trying to raise more money for these improvements through grants and personal donations. Please consider contributing to the Friends to help with this project. Contributions can be mailed to Friends of Peninsula State Park or you can contribute at our website www.peninsulafriends.org.

There are so many wonderful things to do in the park any time of the year, including our Spooktacular event which was held on October 12th.

The park is also beautiful in the winter. Don’t forget to join us this winter for the First Day Hike on January 1st, the fifth Annual Family Ski and Snowshoe on January 18th, and the eighth Annual Candlelight Hike and Ski on February 1st.

Please visit our website to see all of our events and activities. I would also invite you to share any photos or stories of your adventures in the Park on our website and Facebook page. Thanks to Nick Meiers who developed and maintains our website. Thanks to all Friends who have helped out in the park this year. We are grateful for all your efforts. As always, have a great time in Peninsula State Park. You will go home refreshed from experiencing not only the events offered, but also the trails, vistas and wildlife in our park!

Chris Holicek

Memorial Bench Commissioned

The children of Bob and Mary Hislop honored their parents' 50th wedding anniversary by commissioning a bench. "Needless to say," said daughter Jennifer Wondrasek, "the bench brought them both to tears with the thoughts of their grandkids coming to visit the bench for years to come."

Jennifer's mother, Mary Hislop, first visited Door County at age nine, staying at the Anderson Cottages near the park entrance. In 1964, the Andersons gave Mary and her groom a week's stay for their honeymoon. As Mary and Bob's family grew, they continued to visit Door County and do so to this day with their grandchildren.

Options for memorial requests include Tree Donation (preferred option)--$750; Memorial Bench (limited availability annually)--$750. Each includes a lifetime membership to the Friends of Peninsula State Park. Please visit the Friends website at www.peninsulafriends.org for additional information.
Two Full-Time Rangers Accept Positions at Peninsula

Rachael Christensen was appointed to the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) Ranger position at Peninsula in July after a brief time in the LTE (Limited Time Equivalent) position. She started her college education in Georgia, then transferred to and graduated from UW Stevens Point with a Bachelor’s Degree in Environmental Law Enforcement in 2010. She started her career with Wisconsin State Parks in 2009 at Lake Wissota State Park as an LTE Ranger where she worked seasonally through the summer of 2012. Then in fall, 2012, she worked in visitor services and maintenance at Peninsula State Park before assuming her current role. Rachael currently resides in the Green Bay area and enjoys kayaking, hiking, and attending the farmer’s market.

Having an eye on the goal, Jeff Niedling proved that diligent effort pays off; he was hired as a full time Ranger at Peninsula in July.

Jeff grew up in the Northeastern Wisconsin woodlands with a passion for serving and protecting. He respectfully served in the United States Air Force before pursuing a career in law enforcement. Jeff attended Northeast Technical College in Green Bay and graduated with a degree in Criminal Justice. While attending college, he worked as a Loss Prevention Investigator at Mills Fleet Farm. Upon earning his degree, Jeff worked in security at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant in Two Rivers, WI. Then, to gain field experience, he pursued and was granted an internship with the DePere Police Department. This lead to a seasonal position as a Ranger at Peninsula State Park.

He then served as an officer at Green Bay Correctional Institution, while actively pursuing a permanent position as Ranger at Peninsula. Jeff has always had an affinity for outdoors and law enforcement; due to his promotion he will have the opportunity to satisfy both aspirations.
PSP Nature Center Delivers Exceptional Programs in 2013

If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it. David Sobel

Peninsula State Park’s interpretive program is all about connections – not the screen kind – but connections that help people get up close and personal with the land. This year PSP’s two naturalists and a cadre of volunteers offered a remarkable array of events:

