Join Us!

PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

Annual Membership for 2018

- New Member
- Renewing Member

Supporter’s Membership

- Individual Membership $30.00
- Family Membership $45.00
- Donation of _______ amount to the Sustainability Endowment $100

1 / we are interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

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

Questions or comments? Please call us at 320-354-8594 or e-mail us at pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

Thank you for your support.

PRAIRIE WOODS

Warbler

VOLUME 31 SPRING 2018 ISSUE 1

5TH ANNUAL SLEIGH & SKI FESTIVAL

Over 500 people enjoyed the 5th Annual Sleigh & Ski Festival held on Sunday, Feb. 11th, 2018. Thanks to Jeff Vetsch for providing music, Vickie Vogt for orchestrating the chili feed, Gary & Kathy Stai and Joy Zwart for coordinating the wagon teams, NLS National Honor Society volunteers for helping with parking and serving, and a great group of exhibitors and volunteers. Due to very little snowfall, our ski trails were not open but over a hundred people were able to get out and ski in track set on Kettle Lake. It was a glorious day down on Kettle Lake out of the wind and in the sun. It was a bit breezy out on the playing field for the wagon rides but it did not seem to dimish the enthusiasm of the drivers or riders. Inside, everyone seemed to enjoy the hobby share exhibits, chili feed, music, the indoor climbing wall and snacks provided by Little Crow 4-H. The Hobby Share Exhibits ranged from woodcarving, Purple Martin Project, MN Darkhouse Anglers, Master Gardeners, Kandiyohi County Historical Society to the Humane Society and more. The 4-H snack table featured gourmet donuts by Matt Prewald. The dogs and cats from the Humane Society stole the show and the hearts of many. All in all, a good time was had by all. We hope you can join us next year!

THE GOVERNOR’S FISHING OPNER WILL BE HELD IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY

This year and PWELC is pleased to participate as a sponsor and program provider. On Friday, May 11th, PWELC will be taking media guests out on the Mill Pond in the Big Canoe, as well as hosting another media group for a program sampler at PWELC followed by lunch in the Wotby Observatory. We’ll finish off the day with the mobile climbing wall at the community picnic scheduled for Robbins Island.

PRAIRIE RESTORATION CONTINUES

A big thanks to Scott Glup, Joel Halbritter and the many scouts and others who have volunteered to help recover a tract of virgin prairie at PWELC. Treat yourself a hike on the mound ridge trail north of the Wotby Observatory this spring. Enjoy the open prairie view and let your thoughts go back in time to the people who stood on this high place in centuries gone by.

SAVE the Date(s)

EARTH DAY 2018 and the Recycled Outdoor Gear SALE..................................................Saturday, April 21st - 8:00am to 1:00pm
Climate Convening ............................................................................................................Saturday, April 21st - 11:00am to 3:00pm
YES State Champion Award at Target Field .....................................................................Sunday, May 20th - 10:00am
Paddle the CROW .............................................................................................................Saturday, June 2nd
Evening Under the Prairie Stars 2018 ..............................................................................Friday, September 7th
Greetings from Prairie Woods! As I write this update we are putting away our winter gear and getting ready for a very busy spring and summer. Virtually every day in April and May are booked with school programs and our summer is filling up fast. We will be on the road for many days again this summer with our mobile climbing wall, the Yellow Boats Project and Big Canoe as well as with our climbing, camping and paddling programs in partnership with Wright and Stearns County Parks. There will be lots of opportunities this summer to get out and enjoy the Great Outdoors with PWELC.

Some of the exciting events coming up include Earth Day and the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale on Sat. April 21st, The Governor’s Fishing Opener in May, Paddle the Crow in June, and dozens of opportunities like to reserve space for your next special event. PWELC is vibrant throughout the year, but never more so than spring. Please plan to join us for one of our programs or special events or perhaps just come out and enjoy a quiet walk on our trails.

