Thank you for your support.

PRAYER WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER
12718 10th St. NE
Spicer MN 56288
320-354-5894
www.prairiewoodselc.org
pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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 2017

☐ New Member
☐ Renewing Member
☐ Supporter’s Membership
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☐ Individual Membership .................. $25.00
☐ Family Membership .................. $40.00
☐ Donation of ___________ amount to the Sustainability Endowment
☐ $100 to $499
☐ $500 to $999
☐ $1000

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

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

WARBLER WINTER 2016 ISSUE 3

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YES! Great Project Leader
Danny Kubat
Building & Grounds
Ali Dahmen
YES! Coordinator

PRAYER WOODS
VOLUME 29

PARTY IN THE PAVILION!– THE EXCITEMENT IS BUILDING!!!

Bids were opened on Nov. 29th and, by the time this newsletter is in the mail, a contractor will be selected to meet a completion deadline of June 1, 2017 for the construction of a pavilion at the PWELC farm site. Kandiyohi County Public Works did a great job of preparing the base for the pavilion this fall and the site is ready for construction to begin. We want to thank the many folks who helped to initiate the funding of this project including Kandiyohi County, Willmar Area Community Foundation, Cindy Westby bequest, Charles and Sharon Olson, Louise Thoma, MN Waterfowl Association, Jim and Colleen Thompson-Michels, Wally Gustafson, Kenneth & Alisa Rehm, Karen Jones, Paul & Sandy Vollen, Dennis & Ruthanne Neece, Dee Dr Johnson, John & Mary Lindstrom, Steve & Nancy Linder and a host of others to be recognized when we Party in the Pavilion next summer.

The 4800 square foot pavilion will shelter programs in inclement weather, provide a great venue for special event rentals and provide winter storage for valuable equipment like our big canoe and portable climbing wall. The design includes a vaulted ceiling which will allow us to set up our portable climbing wall indoors! Our staff, students and board members are very excited to add this unique structure at the PWELC farm site.

There is still a need and opportunity for you to help buy a piece of the pavilion as we close out our remaining fundraising need of approximately $30,000. If you or your organization would like to join us in completing the pavilion please contact Dave Pederson or one of the PWELC board members today.

MUSIC UNDER THE PRAIRIE STARS 2016–
A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT, A GREAT CROWD, AND ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER

We want to send a big shout of THANKS! to our Prairie Stars committee and all of the wonderful sponsors, guests who made the 2016 event a resounding success. Music by the High 48’s, delicious local food prepared by Chef Monte and crew from the Green Mill and a boisterous and generous crowd made for a great evening. The committee this year included: Jim Tetzloff (chair), Beth Anderson, Mary Merlin, Mari Klise, Amy Demz and Dave Pederson. We were honored and delighted to have Lakeland Broadcasting and Jennie-O Turkey Store return as Underwriting Sponsors along with the PWELC Trustees. Please check out the sponsor and donor list on the following pages and make a point of thanking those folks when you see them in the community.

SAVE the Date(s)
Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament (Spicer American Legion) – Saturday, Feb. 4th, 9am-noon
4th Annual Winter Sleigh and Ski Festival — Saturday, Feb. 4th, 9am-noon
The LORAX & More..……………………………………………..Thursday, March 2nd, 4-5:30 pm
EARTH DAY 2017 & Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale — Saturday, April 22nd, 9am-1pm

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Notes from the Executive Director

Seasons Greetings and Merry Christmas! Thanks to people like you, this newsletter is filled with news of gifts received and gifts given. I want to start by passing along some thank you notes that we have received for programs and experiences that your gifts help to make possible.

We are often amused, surprised and touched by thank you notes received from our students. Here are a few recent quotes from thank you notes written to you and our staff by 2nd grade students from Kennedy Elementary.

1. “Thank you for teaching me about trees and weds and a paper wasp and pioneer life and deer antlers and how the deer can search the trees to impress the galls deer.”

2. “What I liked best was seeing the dead mouse and smoshing the beans.”

3. “It was the best day my life and also my favorite part was going on a hike. I wish I was there in next Monday because I love going on a hike.”

Rachel Dunlavy, 2nd Grade teacher, Kennedy Elementary

Fun to read, but serious too. Thank you for helping us to guide kids on “the funnest hike ever” and provide “the best day of my life,” to kids that otherwise may never have the opportunity. Good things don’t just happen. We need you to help make them happen—every day at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center.

