WINTER GREETINGS FROM FRIENDS OF PENINSULA!

From Friends President Chris Holicek

I hope everyone had a great time in the park this summer and created some wonderful memories. As we head into fall and winter, please consider the following volunteer coordinator opportunities:

- Volunteer Coordinator: Send out volunteer opportunities to Friends via email
- Invasive Coordinator: Work with invasive team of Friends once a week in the park-seasonal
- Newsletter Coordinator: Send out requests for articles and compile into newsletter format
- Membership Coordinator - keeps track of our membership data
- Merchandise Volunteers - help choose and display merchandise
- Nature Center Volunteers - Help with various activities.

If you have a desire to help out, please visit http://peninsulafriends.org and send us a note.

The Friends have been actively involved in advocating for the future of Eagle Tower. Learn more at http://peninsulafriends.org/EagleTower

Finally, I'd like to welcome three new members to our Friends Board of Directors: Judy Ortiz, Rachel Stollenwerk, and Dave Bultman. You can learn more about them on the Friends website.

As always, thank you for being a Friend and supporting the Park!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Celebrate the New Year with a First Day Hike.
Friday, January 1st, 10 a.m. to noon.

Meet at the Weborg picnic shelter. A Master Naturalist will lead the Friends on an easy three mile hike along the Sunset Bike Trail and Weborg marsh. (snowshoes/skis, weather permitting). Come back to the shelter to enjoy a cup of hot cider or cocoa around a warming fire.

Peninsula State Park’s Annual Candlelight Ski or Hike.
Saturday, February 6th, 5:30 -8:00 p.m.

Enjoy the enchanting one-mile candle-lit loop, campfire, and light refreshments. Meet at shelter building near parking lot 5, Highland Rd.

Note: A WI State Park vehicle sticker is required for parking.

Watch for event updates on our website: Peninsulafriends.org or call Park Office (920) 868-3258
From Park Superintendent Kelli Bruns

Dear Friends,

Winter at Peninsula State Park is just around the corner. We’ve had quite a busy summer and fall season with an all-time record visitor attendance in the month of July! We recorded 231,341 visitors in July, our highest visitation in the past 20 years for that month.

The hustle and bustle of the summer season was met with the retirement of our long time Visitor Service Associate Jane Barnowsky. Jane retired in July after 34 years of service to the State of Wisconsin and Peninsula State Park. Jane’s dedication to the park was beyond successful, and we wish her all the best! Her position was filled in September by Jessica Doell, a Sturgeon Bay native. Previously, Jessica was a full time Customer Service Representative with DNR in Green Bay. She also spent 9 years as an LTE at Peninsula State Park and brings with her a wealth of knowledge and a very friendly face. We are thankful to have Jessica join our team!

Another important staff change happened recently when Assistant Superintendent Erin Brown accepted the superintendent position at Potawatomi State Park. Erin has been a strong leader and her promotion is well deserved. She guided and mentored staff at Peninsula for the past 3 ½ years providing dedication, consistency and leadership. (Good thing she will still be in the “neighborhood”; I know we can rely on her for assistance, if necessary.)

We have been fortunate to fill the vacant Facility Repair Worker position. Roger Pronschinske will be the new Trails and Grounds Specialist starting the week of November 29th. He is no stranger to many of you since Roger has been an LTE at the park since April, 2011. Roger and his wife Shirley live in the Sturgeon Bay area. He is looking forward to making significant improvements on the park trails and grounds working year round. Welcome back, Roger!

This year, the park staff and volunteers continued to work on a variety of projects including invasive species removal, new sod and walkways at Nicolet Beach, road improvements, a new drive through window at Park Headquarters, and various emergency needs on park water, sewer and buildings.

