Join Us!

PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

Annual Membership for 2017

- New Member
- Renewing Member
- Supporter’s Membership
  - Individual Membership $30
  - Family Membership $45
  - Donation of $100 to $999
  - Donation of $1000

- I / we are interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

Name(s) ________________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________________
City/State/ZIP ____________________________________________________________
Email ________________________________________________________________

Please enclose payment to Prairie Woods ELC and send to:
Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center
12718 10th Street NE
Spicer, Minnesota 56288

Questions or comments? Please call us at 320-354-5894 or e-mail us at pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

Return Service Requested

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center
12718 10th St. NE
Spicer, MN 56288
1-320-354-5894
www.prairiewoodselc.org
pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

Thank you for your support.

Hats off to Willmar Area Community Foundation and the New London Spicer Area Fund!!

The Willmar Area Community Foundation has been a tremendous supporter of PWELC for two decades and we can’t say thank you loud enough. Projects funded by WACF over the years include the indoor climbing wall, yurt, wetland walkway, environmental education and outdoor recreation equipment, vehicles, the portable climbing wall and most recently a $30,000 grant for the Pavilion project. The New London Spicer Area Fund of the Willmar Area Community Foundation has recently made grants to PWELC for $1,000 to help purchase our “new” truck and $1000 toward the Pavilion project.

We are extremely grateful for the support of WACF and NLSAF. A big thanks to all of you who help to support the work of WACF and NLSAF.

Save the Date(s)

EARTH Day and the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale ........................................... Saturday, April 22nd 8am-1pm
YES! Statewide Awards at Target Field-Twins Game ...................................... Sunday, May 21, 2017
Party in the Pavilion.......................................................................................... Saturday, July 1
Paddle the CROW! .............................................................................................. Saturday, June 1, 2017 7am-noon
Music Under the Prairie Stars ........................................................................... Friday, September 8, 2017

BENICKS helps to launch Yellow Boats Project!

We were delighted to receive a $13,500 grant from the Benicks’ Beverages and Vending Fund of the Central Minnesota Community Foundation for the purchase of 20 kayaks. Look for the fleet of 10’ and 12’ brightly colored sit-upon kayaks to appear at lakes, rivers and ponds throughout the growing PWELC service area. The sit-upon kayaks are easy for novice paddlers to maneuver and will help us to introduce thousands of people to safe paddling and enjoyment of water sports for years to come.

Pavilion Update

Last fall, Kandiyohi County Public Works completed site preparation for the pavilion. In early March, materials began to arrive at the farm site and once again the excitement was building at Prairie Woods. An all-star crew from Great River Energy made quick work of augering holes for the main posts and then the subcontractors for Carlson Construction set about the task of pouring footings and setting posts. We are really excited to have the pavilion completed in time to support the rush of school field trips this spring. Stay tuned for details on a party in the pavilion.

The Willmar Area Community Foundation has been a tremendous supporter of PWELC for two decades and we can’t say thank you loud enough. Projects funded by WACF over the years include the indoor climbing wall, yurt, wetland walkway, environmental education and outdoor recreation equipment, vehicles, the portable climbing wall and most recently a $30,000 grant for the Pavilion project. The New London Spicer Area Fund of the Willmar Area Community Foundation has recently made grants to PWELC for $1,000 to help purchase our “new” truck and $1000 toward the Pavilion project.

We are extremely grateful for the support of WACF and NLSAF. A big thanks to all of you who help to support the work of WACF and NLSAF.
Notes from the Executive Director
by Dave Pederson, Executive Director

Spring is here and things are hopping at Prairie Woods! Pavilion construction, the Yellow Boats Project, Wright and Stearns County Parks project, a spring calendar jam packed with school groups, a resurfacing interest in climbing gym and quarry climbs, Earth Day & Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale, and the first ever statewide YES! Co-opetition culminating with an award ceremony at Target Field on May 21st. All this combined with the excitement of the world waking up after winter. Lots of good things happening!

With your help, Prairie Woods continues to grow and prosper. Our work is important. Our work is fun (Serious Fun!). In a time where the only certainty seems to be uncertainty, we are working to engage the next generation of stewards in understanding, caring for and enjoying the natural world.

Please enjoy catching up on the news from Prairie Woods, feel welcome to join us, and please support our work as a volunteer and contributor. We need you!

Thanks for all that you do for Prairie Woods.

Dave

WRIGHT AND STEARNS COUNTY PARKS PROJECT GAINING MOMENTUM.

As reported in the winter Warbler, PWELC has entered a contract to provide 30 outdoor recreation and environmental education programs in Wright and Stearns Counties over the next two years. We started off the winter with a very successful Schools in the Parks pilot project. Seven schools were able to participate in environmental ed. and outdoor rec. programs held at Robert Ney Nature Preserve, Warner Lake County Park, Rockville County Park and Quarry Park.

