**Why be a Member?**

- Know you are supporting programs you believe in at an organization that is important to your community.
- Receive information and invitations to special events at Prairie Woods.
- Benefit from discounts on equipment rentals and programs.
- Continue to receive the Warbler newsletter three times a year.

**Join Us!**

PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

Annual Membership for 2013

- New Member
- Renewing Member

**Supporter’s Membership**

- Individual Membership .................. $30.00
- Family Membership ........................ $45.00
- Organization/Business Membership ... Please call for rates.
- 1 / we are interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

**Benefactor’s Membership**

- $100 to $499
- $500 to $999
- $1000

Thank you for your support.

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**Upcoming Events at Prairie Woods**

**Earth Day 2013** ...........................................Saturday, April 20 8am - 1pm
9th Annual JJM Victory Run ................................Saturday, June 15
Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale ................................Saturday, June 15 (38-1p)
Little Crow Archers 3D-60 2 day archery event. ..................................Sat & Sun August 10th & 11th
An Evening of Music Under the Prairie Stars ....................................Friday, Sept. 6th

**Collaboration with Sibley State Park continues to grow in 2013**

In December, staff from Prairie Woods met with Sibley State Park Naturalist, Dick Clayton to discuss how we can work cooperatively with school groups. Students visiting Prairie Woods for multi-day residential programs will now have the option of spending part of a day at Sibley State Park. What a great combo!!!

We are also excited to announce some expanded cooperative programs coming up this summer. Thanks to a grant from the Minnesota DNR, park visitors will once again have the opportunity to paddle on Lake Andrew in a 14’ voyageur canoe guided by staff from Prairie Woods and Sibley State Park. Campers at Sibley S.P. will also enjoy opportunities to participate in shooting sports at the Gary Worthy Educational Shooting Range and possibly rock climbing on the walls at Prairie Woods.

**Remember the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale!**

Please remember that Prairie Woods can be a part of your spring cleaning solutions as you wonder what to do with some of that outdoor gear that just hasn’t been used for a few years. Your donations of good used outdoor recreation equipment can help to fund youth programs at Prairie Woods. Donate stuff today and come out and shop for other people’s treasures on Saturday, June 15th from 9a - 1pm. Boats, canoes, camping, fishing, hunting gear etc. are great additions to the annual Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale. Please give us a call to arrange pick-up or drop off of your donated goods.
Notes from the Executive Director

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Prairie Woods Warbler.

Although, as I write this note on March 19th, we still have some deep drifts from the most recent blizzard, we are preparing for the inevitability of Spring. I hope that by the time you receive this newsletter that the pasque flowers are showing themselves on the sunny prairie slopes below the wind turbine and our ponds are opening up to welcome returning wildlife.

Spring is exciting at Prairie Woods! Virtually every day in May is packed with students visiting from throughout the region. It is not unusual to have two to three schools visiting Prairie Woods on the same day that we are conducting programs off-site with Project Eco-Voyageur and/or the Youth Energy Summit (YES!). Spring is a time that Prairie Woods is able to engage literally thousands of people in environmental education and outdoor recreation. Fantastic!!! … but of course it doesn’t just happen. It takes a tremendous amount of dedication and hard work from our staff, volunteers, board members and friends like you to make it all possible.

So, please enjoy catching up with a bit of Prairie Woods news. Once you have read through the newsletter I hope that you will pass it on to friends, family and co-workers. Please help spread the word about Earth Day by placing the poster insert in a prominent place in your home, school, church or community.

Thanks so much for all that you do for Prairie Woods!

Sincerely,

Dave

MWA PRAIRIE POTHOLE CHAPTER-HABITAT DAY TRADITION CONTINUES

Approximately 100 people visited Prairie Woods on a sunny Saturday morning in March to construct over 45 wood duck boxes. A big thanks to the Prairie Pothole Chapter of Minnesota Waterfowl Association for putting on this great event each year. Over the years this event has helped to produce hundreds of wood duck boxes and thousands of wood ducks. If you missed out on Habitat Day be sure to look for it next year and check in with the MWA booth at the upcoming Earth Day 2013 event.

THANKS UNITED WAY OF WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA FOR HELPING US TO GET THOUSANDS OF KIDS UP OFF THE COUCH AND INTO THE GREAT OUTDOORS!!

Is there a graduation, wedding reception, family reunion or other special event in your future???? Forget about having to clean the house, replace the carpet and buy a new sofa, ……… just call Ann Phillips at Prairie Woods and arrange to rent one of our memory making spaces (i.e. Westby Observatory, the Earl B Olson Addition, Tree House or the Barn). You save time and money…… and your rental fees help to support youth programs at Prairie Woods.