Our biggest issue has been the closure of Eagle Tower last spring after an inspection was completed by an outside engineering firm. Structural deficiencies located under stairways and decking areas prompted the department to close the viewing structure to the public for safety purposes. Eagle Tower remains closed, and the DNR will plan to assess the future of Eagle Tower during the upcoming Door County Master Plan efforts, beginning in December. The Friends and the DNR will be sharing more information on the upcoming process in the next few weeks.

The Friends continued to support the park in 2015 with funds for two LTE positions including a seasonal Park Naturalist and Invasive Species Coordinator, matching funds for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant and a Friends of Wisconsin State Parks Affinity Grant. Friends continue to staff special events such as the Door County Half Marathon, Fall 50 and the Peninsula and Door County Centuries. Thank you!

(Kelli’s update continues on the next page…)
WHITE CEDAR NATURE CENTER RENOVATION

This year, the Friends continued the White Cedar Nature Center renovation process by applying for the third phase of the Knowles – Nelson Stewardship Grant. The Friends are actively working from the first phase of the grant which helped fund the design of the site plan. These plans are being finalized and approved by the DNR to add flush toilet facilities, additional display and work space at the nature center.

The Friends of Peninsula State Park have contracted with Marc Isaksen Designs to design the addition, with DNR approval. Once preliminary construction costs have been determined, the Friends will launch this significant project in 2016. We look forward to kicking off a Capital Campaign and will need the help of Friends and volunteers. Funds may also be used to provide additional areas for outdoor improvements such as an observation deck, outdoor playscape and prairie restoration. If you have interest in joining the Friends in this Capital Campaign, contact me at kelli.bruns@wi.gov or stop at the park any time. We are very excited to have the support of the Friends to improve the White Cedar Nature Center. Please visit the Friends website (peninsulafriends.org) or stop by the park office and nature center for additional information. We are grateful for your continued support!

GOLD SEAL AWARD

The Friends of Wisconsin State Parks recently awarded Peninsula State Park a Gold Seal Award for the “Best Place to Camp with the Family” in 2015. President Chris Holicek and I were honored to accept the award during the award ceremony at the Monona Terrace in Madison, November 14th. We also enjoyed hearing the support and success stories of Friends Groups statewide. As uncertain funding for the Wisconsin State Park System continues for the foreseeable future, we realize more than ever how critical the support of the Friends of Peninsula State Park is moving into 2016.

Please consider attending a Friends of Peninsula State Park Board meeting to find ways you can become more involved with all our efforts. Future Board meeting dates will be posted on the Friends’ website at peninsulafriends.org.

Thank you for your continued support, and be sure to spend quality holiday time with your families and at the park!

DON’T FORGET: 2016 PARK STICKERS

2016 State Park Admission Stickers on Sale Dec. 1

Have you run out of ideas for that hard-to-buy-for individual in your life? Do you need to find an inexpensive Holiday gift or stocking stuffer? Look no further! 2016 State Park Admission Stickers went sale December 1st.

State Park Admission fees will increase in 2016. Fees for vehicles with Wisconsin registration plates will be $28 annually, $8 daily, and $5 for an hour. For seniors (65 and older) with Wisconsin registration plates fees will be $13 annually and $3 daily. Non-Wisconsin registration plate fees will be $38 annually, $11 daily, and $5 for an hour. Trail pass fees will be $25 annually and $5 daily.

Give the gift of State Park admission to your loved ones who frequent Wisconsin State Parks. Encourage a friend or family member to visit Wisconsin State Parks by giving the gift of an annual admission sticker in the hopes they will be encouraged to explore what Wisconsin State Parks have to offer.
PENINSULA PARK HOSTS 2 LEGS OF THE FALL50 CHAMPIONSHIP RACE

The 50-mile Championship Run returned to Door County on October 24th and Friends volunteers were there man-nning 2 relay stations, one in Nicolet Bay and the other in Fish Creek by the park entrance. Over 35 Friends volun-teers served food, parked cars and directed traffic in the rain and the wind that did not let up all day. Through it all, the Friends determination to “make it a fun event” never wavered and their smiles where always there to encour-agement the runners. Sean Ryan, Fall50 Race Director, personally thanked the Friends of Peninsula State Park “for a job well done” and donated $2,000 for their efforts.