Both Wright and Stearns County have developed some wonderful park spaces including the 1200 acre Bertram Chain of Lakes Park near Monticello and Quarry Park in Waite Park. We are really excited to work with the park staff to get people of all ages out into the parks and the great outdoors.

Be sure to check out the PWELC Facebook page for upcoming events in Wright and Stearns Counties. Some of the programs coming up include rock climbing in Quarry Park, voyageur canoe and kayak programs at Bertram Chain of Lakes Park, and two large summer kick-off events scheduled for Warner Lake County Park (June 16th) and Bertram Chain of Lakes County Park (June 17th).

This project is made possible through a grant obtained by Wright and Stearns Counties from the Greater MN Parks and Trails Commission with funds provided from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

The PWELC community was saddened by the passing of board member Richard “Dick” Larson in February. Richard was a long time proponent for Prairie Woods during his time as a Kandiyohi County Commissioner and remained active on the PWELC governing board and executive finance committee until the time of his death. We will miss Richard’s very sense of humor, can-do attitude and fair-minded approach to problem solving. He provided a great example of living a long full life of service to his community.

First YES! State Wide Competition Award Ceremony scheduled at Target Field!

The Youth Energy Summit (YES!) is excited to announce the first ever state-wide competition. Each of the four top regional winners will compete this year for the YES! State Championship title. The recipient will receive their award at the Minnesota Twins game on Sunday, May 21st at 1:00pm. We invite all PWELC/YES! fans and friends to join us at the game and congratulate the first YES! State Champion. Please contact algoudenergysummit.org for more information regarding reduced priced Twins tickets for the event.

Major funding for YES! has been provided by the MN Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources. Other major contributors include Southwest Initiative Foundation and the McKnight Foundation.

Please remember Prairie Woods in your estate planning and annual giving.

PRAIRIE WOODS
www.prairiewoodselc.org
320-354-5894
Spicer, Minnesota

PRAIRIE WOODS
www.prairiewoodselc.org
320-354-5894
Spicer, Minnesota

Prairie Woods: A Natural Choice for Weddings, Receptions, Family Reunions, and Corporate Retreats.
**Prairie Woods**

Through the eyes of a second grader…

"Field trip day!!! Hop on the bus – This bus ride is so long. Where are we going? We're driving on a dirt road? This road is sooo long!"

What's that old shack? You want me to wear those funny looking clothes? People wore hats like that all the time! What's an arpent for? We get to go in the cabin? People actually lived here? What's that? (wood burning stove) What's that? (wash board & wash tub)

We get to do that & use those? Yes! Grand coffee, card wool, dance to fiddle & banjo, do laundry, beat rugs, dip candles, saw wood, churn ice cream, potato sack race, picking up item. What's that? (coffee grinder) What's that? (coffee grinder)

It's fulfilling to watch the amazement and excitement of the students as they become pioneers for the day. Many don't want to return back to the 21st century. If you know someone that would like to be a pioneer for a day, sign them up for Pioneer Day on Aug. 16th from 9am - 4pm. They'll even make their own pioneer lunch. More information on the Community Ed. Page.

**Earth Day & Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale**

Join us for a pancake and sausage breakfast from 8am-10am. Presentation by the Minnesota ZooMobile at 10:30am. Panel discussion on Ag Water Quality Certification at 9a.m. Exhibits and kid activities from 8am-1pm. Be sure to bring your wallet and pick up some great deals at the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale.

**Recycled Gear Sale**

Your tax-deductible donations of equipment for the gear sale are accepted up until the day of the sale. Call us if you have items you wish to donate for the sale. We can assist with picking up items.

**THE 2017 TOMMY SWENSON MEMORIAL ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT RAISED $2500 FOR YOUTH SPORTING PROGRAMS AT PRAIRIE WOODS.**

Each year for the last four years the family and friends of Tommy Swenson have held an ice fishing tournament on Green Lake and raised funds to support youth sporting programs in honor of Tommy’s love for the great outdoors. We are honored to receive support from the Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament. This year the family has directed $1000 of the proceeds to the pavilion project. Be sure to check out the Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament in the first week of February 2018.

**Needs and Giving Opportunities:**

* Donate gently-used outdoor gear for the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale

* We still need approximately $10,000 to close out our fundraising for the Pavilion. Gifts in any amount are needed and welcome!

* **Pavilion-warming gifts:** round tables ($100 each) 10 needed; Rectangular tables ($100 each) 8 needed; Folding chairs ($25 each) 250 needed

* We always welcome donations of shoes in good condition for our WorldWear Project.