I invite you to enjoy catching up on some of the news in this edition of the Warbler and I encourage you to take the next step today to support and enjoy our work. Come out to ski or hike the trails. Join us for the Sleigh & Ski Fest, volunteer to help with programs or projects, and please support our work with a membership gift or endowment contribution.

Thank you for joining us in the work and “Serious Fun” at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. Together we are helping kids learn to live well with self, others and the environment. Every day at Prairie Woods!

Dave

Silent Auction Donations-Music Under the Prairie Stars 2016


Thank you to everyone that donated a Silent Auction item and made a Silent Auction purchase. Because of your generosity we were able to raise over $5,000 through the silent auction!

Over the years, Willmar Area Community Foundation has supported many important projects for PWELC including the portable climbing wall, challenge course equipment, the yurt, indoor climbing wall, wetland walkway, & ski equipment, a truck for outreach programs, and most recently a $30,000 grant for the pavilion project. How cool is that!!!! We are extremely grateful for the support of the Willmar Area Community Foundation.

Wright and Stearns County Parks Project

PWELC has just signed a contract to provide outdoor recreation and environmental education programs over the next two years in the beautiful parks of Wright and Stearns County. With the ink still drying on the contract we are jumping into planning a series of at least thirty programs, 15 in Wright County and 15 in Stearns County over the next two years.

Both Wright and Stearns County have developed some wonderful park spaces with 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.

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. Be sure to check out the PWELC Facebook page for upcoming events in Wright and Stearns County.

Yes! Updates

“Ali Dahmes ‘YES’ Coordinator

My name is Ali Dahmes and I grew up in New London, MN on a small hobby farm. After graduation, I took off for college around the country and then across the globe to pursue my love of animals and nature. Four years later I completed a bachelor’s degree in Zoology that I acquired from Oklahoma City (OK), Willmar (MN), Mankato (MN), and Queensland (Australia). I am very passionate about traveling and experiencing different environments. I also have a passion to get younger generations outside and exploring for themselves what nature has to offer which is how I ended up at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) after graduation. I have been working at PWELC for almost a year facilitating Environmental Education and Challenge Course programs. The PWELC and YES! connection has led me to my current position as a YES! coordinator. YES! has provided me with the opportunity to provide teams with the resources to help conserve the nature that I have loved all my life.

Fall Summit—Over 200 students and coaches from 16 Youth Energy Summit (YES) teams from central and southern Minnesota participated in the 10th Annual Fall Summit, held this year at Saint John’s University. Students participated in sessions like “Measuring Your Project’s Success,” “FLInbraising 101,” “Intro for New Teams/Students,” and “Project Sharing” that connected them with peers, engaged them in tools for success, and demonstrated funding ideas as they head into the 2016-17 YES! season. The theme for this year’s Fall Summit was “Say YES! to Youth-Led Water Solutions.” YES! was fortunate to have Dr. Kate Brauman, Lead Scientist for the Global Water Initiative at the University of Minnesota’s Institute on the Environment, present a keynote address on “Why Global Water Matters.” Two of the big hits with students at this summit this year were the climbing wall and 34-foot Voyageur canoe. YES! was also fortunate to have regional experts, Jon Morales from the Middle Fork Crow Watershed District and Mark Haugen and Cassidy Martin from the University of Minnesota 4H Extension, assist with sessions. Please check out youthenergysummit.org to stay current with upcoming YES! winter workshops and learn more about some of the great accomplishments of our YES! teams.

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.
Summer and fall of 2016 had all ages traveling back in time to 1888. Green Lake Lutheran Ministries held a senior retreat that spent the afternoon at the Pioneer Cabin. Stories and memories were shared about “Grandma’s Cabin” over coffee, pie and homemade whipped cream. They also weren’t afraid to get to work de-kerneling corn and sawing wood.

Thank our Prairie Stars! Fund-A-Need Live Auction Donors.

A high point of the 2016 Prairie Stars evening was watching the Prairie Stars Fund-A-Need Donors raise over $15,000 in about 5 minutes, guided by Kristine Fladeboe-Dulinck, to help PWELC purchase a vehicle needed for our expanding outreach programs!!! Thank our Prairie Stars!!! These contributions are in addition to event tickets and sponsorships.

