Join Us!

PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

Annual Membership for 2018

New Member
Renewing Member
Supporter’s Membership
All levels of support are appreciated!

$30.00
$50.00
$100.00
Up to $499
$500 to $999
$1000

Family Membership
Donation to Sustainability Endowment

1/2 the amount
$100 to $499
$500 to $999

1/4 the amount
$100 to $499
$500 to $999

I/we am interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

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

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

Gratitude for your support.
Notes from the Executive Director

by Dave Pederson, Executive Director

Where! Already time for another newsletter. The pace at Prairie Woods has been fast and furious since I last wrote. Geer Island, the new pavilion, Prairie Stars, FFA Greenbands event, Region V Envirothon, 70 outreach programs, Conservation Days, Pheasants Forever Youth Hunt, Yellow Boats Project, Wright & Stears Count Parks Project, big canoe makeover, xc ski trail prep, service projects, fall Youth Energy Summit and multiple programs almost every day. 2017 has been a great year! Man, I can hardly wait until tomorrow!

2017 has definitely been a year of many highlights. Each and every accomplishment was a team effort requiring staff, board members, trustees and many generous donors to step up to a new level. We should all take pleasure in our achievements and give thanks for a great year.

Your gifts to Prairie Woods provide fuel for an engine that wants to go, go, go. We need your time, energy, talents and gifts to help us make certain that kids have the opportunity to get connected to the great outdoors and environmental stewardship. Our work is Serious. Our work is FUN. Serious Fun!

Please join us in the work and play of PWELC. Your end of year donations and gifts throughout the seasons are absolutely essential to the growth, development and service of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. Together, we are helping thousands of kids to experience the joys of outdoor recreation, the wonder of our complex eco-system, and the importance of environmental stewardship. Thanks for living like it matters. I look forward to seeing you at Prairie Woods ELC!

Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season

Dave

Giving Thanks!

A look back through some old Warbler newsletters reminded me of the many gifts given to Prairie Woods over the years which continue to enrich the PWELC experience for thousands of people each year.

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YES! was fortunate to have regional experts to assist with sessions. The Get Current! session (lead by Alexis Troschinetz from Clean Energy Resource Teams) was focused on energy conservation and devices that can assist with that effort. The Climate is Changing, Are You? session (lead by Jothsna Harris and Kira Liu from Climate Generation) focused on teaching students what it takes to put on a community event demonstrated by Climate Generations Climate Convening model. The Water, Water, Everywhere, We Really Need to Care session (lead by Jon Morales from the Middle Fork Crow Watershed District and Charlene Brooks from the Kandiyohi County Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force) had students next to the lake learning about shoreline health and reasons for unhealthy bodies of water. They also explored best management practices completed at St. Johns and around the region. The Waste Not session (lead by Doug Lien from Tri County Solid Waste) focused on how much waste the average lunchroom produces and ways to reduce lunchroom waste through better signage, composting and recycling. In the You Are My Sunshine session (lead by Eric Pasi from IPS Solar) students learned about how schools are getting involved in solar energy and were engaged in a hands-on activity to explore the power of the sun.

YES! will once again be offering multiple winter workshops in the West Central and Central regions to students throughout the state from December - March. Then, during April, students will be preparing for regional spring judging where they will again have the opportunity to go to the state championship award ceremony at the pre-game show of a Minnesota Twins Game in May.

Major funding for YES! is provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund, Southwest Initiative Foundation, and the McKnight Foundation.

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THANK YOU!
This summer, several children experienced life as a MN pioneer through three different Community Education offerings: Pioneer Skills, Game Day at the Pioneer Cabin, and PWELC Sampler. On Pioneer Skills Day, we saw how the knowledge/skills to survive the journey from Sweden to Minnesota to affect the health of their family and use a compass to help them stay on course. Once they got to their designated homestead, they had to use hand saws and drills to get their cabin started. Most had a great time developing their pioneer skills but they also admitted survival in the 1880s was much harder.

Game Day tested a different set of skills. The children unplugged for the afternoon and had a blast playing “the old way”. They learned tag games, blind man’s bluff, graces (a game with hoops and sticks) and Swedish kubb. One child mentioned how he couldn’t wait to teach his friends the “new” game because they could play it anywhere.