- At Blossomburg Cemetery, volunteer re-enactors brought history alive through Talking Tombstones. Gibraltar Historical Society co-hosted the event.
- Bat Conservation of Wisconsin, supported by the Raibrook Foundation, helped visitors understand how this nighttime predator survives among the perils it faces, including white-nose syndrome.
- Community members and the Gibraltar Ecology Club built two “bat condos” funded by the Friends with a matching Stewardship grant.
- Native American Dancer Ron Preston and his family offered a sunrise honor song at Eagle Terrace. Later that day, they performed various dances in full regalia. Parkwood Lodge, the Homestead Resort, and the Friends offered financial support.
- Park staff hosted two bicycle safety programs. Both included various obstacle stations and taught adults how kids perceive traffic differently. Friends provided healthy snacks and volunteers.
- A grant from Edgewood Orchard Galleries of Fish Creek enabled us to host three PSP Digs Reading events where families played extreme hopscotch, hiked the Word Bird trail, and tried various literacy-based activities. Each child received a book to keep.
- A first-ever archery program hit the bulls-eye, with over 300 attending.
- PSP collaborated with the Ephraim Foundation to secure an authentic Camp Peninsular CCC trunk which will be featured at heritage school programs. The trunk was donated by the Buck Eckert family, who also gave a memorial gift towards park education.
- About 1,500 people attended PSP’s 12th and final Spooktacular Candlelight Walk. The Northern Door Firefighters were instrumental in making the event a success, as was Scotty Weborg a.k.a. Smokey Bear. Business supporters included: AppleCreek Resort, Edge of Park, Homestead Resort, Julie’s Restaurant, Nicolet Beach Camp Store, Orchard Country Winery, Piggly Wiggly, Schartner’s Farm Market, and Wood Orchard Market. FPSP helped staff the food tent and provided a “thank you” breakfast for volunteers. cont.
Nature Center cont.
About 150 people assisted at the Nature Center this past year, donating over 1,000 hours of volunteer time. At least sixty were youth, a testament to the FUN vibe. Readers may also be surprised to learn the number of people who visited during 2013’s peak summer months: 4,240 in July and 4,940 in August.

The Nature Center’s long-standing and growing popularity points to the need for more educational storage and other improvements. PSP has embarked on a 3-stage effort to enhance the building (see Superintendent Brun’s article on page 1) while safeguarding its historic charm. If you are interested in learning more about this important initiative, please contact kathleen.harris@wisconsin.gov or kelli.bruns@wisconsin.gov.

Master Naturalist Course Offered in 2014
PSP Naturalist Kathleen Harris is taking a lead role in offering a UW-Extension Master Naturalist course. In collaboration with The Ridges Sanctuary and The Clearing, the 7-session course includes 40 hours of instruction and 40 hours of service to a conservation organization(s) of your choice. For more information contact The Clearing in Ellison Bay, where the course takes place: 920-854-4088 or www.theclearing.org. Visit www.wimasternaturalist.org to learn more about this new statewide initiative.

Chicka dee dee dee!

Bob and Jan Ross, Friends of members, and Nature Center Volunteer Dave Richardson recently donated a new squirrel resistant bird feeder to replace the one that has stood in place for over a decade. Thank you! Many others have brought birdseed, markers, art supplies and all manner of donations to support PSP education.

This winter, birdseed, suet and squirrel corn is a welcome gift. With a little patience, chickadees feed right from the hand all winter long. Other needs are children’s scissors (Fiskar brand), craft feathers, turkey feathers, children’s glue, paper plates and cutlery for outdoor cooking, pudgy pie irons, hot cocoa mix, decaf and regular coffee for volunteer meetings, and new clear storage bins. All donations can be dropped off at Park Headquarters. Call 920-868-3258 to find out office hours.

Birch Bark Disease Present at Peninsula

DNR Forest Pest Specialist Linda Williams points out beech bark disease as DNR Forester Bill Ruff looks on. State park staff attended a spring forestry training session. To find out more about BBD, which is already present in Door County, visit dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/BeechBarkDisease.
On September 8, 2013, the Friends of Peninsula State Park and the Peninsula Golf Associates, Inc. co-sponsored their first golf scramble fundraiser, the Peninsula Classic, on a beautiful fall day at the spectacular Peninsula State Park Golf Course. Sixty-two golfers participated. Afterwards Alexander’s catered a barbecue picnic style dinner in a tent set-up by the Celebrations Party and Event Company at Nicolet Bay Beach. The Door County Trolley shuttled anyone without a park sticker to the dinner.

This fundraiser netted about $8,000, of which $4,000 will go to each organization. This money will help enhance two existing projects within the Park, the historic White Cedar Nature Center and the 86-year-old Memorial Pole on the golf course. Because of these funds, the planned renovation of the Nature Center comes closer to reality.

There were approximately 86 different companies, shops, motels, restaurants and individuals that gave to this event. About 37 of these donors gave certificates and items for the raffle and awards events, and another 49 donated money to be Flag, Hole or Donor Sponsors. It takes many people to help maintain this precious piece of real estate and these donors were eager to help in this meaningful way.

Many volunteers participated in the planning process or helped at various areas during the event. This personal involvement was incredibly helpful in reaching the goals set for the Scramble. Their ideas and energy showed a real commitment to working hard for something that helps make a difference.

The golf outing would not have been a success without the donors, volunteers, and the many golfers involved. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation go out to all for their many contributions.

---

No ideas for holiday gifts? Let the Friends help!