$2,500
Charles & Sharon Olson
$1,000
Dee Dee Johnson, Steve & Nancy Linder, John & Mary Lindstrom, Jim & Colleen Michels, Dennis & Rathanne Neese, New London-Spicer Area Foundation

Up to $500
Gary & Nancy Geiger, Ron & Kay Halvorson, Bob & Connie Hodapp, Ella Meyerson, Barb & Wilson Salter, Myron & Carol Van de Ven

Up to $250
Bruce Behn, Matthew Behn, Mike & Linda Bundy, Ron & Dee Erpelding, Kendall & Douglas Fenstra, Cindy Firkens Smith, Fred & Kathy Huld, Thomas & Lynn Johnson, Wayne & Linda Nelson, Dr. Rachel Tollefsrud

Up to $100
Kevin & Melanie Crowley, Tina Erpenbach, Joseph & Emily Groshens, Kevin & Sandy Hanson, Ann Hogan & Ross Sibley, Craig & Lori Holmgren, Roger Inukele, Margaret Johnson, Glenn & Kelly Klebe, Richard & Betty Larson, Tim Minter, David Moody & Mary Catherwood, Rolbie & Glenda Nissen, Elizabeth & Harley Pakola, Mary Sawatzky, Denise & Tim Smith, Lynn & Gary Skordal, Jim & Terry Tetzloff, Vickie Vogt, Deb & Dale Anderson, Alan & Lori Dietz, Robert & Patti Dols, Gary & Cheryl Kubset, James & Laura Molenaar, Melissa Sorenson

Some of the Nice Things Done for Prairie Woods by People Like YOU!

Joel Johnson - donated time to consult on site development for the pavilion project
Louise Thoma - $5,000 gift for the pavilion project in memory of Bob Thoma
Kandiyohi County Public Works - completed pavilion site prep and coordinated the bid process
United Way of West Central MN - has been a steadfast supporter of PWELC for many years. Thanks to all for supporting your local United Way!
New London Spicer Area Fund of the Willmar Area Community Foundation - Donated $30,000 toward the pavilion project! Wow!!
New London-Spicer Area Foundation - donated $1,000 toward the purchase of a vehicle needed for outreach programs!
Terry Myllenbeck donated trail signage for the special hunts and ski trails.
Chad Lien, Jim Tetzloff, Lee Thompson, Claudia Thompson, Jeremy Lowsinski, John Ullman, Todd Marxhausen, Dustin Parker, Troy Heck, Mike Bundy, Mike Mastey, Kathy Lutz, Matt Holland, Karl Sands, Nate Grotelueschen, Ali Dahmes, Cameron Kalkbrenner, Frank Rezac, and Jeff Denz helped w/ the shooting range and/or firearm safety.
Myra Quale donated items for Time Travel
Dean Mortenson, Danielle Steffen and Genelle Grund volunteered for Time Travel programs.
Sara Carlson, Theresa Hills and Doug Allen helped out w/ the portable climbing wall at Rockin’ Robin.

Call for Exhibitors: Winter Sleigh & Ski Fest and Earth Day 2017

Give us a call if you would like to share a winter hobby, sport or craft at the Winter Sleigh & Ski Festival. Past exhibits have included fly-tying, darkhouse angling, woodworking, soapmaking, woodcarving, curling, bee keeping, cider press, home brewing, xc skiing and more. Show your stuff and help others brighten up their winter with healthy sports and hobbies.

It is also not too early to sign up at exhibit at EARTH Day 2016. Call Dave or Mari at 320-354-5894.
This was a busy year for shooting sports at PWELC. Over 30 groups used the Gary Westby Shooting range this season including: conservation groups, families, businesses, and churches. In addition to these groups there were also several handicapped accessible hunts for deer and turkeys, two youth hunts at PWELC, the Bowhunter 3D-60 archery event, and two field and range days which are required for completion of DNR firearm safety certification.

Two youth hunting traditions continued at PWELC. Pheasants Forever conducted a Youth/Mentor hunt this fall and one youth from the MDHA Forkhorn I Camp was drawn to participate in the fall limited special hunt at PWELC. This year Jimmy Miller from New London was drawn as the lucky camper to participate in the PWELC special deer hunt.