1ST ANNUAL ZOMBIE RUN

Approximately 70 runners and 25 “zombies” participated in the first annual Zombie Run 5k+ at PWELC on Oct. 30th. A great time was had by all. Runners not only had to negotiate manmade obstacles along the 5k+ route but they also had to evade “zombies” who would try to grab flags/ tags from the runners. Thanks to Dan Hubbard, Director of the Glacial Lakes Running Series, and Beth Fischer, Director of the Willmar Lakes Area Convention and Visitor Bureau, for organizing the run. This creative way to get families, friends and our favorite zombies out for fun and fellowship in the great outdoors. Stay tuned for dates and times for the 2013 event.

GET READY TO RUN WILD (AGAIN) AT PRAIRIE WOODS!!

The 9th Annual JFM Victory Run will start at 9am on Saturday, June 15, 2013. Come out and run or walk the trails on 5k or 1mile courses. Whether you are a casual walker or a die-hard competitive runner, the trails at Prairie Woods provide the setting for a great morning of fun and fitness. All proceeds support youth programs at Prairie Woods. Contact Race Coordinator Deb Anderson for details. Pre-registration is encouraged. Check for details on the Prairie Woods Facebook page or www.prairiewoodselc.org.

SITE IMPROVEMENTS:

* By the close of the year we had repaired 95% of the damage resulting from a May 2012 hailstorm. We now have new roofing on all buildings on campus including the, Barn, Education Building, Westby Observatory, maintenance shed, log cabin, granary, farm house & garage, the Bernick’s Outdoor Classroom and the shooting range. 80 new replacement windows were installed in the Westby Observatory and Education Building. When warm weather returns we will complete staining and painting of the siding damaged by the hail. We hope to have things pretty well spruced up again by Earth Day.

* The end of 2012 marked our second year of operating with (net) 100% renewable energy. Despite having our wind turbine out of commission for nearly three months, due to repairs related to a lightning strike, our electricity production in 2012 exceeded our consumption by 2400 kilowatts. Yahoo!

* Kandiyohi County Public Works replaced the deteriorating PIC Bridge with a culvert. Thanks Kandiyohi County! Jeff Breidberg from Kandiyohi County and Skip Wright of the DNR consulted with us prior to the work. The improvement is particularly appreciated by the ski trail grooming crew which no longer needs to fit 8’ wide equipment over a 6’ wide bridge.

* Kandiyohi County Public Works improved the access to the wind turbine, via the old farmsite drive and ski trail, to enable a mobile crane to get into the site. The work was conducted mainly in previously disturbed areas. Thanks Kandiyohi County!

* Marc Reese and Paul Hellenschmidt continue to work on the log cabin to replace several rotted corner logs. Please say thanks to Marc and Paul as well as Roger Strand for helping with the log cabin project. Thanks also to Coralie Jacobson for putting a fresh coat of stain on the cabin last fall.

* Chappell Central installed an air source heat pump to provide heating and cooling in the YES! office. We now have the ability to efficiently heat and cool our three office rooms with electricity generated on site, thus reducing the number of days that we need to operate our biomass boiler.

* A radon mitigation system was installed in the farm house and has successfully reduced radon levels below the EPA recommended standard. We like knowing that Kory, Mari and Hayden are living in a healthy home. Have you checked radon levels in your home?

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

Please remember Prairie Woods in your estate planning and annual giving.
"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." This famous quote by Confucius sums up the nature of experiential learning and why it is so integral to the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) program. One does not have to look far to see that the YES! partnership between Prairie Woods ELCC and the Southwest Initiative Foundation has fostered the opportunity for thousands of kids to benefit from experiential education.

With YES! teams this year, we embraced the diversity of their projects and put on six different Winter Workshops. The workshops took place in Glencoe, The College of St. Benedict, Mankato, Kennedy Community School in St. Joseph, Alexandria, and Milan. The series of workshops started in Glencoe on January 16th where the Glencoe YES! team is building a car for the Supercalameque Competition. Students were able to meet with leaders from the ethanol and automotive industries to help them develop their Supercalameque Car and really get things rolling!

The next workshop was held at the College of St. Benedict on January 30th. This workshop was developed for teams focusing on composting and recycling at their schools. While touring Chuck’s personal passive solar greenhouse where he pioneered his passive solar system. The simplicity of the system, its most attractive features, its efficiency using the little sunlight available during the Minnesota winter, has allowed this system to flourish. Other people in the area saw the value in this system and opened their own passive solar greenhouses. Thankfully, they also saw the value of educating the next generation of growers and in turn opened their doors to the YES! teams.