PENINSULA RESEARCH GRANT

Research Indicates Peninsula Useful Control Site for Oak Wilt Disease Research (And that’s a good thing!)

The Friends 2015 Research Grant recipient, Stephanie Jagemann (UW- Madison), has just completed her 2nd quarterly report regarding her research on Oak Wilt Disease. Her research involves 12 sites but Peninsula is of particular importance since we have no diseased trees at this time.

Stephanie traps beetles, which are known vectors of disease transmission. She writes, “After a great 16week field season, from May 19th through September 9th, 2015, the traps at Peninsula State Park have been removed. These traps were baited to catch two species of Nitidulid beetles, Carpophilus sayi and Colopterus truncates. These are known vectors of Ceratocystis fagacearum, the fungus that causes Oak Wilt Disease that can affect all species of Oak.”

Testing is currently underway. She concludes this report: “Since Peninsula State Park is not known to have Oak Wilt, it is unknown whether we will find Oak Wilt fungus on these beetles, making Peninsula State Park an important control site for this study. I look forward to beginning fungal cultivation in the near future, and to sharing my results with Peninsula State Park; it’s a pleasure to work with a park so welcoming to research opportunities”.

Oak Wilt fungus, C. fagacearum, after a 10 day incubation period.
FOREST THINNING

Beautiful woodland trails define the Peninsula experience. DNR foresters are collaborating with park staff to maintain forest health in the park through tree plantation thinning, monitoring forest pests, and invasive species control.

Peninsula has over two dozen evergreen tree plantations. Periodically removing some trees (thinning) maintains tree vigor and opens up the forest canopy, increasing sunlight to the forest floor and benefiting native tree seedlings, shrubs and wildflowers. From 2015-2017, you’ll see thinning in the plantations scattered throughout the park, including Tennison Bay Campground (last thinned in 2001) as well as along the Highway 42 corridor. Orange paint marks identify trees to be removed. Tennison will be marked shortly before cutting. Scotch Pine, a non-native species once planted for Christmas trees and farm windbreaks (soil erosion control) will also be removed. Red paint boundaries will encircle these areas. The thinning/harvest area will total 72 acres or 2% of the total park area).

Future work may include limited removal of two tree species, beech and ash, impacted by invasive insects. Beech Bark Disease (BBD) is present in Door County. BBD is caused by an exotic scale insect and a Neonectria fungus. The tiny scale insects stick thin, sap-sucking mouthparts into the bark of a tree and secrete a white wool-like wax from glands on their sides, which gives them protection from predators. The fungus follows after the insects, invading the bark where the insects had their mouthparts stuck into the bark. The combination of insect and disease kills the tree. In woods threatened by BBD, where beech is a dominant species, foresters recommend cutting beech trees so that other species of trees can grow and reproduce. Beech with BBD pose a safety hazard since infected trees can snap and fall. Over 95% of trees infected with BBD will die, but hope lies in potentially resistant trees.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) will further impact Peninsula woodlands. Foresters detected EAB evidence on a hazard tree cut at Weborg Point in 2015. All native ashes are susceptible to EAB and no known resistance has been documented. Woodpeckers, however, find EAB beetles and larvae quite tasty. Visitors may see more woodpeckers in the park as a result. Questions? Go to https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth. Consider purchasing A Park Ecology Sampler too, which includes a BBD and EAB information. Phone Peninsula State Park Headquarters at 920-868-3258 or email kathleen.harris@wisconsin.gov.
As I write these Naturalist Notes, the DNR is engaged in a realignment process. Analysis of core work is occurring, with adjustments to organizational structures and priorities expected in 2016. It is unclear how changes will affect Peninsula nature center staffing and programs, if at all. Budget reductions that have already occurred at Peninsula, however, have impacted the scope of work tasks for paid employees, as gaps need to be filled.