Here is a note from Jimmy Miller – a 2016 MDHA Forkhorn I graduate:

“I was excited this summer when my parents asked me if I wanted to attend the MDHA Forkhorn I Camp at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC). I had never been deer hunting before or shot a shotgun and it sounded like fun. I was able to learn about gun safety and earn my firearm safety certificate. I also learned hunting skills like how to set up deer stands and outdoor survival skills like which plants are edible.

As part of the camp, I was lucky enough to be drawn for a special hunt at PWELC in November. I liked riding out to hunting blinds with the volunteers in the ATV. I also liked waiting for deer in different blinds with my Dad. I was excited when a doe popped up in front of our blind and was able to shoot my first deer. I am very thankful for all of the volunteers who helped me. They showed me how to field dress my deer and brought it back to camp with us. I am also very grateful for a special back buck knife that one of the hunters gave me. It was his buck when he was a boy. It was an amazing first deer hunt.”

The 2016 Limited Special Hunt enjoyed another very successful season harvesting seven deer this year. Hats off to Ryan Newville, Dave Muetzel and all the other volunteers.

Sponsors:
West Central Steel, Home Depot, West Central Roofing, Kandiyohi Sheriff Dept., Willmar Police Dept., Kandiyohi Roofing, Larry’s Power Sports, Green Lake Trailer, Spencer American Legion, Spencer Sisters of American Legion, Scheels, and Jennie-O Turkey Store.

THANK OUR PRAIRIE STARS SPONSORS
Event Underwriters $2500 - Jennie-O Turkey Store, Lakeland Broadcasting, PWELC Board of Trustees
Eco-Sponsors $1000 - Affiliated Community Medical Center, Jeff & Sue Danielson, Family Practice Medical Center, DeeDec Johnson
Prairie Partners $500 - Harvest Bank, Heritage Bank, Home State Bank, Lake Region Bank, John & Mary Lindstrom, Northern States Supply, Dennis & Karen Peterson, Roger & Kay Strand, Louise Thoma in Memory of Ben Thoma, West Central Chapter of MN Darkhouse & Angling Assoc.
Prairie Stars Planning Committee - Beth Anderson, Amy Denu, Mari Klebe, Mary Merlin, Dave Pederson, Jim Tetzloff, Special thanks to Laura Nelson & Amanda Tengis - our decorating committee

INDOOR ROCK CLIMBING GYM........ALL AGES
Climbing offers a challenge to yourself! Both physically and mentally. Rock climbing is a true adventure sport. Beginners can learn about the sport, exercise, and have fun! Experienced climbers can come to 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, Jan. 5 • Thursday, Jan. 19
Time: 4:00-5:30pm
Cost: $10/climber for each class

STORY HOUR AT THE PIONEER CABIN...........Grades: 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. This will be a different story from our other Story Hours. Kids, ask your parents if they want to come too! (Meet at Farmhouse)
Date: Tuesday, Jan. 17 • Thursday, Feb. 21
Time: 4:00-5:15 pm
Cost: $5/clider for each class

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 cut and saw wood, make canoes, learn how to build a fire with flint and steel, try snow shoveling and warm up by the fire with some hot apple cider. (Meet at Farmhouse)
Date: Tuesday, Feb. 7
Time: 4:00-6:00 pm
Cost: $14

SNOWSHOEING ............Grades: 4th and up
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, Jan. 11 • Tuesday, Feb. 28
Time: 6:00-9:30 PM
Cost: $8/person

INTRO TO CROSS COUNTRY SKIING...........Grades: 2nd and up
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, Feb. 2
Time: 6:00-10:00 PM
Cost: $8

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION AND RECYCLED OUTDOOR GEAR SALE........Everyone Welcome!
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). Led bulbs. Staff will be available for questions and assistance.
Date: Saturday, April 22
Time: 8:00-10:00 am
Cost: Free

** All Winter!!! $5 ski rentals for students and Prairie Woods ELC members**
4th Annual

Prairie Woods Sleigh & Ski Festival

Sun. February 12, 2017  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
Fourth Annual
Tommy Swenson Memorial
Ice Fishing Tournament
On Green Lake • Spicer, MN

A portion of funds raised will once again be directed to PWELC to help fund youth sporting programs.

Saturday
February 4, 2017
9am to Noon
Lunch @ 12:30pm
Register @ Spicer American Legion
7:30 – 8:30 am

Ticket $25
includes
Chicken Dinner

Please bring a non-perishable food item for the food shelf
Proceeds go to local area charities

Questions:
320-295-9531