Join Us!

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.

Thank you for your support.

PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

Annual Membership for 2014/2015

□ New Member
□ Renewing Member

Supporter’s Membership
□ Individual Membership ......................... $30.00
□ Family Membership ................................. $45.00
□ Organization/Business Membership .... Please call for rates.

Benefactor’s Membership
□ $100 to $199
□ $500 to $999
□ $1000
□ 1 / we are interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

Name(s) _____________________________
Address ______________________________________________________________
City/State/ZIP ________________

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

Notes from the Executive Director
by Dave Pederson, Executive Director

Time flies, whether you are having fun or not. At the end of the day we answer the questions: "Did I live a good life today? Did I accomplish something of value today? Did I do something today that will make a difference in 100 years?"

Although there are days when we wonder, for the most part when we leave Prairie Woods at the end of the day, we can say "yes, I believe what we did today will make a difference in 100 years." If our YES! teams inspire stewardship and leadership in our team members, we can be confident that their impact will be felt and passed along to future generations. If the bus-loads and van-loads of kids that come to Prairie Woods every day return home bolstered by encouragement and respect shown to them by our staff and perhaps connected in even small ways to the wonder of the natural world then we can say "yes, we are making a difference."

If you would like to help make a difference through Prairie Woods, here are a few choices: (1) Post the Prairie Stars poster insert from this newsletter in a prominent location where others will see it. (2) Purchase a Prairie Stars raffle ticket (3) Plan to attend the Prairie Stars Fundraiser (4) Volunteer to help with the Prairie Stars event or the Winter Sleigh and Ski festival (5) Take a kid outdoors to play (6) Make a point of saying thanks to those who donate to Prairie Woods (7) Consider Prairie Woods in your charitable gift planning.

By giving of your time and talents to help kids get connected with the great outdoors you are helping them learn to care for each other and for the environment that sustains us all. What difference will it make in 100 years? It makes all the difference! The difference between clean air and water or not; the difference between healthy food and soil or not; the difference between respect for self, others and the environment or not. Thanks for making a difference.

Sincerely,
Dave

NICE THINGS DONE FOR PRAIRIE WOODS BY PEOPLE LIKE YOU!
* Jim McCormack donated a boat, motor and trailer for the gear sale
* Bill and Betty Huff donated a fiberglass boat, 2 motors and a trailer
* LeRoy Dahlke donated a CLAM pop-up fish house
* Lee Olson donated a pick-up load of items for the Gear Sale
* Eunice Buchanan donated a nice wetsuit
* Gary Kulset donated a woods splitter and other tools
* Deb Anderson and Kay Halvorson put on the 10th Annual JJM Victory Run
* The family of Charles "Chuck" deCathelineau gave a generous memorial gift to Prairie Woods in memory of Chuck's lifelong pursuits as a sportsman and conservationist.
* Shoppers and donors at the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale helped to raise over $2000 for youth programs at Prairie Woods.

THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ANNUAL SPECIAL HUNT RAFFLE!
This year the special hunt raffle raised $3000 after prize awards and expenses. All raffle proceeds support youth programs and the annual wheelchair accessible deer hunt. Past proceeds have helped to purchase archery equipment, a shotgun and scope used by the annual hunt and the youth sporting programs, and also helped with site upgrades such as improved lighting and electrical at the farm site as well as a concrete walkway at the barn. Special thanks to all who sold tickets. Rusty Newville took top honors this year for most tickets sold. Thanks Rusty!

Lucky winners this year include:
$500 Bethany Inslee, $400 Chuck Raske, $300 Caroline Peterson, $200 Jason Schutz, $100 Tim Swenson

THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ANNUAL SPECIAL HUNT RAFFLE!