Get everyone ready for the Friends' First Day Hike, Family Ski/Hike, and the Candlelight Ski. You will find a wonderful selection of shirts and sweatshirts to keep everybody warm. At the same time, you can purchase Wisconsin State Park vehicle stickers, which make great gifts for family and friends. Stickers for 2014 go on sale December 1 and are valid December 2013 through December 2014. Our unique fly-thru magnets or fascinating Door County and Park history books make wonderful holiday combinations with a vehicle sticker.

Stop by park headquarters and get your holiday shopping done! And don’t forget to take advantage of your 10% discount on all merchandise throughout the year by mentioning your Friends membership.

---

Check out photos at www.peninsulafriends.org or on our Facebook page of Spooktacular (Oct.12) and The Fifty Mile Run (Oct. 26) where Friends staffed two rest stations.
Invasives – “The Battle Continues”
Gary Kemp

As we come to the end of another season I am happy to report that we had another successful year in the park. Once again we began in the spring by spraying garlic mustard along Shore Rd. and at the lighthouse. Spraying helps by preventing second year plants from maturing and producing seeds. It also stops the growth of first year plants which breaks the biannual growth pattern. Because garlic mustard germinates very early, we are able to spray for a number of weeks before other native plants begin growing. We followed spraying with hand pulling, which is effective but very labor intensive. Next season we are going to try cutting the plants with line trimmers which allows larger stands to be cleared more quickly than hand pulling. Given the reduced numbers of volunteers I am always looking for more effective ways to deal with all invasives.

This season rather than going directly from garlic mustard to honeysuckle we spent four weeks pulling spotted knapweed in the meadow at the nature center.

Spotted knapweed arrived from Europe and Asia in the late 1890’s as a stow-away in alfalfa or hay. Spotted knapweed is a biennial, which blooms from early July through mid-August. The plants make and secrete chemicals into the soil that kill surrounding plants. Each plant can produce an average of 1,000 seeds, which allows a population to spread rapidly. For this reason we are dedicated to an extensive effort to dramatically reduce its presence. This will require seasonal attention for a number of years.

Finally, we spent about four weeks cutting and treating honeysuckle along the roadsides near the nature center. We have spent five years reducing the growth along Shore Rd. This allows for much improved views in the park and allows the other native species to grow and prosper.

It goes without saying that invasives control in the park is an extremely large and daunting task. The extent to which we can prevail is directly related to the efforts of our dedicated volunteers. Once again, I want to thank everyone who has given a little or a lot of time to helping. “Whatever we are able to do is better than doing nothing!” I look forward to next season and I hope to see each and everyone who possibly can “help make our park better than we found it”!

Meet Our Volunteers

What do you think of when you think Peninsula Friends volunteer – a hardworking garlic mustard puller, a snowmobile trail groomer, maybe a Nature Center host?

You’d be correct with any of those, but there are many other ways our volunteers participate in our activities, and all of them are important and appreciated. Some volunteer opportunities are one-time events, like baking cookies for the Family Ski or selling raffle tickets at the Golf Classic. Other volunteers help throughout the year with committee or board roles. And our volunteers come from many walks of life and locations. continued.
Volunteers continued

Nick Meiers, who maintains the Friends web site, has this to say about volunteer experience:
“\nI was a summer employee at Peninsula State Park for 5 summers, starting in 2006. Around that same time the Friends were beginning to form and I volunteered to create the first website for the group. I've developed and maintained the website ever since and am also responsible for the Facebook page. I now live in Minneapolis (over 300 miles from the park!), but I feel fortunate to be able to stay connected to the park and volunteer from a distance. By managing the website and social media I can help everyone else feel a little closer, too! It's great to be able to do something I enjoy and benefit Peninsula State Park at the same time. It doesn't even feel like work!”

The Witalisons of Fish Creek have made volunteering a family affair. They’ve participated in the autumn Spooktacular for most of its 12 years. Dad Gary has been Smokey Bear, the children have added ‘color’ to the walk as mad scientists and witches, and Mom Joni capped her Spooktacular career (or maybe launched a new one) with her debut in 2013 as ‘Fire’ in the first-ever playlet.

The support of our volunteers is so important to the continuing quality of the park’s programs and facilities. If you are interested in being part of this diverse and talented group, please complete the volunteer interest form that is included in the Friends’ membership form, available at the office or on our website www.peninsulafriends.org, or contact our volunteer coordinator Michelle Kemp by phone (608-963-1916) or email kemps99@msn.com.