* Join the planning committee for the first Prairie Stars event in the new pavilion!

* Help with landscaping around the new pavilion.

**High Notes from the Challenge Course**

Throughout this past winter, PW ELC has had the privilege of hosting Challenge Course groups at our Indoor Rock Climbing Wall as well as leading Teambuilding Initiatives inside our facilities. The Indoor Rock Climbing Gym offers the perfect activity for a cold winter day. This space allows PW ELC to facilitate Challenge Course Programming year round. We’ve done programs with schools, corporate groups, community education, birthday parties, families and groups of friends. While every group may be different, the goals and accomplishments are universal. Whether it’s learning how to communicate better as a team or push yourself higher up a climb, the Challenge Course brings feelings into the present. Participants’ experiences are real. Real in the moment and real in life after. As a parent, I know the joy it brings me to see my son experience life. I see that same passion as family members, teachers, and friends witness those close to them try their best.

As winter ends, I can feel the warm energy of what’s to come. Here at PW ELC, everything seems to accelerate at the temperatures increase. Thousands of youth and adults are planning their spring field trips to PW ELC. I’m honored to be a part of their experience. I vividly remember my time in grade school feeling so excited about going on a field trip to the Outdoor Learning Center. It was my only field trip of the year and it meant everything to me. I still hold that feeling close as I facilitate our programs here at PW ELC. Every program, and each participant, is unique and important.

This summer, Prairie Woods ELC is offering Intro to Rock Climbing at Quarry Park in Stearns County. Participants will get to climb routes on a granite rock face in the designated climbing area at Quarry Park. The PW ELC staff will provide the equipment and facilitation. Adult climbing sessions will take place on Wednesday, June 28th and Wednesday, August 30th 2017 from 5:00pm – 7:00pm. There will be a Youth/Family climbing session on July 25th 2017, 2017 from 1:00pm – 3:00pm.

To register for these programs, contact the Quarry Park Office: (email) parkinfo@stearns.mn.us or (call) 320–255-6172. The Prairie Woods Pinnacle will also visit Quarry Park on Saturday, July 22nd 2017 from 1:00pm – 3:00pm for an open climb. Please feel free to contact me anytime about scheduling a future program.

Your adventure’s waiting! Steve

**NICE THINGS DONE FOR PRAIRIE WOODS BY PEOPLE LIKE YOU!**

Bruce Berghuis donated a nifty little sailboat and other watersports items for the Gear Sale.

Several anonymous donors dropped off some very nice xc skis and poles.

Dr. Dave Newcomer donated a cedar strip canoe for the Gear Sale.

Boy Scout Troop 246 removed sumac and invasive species from the prairie.

Scott Glup continued to work on prairie restoration.

Ron & Dee Erpelding, Roger & Kay Strand, Sam & Sandra Nelson, Joel & Cathy Halbritter and Lee & Betty Olson made contributions to the PW ELC Sustainability Endowment Fund.

Michelle Steffen made a new pair of “Oxen puppet show” for the Lorax puppet show.

Gary Kulset made a contribution towards a kayak trailer for the Yellow Boats project.

Spicer Fire Department donated old, retired hose to be used at outdoor climbing programs.

Luke Geiger and Redstar Creative once again designed our Earth Day poster.

Kandiyohi County Community Services built and donated several wooden recycling bins to replace our old plastic recycling containers.

Anderson, Larson sponsored community spotlight on 106.5. The Train the month of January.

We were honored to receive Memorial gifts from the families and friends of:

Doug Mossberg, Dale Heveron, Richard Larson and Max Barry

**Prairie Woods: A Natural Choice for Weddings, Receptions, Family Reunions, and Corporate Retreats.**
Spring has sprung. Another weird winter behind us there are a lot of people that are titching, trigger finger and all, to get outside and enjoy the great outdoors. There are several opportunities to do just that at PWELC’s Gary Westby Educational Shooting Range.

- Spring Sporting Clay leagues starting in April.
- MDMA Forkhorn I Camp (firearm safety) July 9th-13th
- MDMA Forkhorn II Camp (bow safety) July 16th-20th
- Youth 3D Archery shoot July 21st
- Tommy Swenson Youth sporting clay night July 23th
- Pleasants Forever Youth sporting clay and .22 event August 12th

*Sign up for one (or all) of these events or call to set up a range date for your own group.

EE Notes  - Kory Klebe

As I look back at the newsletter from last spring I notice that I am having some of the same thoughts this year. It is a challenge to do winter programs without winter. Just like 2016, we had a fantastic but very, very, very short ski season. (The exception was the MLK holiday weekend where we rented more skis and snow shoes in 3 days than we have in the last 3 years.) In fact this year schools had to replace skiing and snow shoe classes with other programs such as “The Lorax” puppet show, compass 101, or even a new recreation invention “bowling snow golf.”