I look forward to seeing you at Prairie Woods!

Dave Pederson, Executive Director

PWELC PAVILION IS A HIT!

The new pavilion which was completed on June 1st, 2017 is booked for nearly every weekend this summer and 2019 is already starting to fill in. Thanks to all who contributed to the pavilion!! It has been fantastic to shelter programs in inclement weather and the facility is a popular choice for nearly every weekend this summer to paddle the Middle Fork of the Crow River and enjoy a quiet walk on our trails.

Mary Peterson, Gene Kubesh and the family of Tommy Swenson American Legion. The tournament falls on the first Friday of June and has been fantastic to shelter programs in inclement weather and the facility is a popular choice for nearly every weekend this summer to paddle the Middle Fork of the Crow River and enjoy a quiet walk on our trails.

Earth Day and Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale – Saturday, April 21, 2018

The Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale has grown into a great annual event that will include climate change science, local climate stories, and local climate solutions. All of this will take place from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at PWELC’s Earth Day event April 21st, 2018.

West Central Winter Workshops

The first workshop was held at PWELC where students from ACGC, NLS High, and NLS Middle schools spent the day learning from local experts Jonathan Morales and Dylan Erickson (Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District) and Charlene Brooks (Kandiyohi County Aquatic Invasive Species Task force). 30 students learned how to tell their water story, project planning skills, water quality best management practices, and were informed about local aquatic invasive species challenges.

The YME YES! team traveled to Granite Falls to see firsthand how their city produces energy. 7 students and their coach (Steve Petrich) toured Granite Falls Energy, an ethanol plant and the Granite Falls Dam which produces hydro power for a good portion of the city. They ended their day touring a small solar array that also helps power the city.

The final workshop will feature Climate Generation. A Will Steger Legacy speaker Jenna Totz, who will speak on how climate change is affecting our local prairies and what can be done about this vital issue. Students from ACGC, NLS High School, and DREAM Academy will hike the prairies at PWELC and learn about prairie restoration projects at PWELC. The day will end with a renewable energy tour of PWELC so students can see how a local organization is producing all of their own power.

Second Annual YES! State Competition

YES! will once again be conducting a state competition and presenting the award at Target Field on home base! Each of the four top regional winners will compete for the 2018YES! State Championship title. The recipient will receive the award at the Minnesota Twins game on Sunday, May 20th at 1:00pm against the Brewers. We invite all PWELC/YES! fans and friends to join us at the game and congratulate the new YES! State Champions. Please contact ali@youthenergysummit.org for more information regarding reduced priced Twins tickets for the event.

YES! YOUTH ENERGY SUMMIT UPDATES

– Ali Dahmes YES! Unit Coordinator

We’ve grown! This season we added 6 new YES! teams to the west-central region including New London Spicer High School, ROCORI High School, Melrose Middle School, Sartell Middle School, DREAM Academy and Royalton High School. Team projects this year include installing energy efficient hand dryers, LED light retrofit, building a tiny home, creating and building solar and high mileage vehicles, food production in green houses, and installing a solar panel! Throughout this season, YES! students will have attended workshops on water quality, renewable energy sources, prairie restoration, and climate change.

Youth Convening Minnesota

The New London – Spicer High School YES! team in partnership with Climate Generation are putting on a community climate convening hosted by Prairie Woods ELC during their Earth Day event and sponsored by the McKnight Foundation. NLS youth are planning an event that will include climate change science, local climate stories, and local climate solutions. All of this will take place from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at PWELC’s Earth Day event April 21st, 2018.

Music Under the Prairie Stars 2017 Pavilion and Johnson Memorial Firepit

2008 YES! youth taking secchi tube readings at a Winter Workshop

Thank you for remembering PWELC in your end-of-year giving and estate planning.