PWELC Sampler had students of all ages participate in a number of Prairie Woods activities. They started the day as Pioneers; doing inside chores, outside chores, sawing wood and playing games. It was gratifying to watch the older students (up to 6th grade) interact with and care for other students as young as kindergarteners. After building their own cabin, they cleared fallen trees from trails and helped prepare for the annual special deer hunt.

These summer offerings let children experience the hardships and fun that pioneer life would have brought. If you know someone interested in a Pioneer Experience sign them up for Pioneer Winter Survival on Thursday, Feb 22 from 4-6pm. Also, the Pioneer Cabin is available for birthday parties.

Some of the nice things done for Prairie Woods by people like you:

* Jimmy Appleseed Orchard/Glacial Ridge Winery donated a bushel of apples for a Pioneer Cabin Program.
* Margie Rock donated three cartons of nature-themed books, birding guides and EE resource materials.
* Betty Larson, Roger Imdieke, Dennis Peterson brought in bags of shoes for our WorldWear Project.
* Jennie-O Turkey Store held a WorldWear shoe drive for PWELC.
* Ryan & Gail Newville, Dave Muetzel, Mike Gjerde, Mike Anderson, Blain Adams, Randy Kardell, Mark Volk cleared fallen trees from trails and helped prepare for the annual special deer hunt.
* Pennock Produce donated 80 pumpkins for Halloween Haunt.
* Sunnyside Orchards donated apples and cider for Halloween Haunt.
* Cashville, Cub Foods donated goods and popcorn for Halloween Haunt.
* New London-Spicer National Honor Society helped with pumpkin carving, cookie decorating, games and the Enchanted Creature Trail.
* United Way of West Central Minnesota provided funding support for Everyone Outside!, Serious Fun! & YES!
* Bernicks Family Foundation, Tebben Enterprises and New London-Spicer Area Fund helped to launch the Yellow Boats Project.
* Terry Mylenbeck donated splatter targets for firearm safety training.
* Harold Danielson Memorial Gift Donations – Thanks to all who donated to honor the life and memory of Harold Danielson.
* Waves Crew for clearing debris off trails preparing for the ski trail grooming season.
* Mike Bundy and Kathy Hogan donated a masterful makeover of the Big Canoe.
* PWELC Staff continue to earn accolades as program rockstars!
* Huge thanks to the Prairie Stars Event Committee – Jim Tetzloff, Mari Klebe, Beth Anderson, Sharon Oleson, Scott Klup, Laura Nelson and Amanda Toutges.

Geer Island Donations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Donor</th>
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<tr>
<td>$2500</td>
<td>Charles &amp; Sharon Olson</td>
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<tr>
<td>$2000</td>
<td>Jim &amp; Colleen Thompson - Michels</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1000</td>
<td>Bruce &amp; Diane Behm, Gary &amp; Nancy Geiger, Steve &amp; Nancy Lindner, John &amp; Mary Lindstrom, Roger &amp; Kay Strand</td>
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<tr>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Kenneth &amp; Alish Behm, Gregory &amp; Lynette Christenson, Ron &amp; Dee Erpeldeg, Cindy Kirkens Smith, Ron &amp; Kay Halvorson, Craig &amp; Lori Holmgren, Ella Meyersen</td>
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High Notes from the Challenge Course

“Well… It’s that time of year again. As the cold weather comes, so does the indoor rock climbing season. For the wild animals seek shelter from the cold, so does our wild rock climbing community! The outdoor challenge course and the mobile wall are settling into their winter hibernation. The Indoor Rock Climbing Gym on the other hand, is wide awake. If you’re looking for a warm winter activity, please don’t hesitate to contact Prairie Wood ELC to schedule a climbing session. Prairie Woods ELC offers community education rock climbing programs as well. 2017 in review: Prairie Woods ELC has had the privilege of working with numerous groups throughout the spring, summer and fall on our challenge course and off site with our outreach programs. The biggest difference this year was the addition of a variety of new venues and groups who experienced the Prairie Woods Pinnacle (Our Mobile Rock Climbing Wall). We had the privilege of attending the Meeker County Fair, Raymond Harvest Fest, the Viking Sportsman Event in Alexandria, as well as a number of different programs at parks in Stearns and Wright Counties. The PWELC staff served more than 900 climbers in 6 hours at the Viking Sportsman event this year. A new participant record! The PWELC staff also had the unique opportunity to lead a teambuilding event for 250 participants from the Marshall Hockey Association at their Red Baron Arena in Marshall, Minnesota. A successful new addition to our 2017 programming was rock climbing at Quarry Park in Stearns County. The PWELC staff designed this program to allow participants of all ages to have the chance to climb outside on a real granite rock face. In the future, we hope to continue to expand our programming both on site and outreach. This of course can’t be done without a dedicated and innovative team of staff members. Thank you to everyone who has contributed their talents to bringing and expanding the climbing culture here in our area.