REMEMBER WHEN?
TEN YEARS AGO- 2004
* A bequest of $100,000 from Ruth and Helen Peterson helped to firmly establish the Prairie Woods Endowment Fund.
* We renovated the barn with the help of many volunteers and a regional impact grant from Southwest Initiative Foundation.
* Time Travel programs were established with the help of the American Swedish Institute, Kalmarlans Museum of Sweden and a grant from Pioneer Hi-Bred. The first Time Travel programs were coordinated by Becca Conser, PWELC’s first Environmental Ed. Coordinator.
* First Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale
Twenty Years Ago- 1994
* Dan & Barb Quim et were hired as co-directors of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center with offices in the WEAC Building in Willmar. Dan and Barb worked tirelessly to help Prairie Woods make the challenging transition from an all volunteer organization to one run by professional staff.
Thirty Years Ago- 1984
* The first Prairie Woods Learning Center organization is dormant from 1980-1991 due to lack of funding.
Forty Years Ago- 1974
* First meeting of the Prairie Woods Environmental Education Council, (one of 13 Regional Environmental Education Councils created by the MN Legislature in 1973), which eventually led to the formation in 1977 of Friends of Prairie Woods Learning Center a forerunner of the PWELC we know today.

NOTE: PWELC/Trustees Denise Smith and Ron Erpelding are compiling a chronology of Prairie Woods for display in the Education Building. Send us your vote for the top ten milestones for Prairie Woods.

Thank you to JJM Run Donors!!!
Chad Mithaugen
Precise Ice
Prairie Woods
Red Onion
Belgrade Meat Center
Belgrade Hardware
Kandiyohi Power Coop
Bayer Built
Halvorson Ag
Country Stop Inc
Central MN Credit Union
Joe Borgerding
and all who helped with the race, driving 4 wheelers/golf carts, timing, finish line and registration.

The JJM Victory Run was started by friends and family to commemorate the life and friendship of Jesse John Mithaugen. The 10th Annual JJM Victory Run was held on June 21st. Runners and walkers chose from 5k or 1 mile courses through the hills, forest and prairies of Prairie Woods. As in years past, participants included serious competitors as well as relaxed walkers pushing strollers. Approximately 150 people turned out for the run this year. A good time was had by all.

Overall place winners for 2014 were:
1 Mile- Brady Schwinghammer 1st Place; Levi Anderson 2nd Place; Brian Jacobsen 3rd Place.
5K- Perry Kinzel 1st Place; Carl Spalding 2nd Place; Logan Schwinghammer 3rd Place.

Many thanks to race coordinators Deb Anderson and Kay Halvorson for ten years of dedication to this event.

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If you can’t come to us – Then we will come to you.

Initiative Games
solving, cooperation and critical thinking skills. Activities

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of kids in the summer through program s with Community Education, Green Lake Bible Camp, Sanderson Girl Scout Camp, local sports teams and Forkhorn Camps. February is generally packed with schools coming out for xc skiing, snowshoeing, and winter survival but November thru January can be cold, lonely months at PWELC until we have ski-able snow.

Unpredictable Minnesota winters and questionable driving conditions with a bus loaded with kids are common reasons given by groups for not coming out in the winter.

SO…………………………

If you can’t come to us – Then we will come to you.

PWELC Outreach Programs - available November-March

Initiative Games teach communication, creative problem solving, cooperation and critical thinking skills. Activities

illustrate the complexity and interconnectedness of natural systems and provide a fun way to prepare for meeting the challenges of daily life.

Minnesota Mammals

Through studying pelts and skulls, students learn about adaptations among our native mammals. Along the way, we’ll learn how animals move, what they eat, where they live, and much more.

Snowshoeing

If you have the snow and space then we have the snowshoes. Students will have the opportunity to try their hand (or feet) at snowshoeing. These are just three examples of programs that we could bring to you. Give us a call for more information on classes that may be available or to discuss a customized program for your group.

Time for a little time travel… Mari Klebe - Time Travel Program Leader

Think all the way back to the spring; snow melting, sun warming things up, flowers opening, birds returning. Oops, no, I mean this spring. Return to the cold, rainy, windy, sometimes hailing spring that we survived. Now picture 50 smiling, excited, second graders hopping off the bus ready for a day as a pioneer in 1888. Despite the weather Travel program brings a unique set of skills. Jerry Saetveit, Dean Mortenson, and Jeff Vetsch transform into amazing “Swedish” musicians and have everyone kicking up their heels in dance. Mike (in a time with no running water & electricity). A huge Thank You to all of the Time Travel staff for all of their hard work. I’d love to hear them. I’ll bring the coffee and cookies and we can have a chat.

High Notes from the Challenge Course

Steve Friedlein, CC Coordinator

Greetings friends! It’s been an amazing year so far here at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center Challenge Course. People have come from all over Minnesota and even the world to have the chance to experience our ropes course. Every group brings their unique energy and purpose to the course. It is truly a pleasure to coordinate and customize each individual program to meet the expectations of our participants.