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

www.prairiewoodselect.org
pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us
Spicer, Minnesota

8 am Registration
5K or 1 mile

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One of the most gratifying things about working with children is seeing their delight in learning and trying new things. Sometimes we get further insight through Thank you notes that they send after their trip to Prairie Woods. I thought I'd share a few, since you, as a member, help make these programs happen too.

"Thank you for a nice time on the Minnesota Trail. My favorite thing was Everything we did. I liked when we made ice cream and the part when we were in the cabin and when we were wood cutting and when we dressed up and danced. It was fun thank you very much. ~ Your friend Danika."

"Thanks for letting me wash clothes. I liked the bonnet, it was beautiful and comfortable. The ice cream was delicious. The toy is very fun. ~ Sincerely, Mindy."

"Thank you for the trip. My favorite thing was cutting the wood. I got to saw the woods apart. It was very generous of you guys. ~ Your friend Avery."

As you can see, sawing wood and ice cream are usually the highlights at the pioneer cabin. If you know of a class that would benefit from a hands-on, living history experience please contact me. We have space available for fall programs. If you have a youngster that would like to be a pioneer for a day, sign them up for Pioneer Day on Aug. 14th from 8am-4pm. They’ll even make their own pioneer lunch. More information on the Community Ed. Page.

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**Time Travel** - Mari Klebe

"During our trip to Prairie Woods, we had a wonderful experience. The Nature Center was amazing, and the hikes helped us learn about the environment. My favorite part was building a campfire ring that will be placed on Geer Island.~ Your friend Mari Klebe"

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**High Notes from the Challenge Course** - Steve Friedlein, CC Coordinator

Preparations are well under way for spring programming here at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. It’s always great to correspond with group leaders about planning a field trip experience for their students. Every group has the opportunity to share their thoughts and intentions on what they would like to create for their experience. It’s a great honor for the PWELC staff to deliver on those expectations. This past winter, the Challenge Course programs consisted primarily of Teambuilding and Indoor Rock Climbing. Schools, Community Education, Birthday Parties and Corporate groups are examples of participants who’ve visited for a Challenge Course Program over winter. The Hutchinson Middle School 6th graders were one of those groups. They take part in a program at PWELC every February, and bring around 200 students over a two day period. I had the pleasure of leading the Teambuilding portion of their field trip. After 12 sessions of 1 hour and 15 minutes each, I can honestly say that I was speaking “fluent six grader.” Some of the goals were problem solving, being respectful, and communication, which of course includes listening. Let me tell you, six graders are very good at the talking part of communication. Throughout the program, we did a series of initiative games that focused on their goals. With 200 students, it can be difficult for students to know everyone in their grade. At the end of each session I would debrief with the students and ask the question: Did anyone work with someone new that they don’t normally spend time with? The answer was always “yes”, from every student. Teambuilding initiatives create a safe space for participants to work together towards a common goal. It’s truly amazing to see that the students all have the chance to speak their mind as well as respectfully listen to one another. They realize that if they work together in a positive manner, the outcome is always better. We’re all after the same goal, so let’s reach it together!

The Mobile Climbing Wall is scheduled for over 20 appearances at community events around the region this summer. Check for updates on Facebook.

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**Upcoming Summer Mobile Rock Climbing Wall Events**

Governor’s Fishing Opener Community Picnic- Friday, May 11
Saturday, May 19th, 2018: Cinco de Mayo (Willmar, MN)
Saturday, July 14th 2018: Bonanza Valley Days (Bropton, MN)
Saturday, August 4th 2018: Meeker County Fair
Saturday, August 11th 2018: Kandiyohi County Fair
Saturday, August 25th 2018: Raymond Harvest Fest
Sunday, August 26th 2018: Viking Sportsmen Event (Alexandria, MN)
Saturday, September 8th 2018: Prairie Pothole Day (New London, MN)

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**Nice things done for Prairie Woods by People Like You:**