Research News

During 2013, Allison Perrigoue, the Friends of Peninsula State Park Research Grant recipient, identified and recorded colonies of the Federally-threatened plant, Dwarf Lake Iris. Although there are known colonies of Iris lacustris (Dwarf Lake Iris) in the Park, a thorough study of their locations is out-of-date and. Allison spent the summer locating, mapping and recording the sites of colonies of this beautiful orchid-like plant. Allison delivered an excellent report of her findings at the Annual Meeting. We are currently looking forward to her final report. She is a senior biology major at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

The Friends have just received the final report from the 2012 Grant Recipients, Assessment of reptile and amphibian communities in Peninsula State Park with particular focus on rare or endangered species, and it is currently under final review. While a full report will be made in the next newsletter and on the Friends website (www.peninsulafriends.org), we can report a few facts at this time. UW-Stevens Point students Spencer Siddons, Matthew Rucker and Bradley Steckert report:

Throughout our project we found 10 species of reptiles and 6 species of amphibians. Of the reptile and amphibian species we encountered, one is of special concern, Ringed-neck Snake (Diadophis punctatus edwardsii), and one is endangered, Northern Ribbon Snake (Thamnophis sauritus). We believe these findings present important management implications in order to protect these species. In addition, a more thorough investigation of PSP, especially specific ecosystems within the park are vital in understanding the status of the populations of these species.

The 2014 grant guidelines are now available for applicants. The two areas of priority are

- Sunset Bike Route  A survey of Sunset Bike Route, primarily data collection and analysis of bicyclist demographics and trail use; and, secondarily, assessment of trail design impact on user safety as well as natural and cultural resources at specific sites identified in the 2012 Sunset Bike Route Evaluation.

- Niagara Escarpment  Analysis of vegetative species composition associated with the Niagara Escarpment at specific sites in Peninsula State Park, including identification of negative indicator species, using The Niagara Escarpment: Inventory Findings 1999-2001 and Considerations for Management as a basis for comparison.
2014 Winter Events Planned

Save these dates to welcome and enjoy winter in Peninsula State Park:

**Wednesday, January 1st, 10 a.m. to noon.** Celebrate the New Year with a First Day Hike. Meet at the Weborg picnic shelter at 10 a.m. Join the Friends on an easy three mile hike along the Sunset Bike trail and Weborg marsh. Come back to the shelter to enjoy a cup of hot cider or cocoa around a warming fire.

**Saturday, January 18th, 10 a.m. to noon.** Peninsula State Park and Friends 5th Annual Family Ski and Snowshoe. Join Friends and families for a leisurely ski or snowshoe on the golf course and light refreshments. Meet at shelter building near parking lot 5, Highland Rd.

**Saturday, February 1st, 5:30 - 8 p.m.** Peninsula State Park’s Annual Candlelight Ski/Hike. Enjoy the enchanting one-mile candle-lit loop, campfire and light refreshments. Meet at shelter building near parking lot 5, Highland Rd.

Watch for updates on our website [www.peninsulafriends.org](http://www.peninsulafriends.org), our [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com), or call Park Office (920) 868-3258

---

**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.

- A Peninsula Park-View Resort
- Bay Shore Outfitters
- Baylake Bank
- Door County Kayak Tours
- Ecology Sports
- Ephraim Visitor Information Center
- Fish Creek Kite Company
- Gibraltar Grill
- Gravity Trails LLC
- Great Northern Construction, Inc.
- Hat Head
- Hide Side Boutique & Corner Store
- Homestead Suites
- Julies Park Café & Motel
- Nelson Shopping Center
- Nicolet Bay Concessions
- Nor Dor Sport & Cyclery
- On Deck Clothing Company
- Parkwood Lodge
- Peninsula Pacers LLC
- Spielmans Kid Works
- The Cookery Restaurant & Wine Bar
- The Main Course
- Thomas/Pfeifer Insurance
- What Next?
- Wild Tomato Wood Fired Pizza & Grille
- Wilson’s Restaurant & Ice Cream Parlor
Friends of Peninsula State Park
P.O. Box 502
Fish Creek, WI 54212-0502

Friends of Peninsula State Park Board of Directors

Chris Holicek, President
Bill Schaars, Vice President
Gail Anderson, Secretary
Gary Kemp, Treasurer
Nick Anderson
Brian Fitzgerald
Dan Engelke
Cathy Fiorato
Michelle Kemp

Peninsula State Park Staff

Kelli Bruns, Superintendent
Erin Brown, Assistant Superintendent
Jane Barnowsky, Finance/Visitor Services
Kathleen Harris, Naturalist
Rachael Christensen, Ranger
Jeff Niedling, Ranger
Ted Huber, Facility Repair Workder
Jeff Lange, Facility Repair Worker
Chuck Smrz, Utilities Specialist