The combination of the challenge course itself and the Prairie Woods staff makes this such a special place. All the PWELC team members care deeply about delivering the best experience possible. Our staff shows up early in the morning to set the course for the day’s upcoming program. It’s hard to imagine a more beautiful setting for a challenge course. There is a powerful feeling of excitement knowing that the buses will soon show up with people of all ages ready for a day of challenges and pure fun. It’s the people that make the challenge course come alive. Every group and every participant arrives with a different experience level. Some have never seen a ropes course, while others have been climbing their whole lives. The Prairie Woods ELC Challenge Course caters to both and is continuously evolving. We’ve been adding new routes on the rock climbing tower of various difficulties as well as incorporating new initiative games for team building. Also, check out the cargo net and rope climb during your next visit to the indoor climbing wall. The possibilities are endless!

T hank Y ou! ~ Steve

Home on the Range - Kory Klebe

This year 67 kids went through firearm safety classes at PWELC. 45 of them participated in our all day field and range days. The remaining 22 took part in our overnight Forkhorn camps. The field and range days are the hands-on component of the MN DNR online firearm safety class. The students first have to take the classroom portion on-line. After successful completion of the online test they can then buy a voucher for the field day. During the field day students are divided into small “hunting groups” of 4 students with 1 instructor. The day starts with a quiz to ensure that the participants have retained the information from the on-line section. Then each participant will load and unload the 5 different firearm actions, demonstrate the 6 firearm carries, and get comfortable with 4 firing positions before heading to the Gary Westby Educational Shooting Range where they will go through 12 different learning stations. These stations include shoot/don’t shoot scenarios, zones of fire situations, and two live fire stations with 22 and shotguns.

This year’s Forkhorn camps broke a record in attendance in the number of girls that attended. In the 5 previous years there had only been one girl that attended both Forkhorn I (firearm safety) and also Forkhorn II (bow safety). This year there were 7 girls. They actually outnumbered the boys for the bow safety camp. I now know that if somebody tells you that you “shoot like a girl,” consider it a compliment.

The Forkhorn Camps and Firearm Safety programs would not be possible without the support of many conservation groups and individuals. Thank you to MN Deer Hunters Association, Pheasants Forever, MN Darkhouse Anglers, Paulus Sportsman group, Ducks Unlimited, MN DNR, and all the individual firearm safety instructors that donate time and money to make these fun and educational programs happen.

*We are always looking for people interested in making a difference. Please, call if you are interested in becoming a firearm safety instructor!!

Please remember Prairie Woods in your estate planning and annual giving.
U M M  H O N O R S  P W E L C  W /  G R A N T  A W A R D

We were pleased to receive a letter from University of Minnesota Morris Chancellor Jaqueline Johnson informing us that U M M had selected PW ELC to receive a grant from the BIG 10. Upon recommendation by U M M , Prairie Woods has received a gift of $3733 to support youth programs. The funding became available as a result of a judgement against Penn State by the Big Ten requiring Penn State to forfeit proceeds from athletics and distribute those funds to Big Ten schools. This year the University of MN chose to distribute funds to out state campuses which in turn distributed funds to non-profits organizations serving youth in their regions. We are very honored and grateful to have been selected by the University of Minnesota as an organization worthy of support.

T H A N K S  T O  K W L M  A N D  1 0 6 . 5  T H E  T R A I N !

P W E LC  is featured on the Community Spotlight throughout the month of August. Community Spotlight is a tremendous service to the non-profit organizations in K andiyohi County and we are honored to be selected once again as a Community Spotlight grant recipient. Thank you to the Community Spotlight sponsors. We would also like to thank West Central Sanitation and Anderson, Larson Attorneys for being Spotlight sponsors.


The Winter Sleigh and Ski Festival at Prairie Woods is a community gathering to celebrate the outdoor life and share winter activities both indoors and outdoors. Last year over 600 people enjoyed sleigh rides, skiing, snowshoeing, a chili feed, great music and exhibits including the Willmar Curling Club, MN Darkhouse Anglers, woodcarving, MN Waterfowl Association and more.