Over in Milan, teams focusing on local foods projects got a chance to meet with Chuck Waibel, a local leader when it comes to growing greens in the harsh Minnesota winters. The day started off with a stop at Chuck’s personal passive solar greenhouse where he pioneered his passive solar system. The simplicity of the system, its most attractive features, its efficiency using the little sunlight available during the Minnesota winter, has allowed this system to flourish. Other people in the area saw the value in this system and opened their own passive solar greenhouses. Thankfully, they also saw the value of educating the next generation of growers and in turn opened their doors to the YES! teams.

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Challenge Course Notes

Deb Anderson - Challenge Course Coordinator

HIGH POINTS FROM THE CHALLENGE COURSE

Spring has arrived!!! That means we are all starting to think about warm weather, green grass, longer days filled with sunshine and the sounds of birds and frogs. Here at Prairie Woods it also means the start of a very busy season of adventure for young and old. We will soon hear the sounds of laughter and learning echoing from the top of the hills and across the wetlands. Prairie Woods is a great place to welcome Spring. Even though our indoor climbing walls have been busy this winter, it is now time to get busy opening up our outdoor challenge course. I am excited to start hearing the stories of people as they come out this year. Stories of how relationships were built, stories of how kids 'cheered making someone feel proud for the first time, stories of sports teams really figuring out what it is to work as a team and stories of why a day spent here is often the "best day of my life". I also get to watch as the "I can't" turns to "I'll try" and the "I'll try" turns into "I DID IT"!!

We look forward to seeing you at Prairie-Woods this spring and summer. The calendar is already filling in so please call today to schedule your group for a day of team building and memories on the Challenge Course at Prairie Woods.

AN EVENING OF MUSIC UNDER THE PRAIRIE STARS

Here's another big shout out for all who helped to make the 2012 Evening of Music Under the Prairie Stars a huge success. The event raised approximately $34,000 to support youth and family programs at Prairie Woods. Thanks everyone for the great support needed to pull off another very successful event. We were blessed with an excellent Prairie Stars Committee and generous donors. Major sponsors included:

- Premier Underwriter $5000
  Jennie – O’Turkey Store
  Event Underwriter $2500
  Lakeland Broadcasting
  Eco-Sponsors $1000
  Affiliated Medical Center
  Family Practice Medical Center
  Prairie Partners $500
  Anthon & Thompson & Co., CPA’s
  Watertown State Bank
  Duanick Brothers
  Heritage Bank
  Kandyhoky Abstract & Title Co.
  Lake Region Bank
  John and Mary Lindstrom
  Roger & Kay Strand
  Anonymous

Voyageur Level $250
Conway, Deth & Schmiesing, PLLP
Dooley’s Petroleum, Inc.
John & Karen Gilbertson
Robert & Pauline Halvorson
Robert & Patricia Kaiser
Lakes Area Dental
James & Teresa Lippert Rieth
Dennis & Ruthanne Neeser
Northern States Supply
Dave Pedersen & Ruth Fairchild
Dennis & Karen Peterson
Pioneer Heritage Insurance, LLC
State Farm
Jim & Terry Tetzloff

We had a Fantastic Prairie Stars silent auction thanks to the following contributors:

- Denise Smith, Minnesota Twins, Carol & Myron VanDeVen,
- Green Lake Nursery, Mary Calvin, Ron Erpelding, Pat Walsh &
- Atwater Ford, Walt’s Car Wash, PWELC Trustees, Mr. B’s
- Chocolates, John & Christina Wodres, Precision Archery,
- Cawkise, Pleasants Forever, Minnesota Waterfowl Association,
- Clair Verch, Lyndon Hanson, Green Mill and Chef Monte,
- Becky & Scott Mueller, Fit by Handy, D’s Creations, Cindy Old,
- Christi Otteson & Josh Reed – Make It Workshop, Minnesota SWARM,
- Green Easy, Little Crow Golf Course, Loren Luschen, Eagle
- Creek Golf Course, Dale & Deb Anderson, Minnesota Dark
- House Anglers Association, Molly Elkjær, Lil Boutique, Mike
- Lynch, Steve Hage, Bob Erickson, Amanda Raatz, Bill
- Gabbert, Tracy Bjork of Lost Valley Woodwork, Janet Felton,
- Linden Chiropractic, St. Paul Saints

Thanks a ton to the Prairie Stars committee for putting on a wonderful evening and a tremendous fundraising event for Prairie Woods.

2012 Committee members included: Mary Merlin (chairperson), Beth Anderson, Amanda Touget, Ron Erpelding, Laura Nelson, Joel Schmidt, Jennifer Tempel, Jim Tetzloff & Christina Wodres

The 2013 BOWHUNTER 3D-60 ARCHEFY EVENT

put on by Little Crow Archers and Swift County Archers is scheduled for August 10th & 11th. The Bowhunter 3D-60 is gaining a state-wide reputation as a two day family friendly event for novice and expert archers alike. Walk a beautiful course at Prairie Woods and enjoy 60 challenging targets. Register for this event by contacting Little Crow Archers. For details check out www.littlecrowarchers.com. Walk-ins are welcome.