With this in mind, and having personally experienced the possibility of lay-off this past year, I believe it is time to focus on two areas in the coming year. The first is interpretive signage. Wayside signs range in age from thirty years to ten. I hope to update the aging signs over the next few years, beginning with the White Cedar Nature Trail. Look for new signs and sensory trail items in 2016. A Whitetails Unlimited and Friends of Wisconsin State Park Affinity grants – as well as visitor donations – are funding improvements.

The second area of need is archives. Peninsula has irreplaceable documents, photos, maps and brochures. Developing a plan to protect these resources is in the works. I will be working with Mark Dudzik, DNR State Parks Archaeologist.

How can you help? Donations in any amount earmarked for either one of these are always needed. Contact me if you need more information. Help install the new signs and sensory items next spring, and help with wood chipping the trail, too. Another need is craft activity preparation. I am planning a grand reopening of the White Cedar Nature Trail in late spring. The craft preparation can be done here or at your own home. As for archives, sorting and filing are a great need. Watch for announcements of archival work mornings and afternoons this winter. To help, contact kathleen.harris@wisconsin.gov or phone 920-868-3258.

Monarch Butterfly Monitoring

Peninsula released at least 318 monarch butterflies in 2015. Ninety-three were tagged and 27 were tested for Ophryocystis elektroscirrha. OE is a protozoan (single celled) parasite that infects monarch and queen butterflies. In simpler language, OE isn’t an animal or a plant, but a protozoan. OE was first discovered infecting monarch and queen butterflies in Florida in the late 1960s. There are no known other hosts. It has since been found in all other monarch populations world-wide. Because of this world-wide range, all indications are that this parasite has coevolved with monarchs. Of the twenty-seven monarchs tested at Peninsula, one was heavily infected and six had OE spores.
New Geocaches

In 2015, I created two new geocaches that featured the ash tree and the beech tree. Both geocaches highlight forest pests and diseases affecting these trees. Go to www.geocaching.com and search for Peninsula State Park caches. Meanwhile – consider taking a photo of yourself near an ash or beech tree that can be included in a nature center special photo book. Some day, these spectacular trees may be just a memory. Send me your photos at kathleen.harris@wisconsin.gov.

Nature Center Wish List

Your support helps Peninsula reach thousands of park visitors each year through beautiful natural gardens, unique experiences, and engaging programming. Here are some of our current needs:

- Bird Seed & Suet, Sugar for Hummingbirds
- Gently Used Children’s Books for our lending library – nature and science themes preferred
- Camper Spring Garden Needs: onion and garlic bulbs, zinnia and basil starter plants, bag organic fertilizer, straw bales, children’s water cans
- Headquarter Spring Garden Needs: Purple Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan and Alma Potchke Aster novae-angliae plants
- Program Needs: paper plates, glitter, glue, googly eyes, hot cocoa, one-inch foam paint brushes, jingle bells, watercolor pencils, plastic eggs, teddy grahams, s’more fixings, individually wrapped lollipops, large-holed beads, , pony beads, craft feathers, lanyard, Mod Podge, craft glue, plaster of Paris, antlers
- Gift Cards: local grocery stores, montessoriservices.com ($15 children’s rakes), naturewise.com (lightning bug activity kits, arrowheads), monarchwatch.org (tagging kits)

Donations in any amount always appreciated!

Stay Updated

Want more updates from Kathleen related to Nature Center events? Friends of Peninsula State Park uses Facebook to share many updates on behalf of the park year-around. Go to Facebook and search for “Friends of Peninsula State Park”.

Ted Huber, Peninsula Maintenance, installs a new trailhead sign for the White Cedar Nature Center. The trailhead has been moved closer to the deer exclosure.