Time Travel – Mari Klebe

Top rope climb at Quarry Park in Stearns County.

Geer Island Donations

- Robert Bliss
- Larry Quinnick
- Rachel Dunlay
- Tina Ersenbach
- Bruce & Mary Felt
- Alfred Gregersen
- Sarah & Riley Gustafson
- Roger & Judy Indeleke
- Mary Merlin
- Tim Minter
- Barb Riley
- Mary & Doug Sawatzky
- Ellen Shiever
- Julie Tauton
- Joy Zwart – In memory of Fred Zwart

Up to $100

- Mike & Linda Bundy
- Alan & Lori Dietz
- Joan Easterlund
- Dan & Holi Ruter

Up to $500

- Tim Minter
- Mary Merlin
- Mike LeVine
- Joan Easterlund
- Dan & Hollie Ruter

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After another successful year, with around 30 groups, the Gary Westby Educational Shooting Range is CLOSED for the season. Look for it to open up next spring—usually sometime in April depending on snow. The typical kick-off events in the spring are an all-day field and range for the online firearm safety class and Spring Sporting Clays league.

Some of the groups visiting the sporting clays range this year included: Pro-Core, Jennie-O Turkey Store, Pheasants Forever, Tommy Swenson Memorial Youth Shooting Day, Izaak Walton League, Farm King, Border States Electric, MN DNR, Degeest, Maxfields, Dunlavy’s, Andersons, Marshausens, Thompsons, Gerharsons, Hubbards and Laurances. Many thanks to the staff and volunteers: Lee Thompson, Troy Heck, Mike Bundy, Jim Tetzlof, Stephe Deleski, Jon Ullman, Todd Markhausen, Claudia Thompson, David Clark, Jeremy Losinski, Ali Dahmes, Kathy Lutz.

I get asked all the time “what do you do at Prairie Woods”? My usual response is “What don’t we do.” Then I go on and list all the cool things that we do for Environmental Education to get people outdoors. Things like: classes on insects, birds, mammals, ponds, prairies, trees, compass, predator/prey relationships, animal tracking, Lorax puppet show, canoeing, archery, Eco-Voyageur, American Indians, (hopefully this winter) cross country skiing, and snow shoeing. AND then there is all the Time Travel, Challenge Course, Shooting Range, Special events (Earth Day, Conservation Day, Sleigh & Ski Festival, Prairie Stars) and building rentals (weddings, families reunions, business meetings).

As I have thought about it a little more, it is amazing how some programs started and then have mostly stayed the same. Like: Eco-Voyageur program with 10 programs in 2008 to 30 programs in 2017. Outreach programs (like the Lorax Puppet show, programing with the Grow Mobile, Stearns and Wright County programs, Paddle the Crow, prairies, trees, compass, predator/prey relationships, animal tracking, Lorax puppet show, canoeing, archery, Eco-Voyageur, American Indians, (hopefully this winter) cross country skiing, and snow shoeing. AND then there is all the Time Travel, Challenge Course, Shooting Range, Special events (Earth Day, Conservation Day, Sleigh & Ski Festival, Prairie Stars) and building rentals (weddings, families reunions, business meetings).

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We had another very successful Prairie Stars Fundraiser thanks to the efforts of a great event planning committee, led by Jim Tetzlof, and a host of generous contributors. It is difficult to describe the amount of inspiration and support that our staff, board and volunteers experience when we are surrounded in the pavilion by a large crowd enthusiastic to support the mission and work of PWECL. Please make a point to say thanks to these generous PWECL supporters when you see them in the community.