CALL FOR DETAILS ON SPRING SPORTING CLAYS LEAGUES
SATURDAY APRIL 20TH
8:00AM - TO - 1:00PM
PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER
12718 10TH STREET NE, SPICER • 320-354-5894
WWW.PRAIRIEWOODSELG.ORG

WATER
LAND
IT'S ALL CONNECTED TO YOU
THIS YEAR FEATURING THE
MN ZOO ZOOMOBILE

8:00-10:00AM : PANCAKES (FREE-WILL)
8:00AM-1:00PM : EXHIBITS & KIDS ACTIVITIES
10:30-11:30AM : MN ZOO ZOOMOBILE
11:30AM-12:30PM : MN ZOO ZOOMOBILE

ATTRACTIONS: MN Zoo Zootopia, Free Trios, Water Quality Info, Geocaching, Educational Activities, Digital Photo Workshop, Live Reptiles, DNR Fish Tank & Laser Show, Info Booths, Mini Putt Putt, Aquatic Invasive Species Demo, Archaeology Exhibits, Flint-Knapping Demos

KIDS ACTIVITIES: Tie-Dying, Climbing Wall, T-shirt Bags & More!
**HIGH ADVENTURE DAY CAMP**
Grades 3-7  (If an older group would be interested I will schedule a separate class. Call PWELC to arrange 320-354-5894)
This is it! The day camp you have been asking about and waiting for… High Adventure! Spend a thrilling day at PW experiencing new adventures on the ground and in the air. Fly through the air on the Flying Squirrel, challenge yourself on the 40 foot climbing tower, use teamwork to climb the Giant’s Ladder and much more. Bring a bag lunch and be prepared to have LOTS of fun.

**Tues, June 18, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, OR**
**Thursday, July 11, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, OR**
**Tuesday, July 30, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm OR**
**Thurs, Aug 15, 9:00-4:00**
Attend one session.
$25 per person  (min of 10)

**SPASH BASH**
Grades 3-7
This is a Wet and Wild Day Camp full of games and water activities. Bring a swim suit or an extra change of clothes, because we will play games with water, canoe on the water and take a closer look at water. A fun, educational day of laughter and learning. Bring a bag lunch and a towel.

**Wed, July 24**
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
$25 per person  (min of 8)

**INVESTIGATE AND RESCUE DAY CAMP**
Grades K-4
SSHHHHH… Where did all the animals go?? Investigating where they might be and how we can rescue them, while learning about nature and about working together as a team. We might even have to rescue them from hidden places on the climbing wall. Be a hero! Help us rescue the animals. Bring a sack lunch.

**Thursday, August 1**
9:00 am to 2:00 pm
$25 per person  (min of 8)

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**EARTH DAY CELEBRATION**
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 20**
**Time: 8:00am-1:00pm**
**Cost: Free**

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**PWELC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CLASSES**

**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.

**Date:** Tues-Thurs, June 11, 12, 13 OR Tues-Thurs, July 9, 10, 11
**Time:** 8:30am-11:30am
**Cost:** $15

**3D DEER ARCHERY SHOOT**
Grades: 5th and up
If you have a couple archery seasons under your belt or are thinking about hunting deer with a bow and arrow for the first time---This class is for you. This class is a chance to add new or develop existing deer hunting archery skills. We will talk about shooting form, judging distance, ethical shooting, and tracking deer. Then we will go out and practice the skills on some 3D deer targets.

**Date:** Fri, June 28
**Time:** 9-12
**Cost:** $15

**FORKHORN I CAMP**
Forkhorn campers will sleep in tents under the stars as they learn beginning hunter skills. This camp is designed to provide extensive hands-on instruction in basic firearm safety, shooting technique, hunter’s ethics, and wildlife ecology. MN DNR firearm safety certification is part of this camp.

**Age:** 11-15 years old
**Date:** June 16-20
**Time:** Check-in Sunday @ 3pm,
Check-out Thursday @ 1pm
*Call Prairie Woods ELc for registration packet

**FORKHORN II CAMP**
Forkhorn II is an advanced camp for youth who have graduated from Forkhorn I or have completed their firearm safety training. It goes beyond the basics and will include orienteering and bow hunting skills. Students will be certified in MN DNR bow hunter education program.

**Age:** 11-15 years old
**Date:** June 23-27
**Time:** Check-in Sunday @ 3pm,
Check-out Thursday @ 1pm
*call Prairie Woods ELc for registration packet