Nina Whipple poses with Smokey Bear (a.k.a. Invasive Species Coordinator Nate Rice) by a white ash tree.
GIVE THE GIFT OF PENINSULA STATE PARK

Winter Wear and Holiday Gifts Available at Park Office

Get ready for winter weather and find holiday gifts for everyone on your list, maybe even yourself. You can choose from shirts, sweatshirts, fleece jackets and an array of fleece hats and billed caps in eight colors. Be sure to look at the wide selection of books we have assembled: guide books of native flora and fauna, historical books about the Park and early settlers and, of course, enjoyable children’s books. Our Plush critters will make any child smile.

Friends Memberships

Looking for something special to give a friend, co-worker, student, fellow camping buddy?

How about giving that someone a membership to the Friends of Peninsula State Park. They will enjoy being a part of an organization dedicated to supporting the programs and activities that Peninsula State Park provides to well over a million visitors each year. Members also receive spring and fall newsletters, email updates and a 10% discount on all merchandise offered at Park headquarters and the White Cedar Nature Center.

Gift For

Name

Address

Email

Phone Number

Gift From

Name

Address

Email

Phone Number

We will send a card to the recipient telling them of your thoughtful gift.

Membership level: Individual $25 ______________, Family $40 ______________, Life $300 ______________

Make check payable to: Friends of Peninsula State Park

Mail to: Friends of Peninsula State Park
        PO Box 502
        Fish Creek, WI 54212
A PARK FOR ALL SEASONS

The fun doesn’t freeze at Peninsula!

You don’t have to wait for warmer weather to plan your next Peninsula visit! A few ideas to get your winter adventure off to a good start...

1. **Feed the chickadees at the White Cedar Nature Center.** Hungry chickadees will feast straight from your hand—as long as you keep still!

2. **Conquer Hill 17.** After the irons have been put away for the season, sleds and tubes take over. Keep your eyes open and your balance centered as you cruise down one of the Peninsula Golf Course’s best hills.

3. **Attend a Nature Program.** Get outdoors and learn something new with Peninsula’s naturalist. A limited number of programs are offered during the winter months—check with the park office or the park’s website for details.

4. **Make new Friends a Peninsula Friends Event.** Start the year right with the annual First Day Hike (10 a.m. on January 1st) or the Candlelight Ski/Hike (evening of February 6th).

5. **Snowshoeing.** Peninsula is home to six miles of designated ungroomed snowshoe and hiking trails in the winter. These trails traverse some of the most peaceful and remote regions of the park.

6. **Cross-Country Skiing.** Classic or skate? Your choice! Peninsula has 16 miles of groomed, mostly double tracked cross-country ski trails—six miles of those trails can be used for both classic or skate skiing. Visit the park website for current rail conditions (http://www.dnr.wi.gov and search for “Peninsula”).

7. **Snowmobiling.** Peninsula has 17 miles of scenic snowmobile trails. Snowmobiles are allowed only on marked trails. Maximum speed limit is 25 mph on park property.

8. **Ice!** As winter begins to turn to spring, watch (and listen) safely from land as ice buckles up along the Peninsula shoreline.

9. **Winter Camping.** Do you have the gear (and the spirit!) for winter camping? Select sites in Tennison Bay campground are open year-around. A warm campfire never felt so good.
THANK YOU FRIENDS 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.

- Baylake Bank
- Bay Property Services of Door County
- Ecology Sports
- Edge of Park Rentals
- Ephraim Visitor Information Center
- Gibraltar Grill
- Going Garbage & Recycling
- Great Northern Construction Inc.
- Hat Head
- Hide Side Boutique & Corner Store
- Homestead Suites
- Julie’s Park Café & Motel
- Nicolet Bay Concessions
- Nor-Door Sport & Cyclery
- On Deck Clothing Company
- Parkwood Lodge
- Peninsula Pacers LLC
- Spielman’s Kid Works
- The Cookery & Wine Bar
- Thomas/Pfeifer Insurance
- What Next?
- Wilson’s Restaurant & Ice Cream Parlor