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Sun. February 11, 2018  11:00 am to 4:00pm
Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center
12718 10th St NE - Spicer, MN
320-354-5894          www.prairiewoodselc.org

Join us for a day of winter fun!
Chili Feed (11a -1p), Live Music, Sleigh Parade,
Winter Hobby & Craft Exhibits and More.
Sleigh Rides from 1 to 3 pm FREE

Try XC Skiing, Snowshoeing & Rockclimbing
rentals $5/$15 max for families
INTRO TO CROSS COUNTRY SKIING ....................................................Grades 2 and older
Don’t let the snow keep you inside all winter long. Come learn the basics of cross country skiing. Then hit the trails to practice your new skills. Instruction and equipment provided. (Meet at main building)
Date: Tuesday, January 30th
Or Tuesday, February 27th
Time: 4:00-5:30pm Cost: $8/session

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 main building.)
Date: Thursday, February 1st
Thursday, March 1st
Thursday, April 5th
Time: 4:00-5:30 pm Cost: $10/climber for each class

SNOWSHOEING ............................Grades 4 and older
Arctic Adventure or at least Prairie Wood’s version. On snowshoes, you can explore “off the beaten path” and beyond the trails. Enjoy this magical adventure through quiet woods and hills, while watching for tracks and signs of our animal neighbors. Instruction and all equipment provided. (Meet at main building.)
Date: Tuesday, February 6th
Time: 4:00-5:30 PM Cost: $8/person

PIONEER WINTER SURVIVAL ...............Grades 3rd – 6th
Do you have what it takes to survive a Minnesota winter pioneer style? Come to the 1888 cabin, dress as a pioneer, help saw wood, make candles, learn how to build a fire with flint and steel, try snow shoeing and warm up by the fire with some hot apple cider. (Meet at Farm Site)
Date: Thursday, Feb. 22nd
Time: 4:00 – 6:00 pm Cost: $10

SLEIGH & SKI FEST ..............................Everyone
Let it snow, Let it snow, Let it snow. Celebrate winter at PWELC with fun outdoor activities for everyone in the family. There will be horse drawn sleighs, games, music, and chili at no charge. For a small fee you can use PWELC Cross country skis, Snowshoes, and Indoor Climbing wall.
Date: Sunday, February 11
Time: 11:00-4:00 PM Cost: $5 per person, $15 max per family (for use of skis, snowshoes, and climbing wall)

PRESIDENTIAL SKI/CLIMB/SURVIVE: .................................Grades 1 and older
NO SCHOOL TODAY. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
Get outside and explore this winter! Hit the trails and have an adventure on the skinny skis. Learn some winter survival skills. Then we will come inside to finish the day at the indoor climbing wall. (Meet at main building.)
Date: Monday, February 19
Time: 8:00-4:00PM Cost: $25/person

PWELC SAMPLER .............................Grades: K and up
Come experience what Prairie Woods ELC has to offer. While everything that we do is AWESOME—activities will depend on the weather. The possibilities are endless. Cross Country skiing, Snowshoeing, Archery, Climbing Wall, Orienteering, Geocaching…….the list goes on and on. Bring a sack lunch. (Meet at main building)
Date: Friday, March 2nd
Time: 8:00-4:00 Cost: $25

BEGINNER ARCHERY CLASS ..........Grades 5 and up
This class gives you the opportunity to learn the basics of using a compound bow and arrow. We will be working on form, safety, technique, how to properly use the equipment, etc. A hands-on class of learning and fun while practicing and playing archery games that all ages will enjoy. All equipment will be provided. (Meet at farm site.)
Date: Tuesday, March 6th
Time: 4:00-5:30pm Cost: $10/person

AFTER SCHOOL ARCHERY CLUB ....Grades 5 and up
It is lots of fun learning and practicing the skill of archery. We will be using compound bows to improve our skills. We will play games, shoot 3-d targets, do Olympic style archery, use the atlatls, all while aiming to have a great time. Equipment will be provided. (Meet at farm site)
Date: Tuesday, March 13, 20, and 27th
Time: 4:00-5:30pm Cost: $30/person

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION ....................Everyone
Open to all ~ A fun and educational experience for the whole family. Booths, exhibits, and activities offer information about water quality, energy efficiency, land management, and much more. Pancake and sausage breakfast from 8-10am (free will donation). Enjoy food, entertainment, kid activities and information about “greening” your life.
No pre-registration necessary.
Date: Saturday, April 21st
Time: 8:00-1:00pm Cost: Free

PWELC COMMUNITY EDUCATION OFFERINGS
WINTER/SPRING 2018