* United Way of West Central Minnesota has helped to support PWELC youth programs for over 15 years.
* Scott Gulp has volunteered many hours for prairie restoration
* Leo’s Legs Fund of the Willmar Area Community Foundation is helping to sponsor Yellow Boats events this summer.
* The New London-Spicer Area Fund of the Willmar Area Community Foundation is sponsoring two Yellow Boats events in New London this summer.
* Legacy Amendment funds administered by the Greater MN Parks and Trails Commission are funding PWELC programs in the beautiful parks throughout Wright and Stearns County this summer.
* Sue & John Bahr donated an antique corn planter to the Pioneer Cabin program.
* Tracy Tebben and the Advanced Metals Class built a campfire ring that will be placed on Geer Island.
* Sibley State Park naturalist Kelsey Olson came and helped with February programs.

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**Needs and Giving Opportunities**

* Scandinavian RickSieles $240 each. Goal: 20 rickSieles
* Sponsor a YES! team or YES! prize awards ($500, $1000, $1500)
* Endowment Fund - Gifts of all sizes are welcome! A great option for memorial gifts.
* Donations of outdoor gear in good condition for the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale
* Donations to help complete a new restroom facility at the farm site.

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**We have been honored to receive memorials from the friends and families of:**

Sandy Kardell
Gene Johnson
Harold Ekren
Lori Green
Walter Harguth
Harold Danielson
Evone Loch
Roland W. Mohler

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**Thank You**

Thank you for remembering PWELC in your end-of-year giving and estate planning.
Environmental Education & Shooting Sports Notes

In 1965 The Byrds released Turn, Turn, Turn. They sang “For everything there is a season.”

This newsletter finds us transitioning between seasons and the “everythings” that we do.

June/July/August –
(June 29th NL Mill Pond, July 21st NL Mill Pond - Waterdays, July 27th-Ringo Lake)

------Plus keep an eye on Facebook for surprise pop-up events------

April 3rd – Spring Shooting league at the Westby Shooting Range

July 16-20th – Bow Safety Forkhorn II Day Camp

August 11th – Pheasants Forever Youth Shooting Program

July 8th-12th – Firearm Safety Forkhorn I Camp

July 24th – Tommy Swenson Memorial Youth Sporting Clays

June 2nd – Paddle the Crow River Trip

August 24th – Full Moon Canoe @ PWELC

April 26th/28th – Firearm Safety Field Day

May 31st – Firearm Safety Forkhorn I Camp

The Prairie Stars Event has become the premier fundraising event of the year for PWELC and we are excited to hold the event in the Pavilion for the second time. Please plan to join us on Friday, Sept. 7th and please consider taking a sponsorship role to help support this seriously fun event to advance the work of PWELC.

KICKSLEDS!

Several winters of low snow and brown ground have sent us searching for fun alternative winter program activities. At the end of this winter we purchased a Scandinavian kicksled and as a staff, we are getting a huge kick out of kicksledding. Kicksleds can be used on bare ice on our sloughs or also on snow with the addition of snow-runners. By next year, we hope to have a fleet of kicksleds in service for winter programs and available for weekend rentals. The kicksledders cost approx. $240 each and our goal is to acquire some sleds to suit our small to XL sized participants. The kicksleds are available for rent on weekends. If you would like to donate a kicksled with your name or the name of your business or organization attached please give Dave a call at 320-354-5894.

DETOUR ALERT

Major construction work on HWY 71 may periodically present some challenges for reaching PWELC from mid-April through July. Please check our website and Facebook for updates and alternative routes to PWELC.