Despite the general lack of snow the kids were enthusiastic and enjoying exploring nature.

We actually had great ski conditions for our first Wright and Stearns County Parks outreach program with Maple Lake 6th graders at Robert Nye Nature Preserve, and were able to snowshoe with kids from Richmond Elementary at Warner Lake County Park. Highlights for kids were finding vole trails and examining various skeletal remains as they emerged from the snow.

This winter, we welcomed Kelsey Olson, MN DNR Naturalist from Sibley State Park who assisted with some programs as part of a new memorandum of agreement between Sibley State Park and PWELC to exchange staff and program resources. Thanks Kelsey! Thanks Minnesota DNR and Sibley State Park!

The Lorax

During our 2016 Earth Day Celebration we debuted a puppet show adapted from Dr. Seuss’s “The Lorax.” Since that presentation this show has been performed for an additional 350 students. This spring and summer we will be taking the “Lorax” on the road. The 1st outing will be with AIM in Willmar. The “Lorax”’s next two road trips are a bit further away but open to the public:

-June 16th Warner Lake County Park in Stearns County
-June 17th Bertram Chain on Lakes County Park in Wright County.

Come join us for one of these presentations or have the “Lorax” visit your school, church, or special event.
EARTH DAY

WATER CONNECTS

APRIL 22ND 2017  8AM - 1PM

Prairie Woods
Environmental Learning Center
12718 10th St NE, Spicer
320.354.2664
prairiewoodsdcic.org

SCHEDULE:
8a - 10a  - Pancake Breakfast
8a - 1p  - Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale
Activities & Exhibits
9a  - Ag Water Quality Presentation & Panel
10a - 1p  - Sappy Joes for sale
10:30a - MN Zoomobile

RECYCLED OUTDOOR GEAR SALE
Gear donations welcome and day of sale.

WE WANT YOUR SHOES - WORLDWEAR PROJECT
Bring gently worn shoes to Earth Day as fundraiser for PWEUC

FREE NITRATE TESTING
Bring a small sample of water in a clean glass jar & MN Soil & Water District or MPCA will test the nitrate levels.

ATTRACTIONS FOR KIDS & ADULTS:
Waterhed Health - Birding - Climbing Wall - Nitrate Testing - Arts & Crafts - Practice Casting - DNR Fish Tank - More

EVENT ORGANIZERS:
CROW SWCD

EVENT SPONSORS:
CROW SWCD • Cass County • Minnesota Sea Grant • MN Board of Regents • Minnesota Forest Service • Rural Minnesota
4TH ANNUAL SLEIGH & SKI FEST A SUCCESS DESPITE BROWN GROUND.

Owing to brown ground and a non-winter, numbers were down somewhat for the 4th Annual Sleigh and Ski Fest, but those who showed up had a great time! Vickie Vogt reported that 125 people enjoyed the chili feed. The Cedar Creek Band provided live music. Over 25 exhibitors shared winter crafts, sports and hobbies. The National Honor Society from New London-Spicer H.S. once again provided able volunteers to assist with the chili feed, parking, and children’s activities. The indoor climbing wall, always a hit, was busy throughout the day.

The Sleigh & Ski Fest was the brainchild of Fred and Joy Zwart. The 2017 sleigh fest was dedicated to Fred who passed away this winter. The event this year was tinged with sadness but also a great feeling of gratitude for all that Fred did to establish the Sleigh & Ski Fest.

Big thanks to Gary Stai, Kenny Wetzel and Joy Zwart for stepping up to help organize the event this year.

A special thanks to the folks who provided teams and horse drawn wagons: Joy Zwart, Kenny Wetzel, Gary & Kathy Stai, Dale & Grace Fladeboe (sound truck and announcing), Pat & Gwen Hood, Henry Haglund, Norman Rearing, Tony Loughlin, Stan Gilmosdal.

The horses, and their handlers, are always impressive and a big hit with folks of all ages.

We also need to give special thanks to Vickie Vogt, Danny Leite, Ida Leite, Vicky Thompson and daughter Shannon, for another great job of orchestrating the chili feed. And the many sponsors and volunteers who contributed to the event.

Jennie-O Turkey Store and 1st District Association for supplying meat and cheese for the chili feed.

Tom Gustafson and the Cedar Creek Band, Tom Bahr & Custom Signs, NL-S National Honor Society: parking, chili feed servers, activities


Party in the Pavilion!

Join us for our Grand Opening –
Open House on Saturday, July 1!!
Stay tuned to Facebook, our Website, or attend Earth Day for more details!!!