Festival organizers are already meeting to build on the success of last year’s event. If you have a winter hobby or passion to share please give us a call. If you would like to bring horse drawn sleigh to the festival please contact Fred Zwart or Gary Stai. Individuals, businesses and organizations who would like to bring exhibits or help with food, parking, music or activities, please contact Dave or Mari at the PWELC office.


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MUSIC UNDER THE Prairie Stars
AN EARTH CONSCIOUS BENEFIT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OF OUR YOUTH

FRIDAY
SEPT. 5TH
2014
5:30PM

PRAIRIE WOODS ELC
SPICER, MN

JOIN US FOR OUR 7TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER
* COCKTAIL
* LOCALLY SOURCED DINNER UNDER THE STARS
* "GREEN" SILENT AUCTION
* 'AN EVENING OF ENTERTAINMENT

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY;
ONLY $50 EACH
CALL: 320-154-5394
SURF: WWW.PRAIRIES.COM
VISIT: PRAIRIE WOODS ELC
12TH ST NE, SPICER, MN 56288

LIVE MUSIC BY
STEVE KAUL & THE BRASS KINGS

RAFFLE DRAWING - CASH PRIZES UP TO $1000
RAFFLE TICKETS: 3 for $20
PURCHASE AT PRAIRIE WOODS ELC

THIS EVENT GENERously UNDERWRITTEN BY:
COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

AFTER SCHOOL ARCHERY CLUB....
Grades: 4 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 Native American atlatl’s, all while aiming to have a great time.
Equipment will be provided. (meet at the barn)
Date: Tuesdays, September 9, 16, 23
Time: 4:00-5:30 pm
Cost: $30/person

NIGHT HIKE....
Grade: 4 and up
Find out what goes bump in the night. During the hike we will learn how animals, including people, rely on their senses in the dark. We will also cover other topics that come up... like the stars (hopefully). (meet at the barn)
Date: Friday, September 26
Time: 7:30-9:00 PM
Cost: $5

HALLOWEEN HAUNT....
Grades: K-5
Talk with the creatures on the enchanted trail, carve a jack-o-lantern, and have a creepy critter painted on your face. Climb the Wall in costume. This Halloween party is most fun of the year! Children must be accompanied by an adult. (main building)
Date: Friday, October 11
Time: 6:00-9:00 PM
Cost: $8

CHALLENGE COURSE....
Grades: 1-6
We are going nuts at Prairie Woods ELC, so we need Squirrels... Flying Squirrels. Come join us at PWELC and get your chance to try the ride that lets you swing through the treetops like a Flying Squirrel. We will also learn something about team work, safety and trying our best.
Date: Thursday, September 18
Time: 3:30-5:00 PM
Cost: $10

~TIME TRAVEL PROGRAMS~

GAME DAY AT THE PIONEER CABIN....
Ages: 3rd-6th Grade
Who’s up for some friendly competition? After dressing as a pioneer, unplug for an afternoon of blind man’s buff, a three-legged race, graces (hoop and sticks), and many more pioneer games. If it’s raining out we’ll see how you do at jacks, pick up sticks, and card games.
Date: Thursday, Sept. 25
Time: 4:00-5:30 pm
Cost $6

STORY HOUR AT THE PIONEER CABIN
Ages: K-3rd
Come to the Pioneer Cabin at Prairie Woods! Dress as a pioneer and listen to a story about the Ingalls family and what pioneer life was like. We will take a page out of the book and do an activity that Laura did. Kids, ask your parents if they want to come too!
Date: Thursday, Oct. 23
Time: 4:00-5:15 pm
Cost: $5 per child (adults free)

ORNAMENTS FOR KIDS....
Ages: 3rd – 6th Grade
Get in the holiday spirit by visiting the Pioneer Cabin. During your visit you can dress as a pioneer, get creative while making holiday decorations, and warm up with some hot cider.
Date: Tuesday, Nov. 18
Time: 4:00-5:30 PM
Cost: $8

ORNAMENTS FOR ADULTS....
Ages: Adults/Families
Get in the holiday spirit by visiting the Pioneer Cabin. Pictures this; a cozy 1870’s cabin with a fire in the wood burning stove, the smell of hot cider filling the small room, and using your creativity to design your own straw ornaments, a Scandinavian tradition.
Date: Thursday, Dec. 4
Time: 6:30-8:00 PM
Cost: $10