ENDOWMENT UPDATE

The Prairie Woods ELC Sustainability Endowment has surpassed $525,000 thanks to the many who have given gifts large and small. The endowment was established with $80,000 from a bequest from the estate of Ruth and Helen Peterson and has grown steadily with several large anonymous gifts and many, many smaller but important and meaningful gifts. The endowment has reached a point where the governing board has designated a percentage of annual proceeds to support programs and special projects at Prairie Woods. It is exciting to know that the endowment principal will continue to grow and provide support for PWELC programs in perpetuity.
APRIL 21ST 2018 8AM TO 1PM

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center
12718 107TH NE Spiker
320.354.6604
prairiewoodscw.org

SCHEDULE:
8a - 10a • Pancake Breakfast • Pre-game • Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale
10a - 1p • Activities & Exhibits
103 • Bruce the Bug Guy "A LIVE insect Experience"
11a • Climate Converging

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

CLIMATE CONVERGING
With Climate Generation, MLS YES! Team & other Climate Experts

FREE NITRATE TESTING
Design your own word clock and water in a water clock jar (at hands-on)
Soil & Water District or MPCA will test the nitrate levels.

ATTRACTIONS FOR KIDS & ADULTS:
Free Trees • Best Management Practices • Water Quality Information • Watershed Health • Master Gardener • Pollinator Info • Archaeology Exhibits • Climbing Wall • LMRF Fish Tank • Little Crew Anglers Minnow Races & Casting Practice • Stillwater State Park Naturski • MPCA Bee Alter Info • Nature Art by Demo, Inc. • Hands on Educational Activities & Many More Exhibits

EVENT ORGANIZERS:
CROW • SWCD • MPCA • Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Soil & Water District

EVENT SPONSORS: • Cass-Wake Cub Foods • Jennie-O • MN Dairy Association • MN Pork Producers • Feeder Cattle
PADDLE THE CROW……………………………………….All ages
Come with Prairie Woods ELC and the Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District to “Paddle the Crow.” This will be a 1 hour river trip down the Middle Fork of the Crow River. We will paddle 17 foot canoes in addition to PWELC’s 34 foot Voyageur Canoe (perfect for notions and families with young children). The trip will start at the boat access/fishing pier parking lot on the New London Mill Pond. From there we will be shuttled to “Dilly” Bridge north of New London and paddle back to the Mill Pond. Lunch afterward will be provided by the Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District. All equipment will be provided.
Date: Saturday, June 2nd
Time: 9:00-12:00
Cost: $7/person and $20/family

GAME DAY AT THE PIONEER CABIN ............Grades: 3rd-6th
Who’s up for some friendly competition? After dressing as a pioneer, unplug for a morning of blind man’s bluff, a three legged race, a game of graces (hoops & sticks), kubb, and many more pioneer games. It’s raining out we’ll see how you do at jacks, pick up sticks, and card games. (Meet at Farmsite)
Date: Tuesday, June 5
Time: 9:30 am – 11:30 am
Cost: $8

PWELC SAMPLER ……………………………..Grades: 1st and up
Come experience what Prairie Woods ELC has to offer. We will visit the Pioneer Cabin to see how people lived “back in the day”, do the Flying Squirrel, climb the wall, track some animals, and learn some outdoor survival skills. Bring a sack lunch. (Meet at main building)
Date: Monday, June 11th
Time: 8:00-9:00 am
Cost: $25

KAYAK THE CROW RIVER……………………………..Ages: 12 and up for solo boat, Please call to discuss options for younger children
Join the Guides from Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center for an exciting adventure on the water. Kayaks, gear and instruction will be provided. Registration required. Max of 18 participants.
Date: Monday, June 11th
Time: 1:30pm – 3:30pm
Location: Mill Pond Beach (New London, Minnesota)
Fee: $15.00 per Kayak

POINTER SKILLS …………………………………Grades: 3rd – 6th
Do you have what it takes to live as a pioneer? Test your knowledge while participating in our version of “Oregon Trail”. Break out or develop your compass skills. Try your hand at the cross cut saw and buck saw. If time allows, you might go home with a craft as well. (Meet at Farmsite)
Date: Thursday, July 19
Time: 9 am – 12 pm
Cost: $15

2018 NEW_LONDON_WATERS DAYS EVENT
The Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center’s Yellow Boats Project will be participating in the New London Water Days Event in 2018. Kayaks will be available to pedals on the Mill Pond.
Date: Saturday, July 21st
Time: 12:00pm – 3:00pm
Fee: Free

YOUTH SHOTGUN IN SPORTING CLAYS
SPONSORED BY TOMMY SWENSON MEMORIAL ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT ………..Grades: 12-18
Did you know that Prairie Woods ELC has a Sporting Clay Shoot Range? The range consists of 25 targets set up at varying distances. Each target consists of an 8 inch long clay that rolls on the ground. You may bring your own (12 or 20ga) shotgun or borrow one of ours. There will be target limits set up. One for 1st time shooters in addition to our regular sporting clay range. Program cost greatly reduced due to contribution from the Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament. (Meet at Westby shooting range)
Date: Tuesday, July 24th
Time: 6:00-6:45, 6:45-7:30, 7:30-8:15
Cost: $5

KAYAK RINGO LAKE………………………….Grades 5 and up
Ages: 12 and up for solo boat, Please call to discuss options for younger children. Join the Guides from Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center for an exciting adventure on the water. Kayaks, gear and instruction will be provided. Registration required. Max of 18 participants.
Date: Friday, July 27th 2018
Time: 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Location: Ringo Lake Access
Fee: $15.00 per Kayak

POINTER DAY …………………………………GRADES: 3RD – 6TH
Help Anna Danielson get ready for fall. Find out what pioneer life was really like with this ALL day adventure. We’ll start the day by dressing as a pioneer. Then we’ll get busy with our indoor chores which will include preparing our own pioneer lunch. Followed by some outdoor activities such as doing laundry, cutting wood & beating rugs. After chores we should find time to play a few games, make a craft & maybe even end with a sweet treat of homemade ice cream! (Meet at Farmsite)
Date: Tuesday, Aug. 7
Time: 8 am – 4 pm
Cost: $15 (includes lunch)

YOUTH SPORTING CLAY AND .22 SHOOT SPONSORED BY PHEASANTS FOREVER………………………Ages 11-16
This is a great opportunity to shoot for the 1st time OR to improve your already existing shooting skills. Included in the class will be instruction on safe gun handling and shooting technique. Firearms, shells, and targets will be provided. You may bring your own 12 or 20ga shotgun. All levels of shooters are invited. (Meet at Westby Shooting range)
Date: Saturday, August 11th
Time: 1:00-5:00 with Hotdog dinner to follow program. Cost: $5

NATURE DAYS …………………………………Grades: K-3
WHAT’S THAT?? Let’s check it out! For three mornings we will explore the natural world in which we live. We will use hands-on activities and games to better understand the forest, prairie, and the wetlands at Prairie Woods. Bring a sack lunch, snacks, and a water bottle. (Meet at main building)
Date: Tues-Thurs, August 14,15,16
Time: 8:00am-11:00am
Cost: $55

FULL MOON CANOE ……………………………….Grades: 5th and up
Come with your friends or family to enjoy the solitude of a Prairie Woods wetland during while watching the sun set and the moon rise all in the same evening. Canoe, paddles, life jackets and instruction provided by Prairie Woods ELC. Children must be accompanied by an adult. (Meet at Farmsite)
Date: Friday, August 24th
Time: 6:00p-8:00p
Cost: $7 per person

INDOOR ROCK CLIMBING GYM ………….All Ages
Climbing offers a chance to challenge yourself both physically and mentally at your own pace. Rock Climbing is a true adventure sport. Beginners can learn about the sport, exercise and have fun! Experienced climbers can come train and refine their skills. The Prairie Woods ELC instructors are here to help every climber reach new heights! Equipment will be provided. Meet at the main building.
Date(s): Thursday, April 5th, Thursday, June 7th, Thursday, August 2nd
Time: 6:00pm – 5:30pm
Cost: $10 per climber / per session