



# The Maple Leaf

Winter/Spring 2016

Friends of Maplewood State Park    Box 259    Pelican Rapids, MN 56572

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Maplewood State Park  
39721 Park Entrance Rd  
Pelican Rapids, MN 56572  
218-863-8383

Don Del Greco, Park Manager  
Jeff Fjestad, Assistant Park Manager

## Upcoming Events:

Feb. 20 – Candlelight Ski  
April 9 – Maple Syrup Day

## Advisory Committee

Steve Nagle, **chairperson**  
Alma Ronningen, **secretary**  
Stu & Corinne Peterson, **treasurer**  
Kay & Denny Albright, **membership**  
Judy Babler  
Char Berger  
Penny Brynildson  
Deb Carpenter  
Don & Bonnie Del Greco  
Carol & Sanford Emery  
Judith Engebretson  
Jeff Fjestad  
Barb & Jeff Grunewald  
Bob & Kathy Hanson  
Terry Heller  
Ruth & Van Holmgren  
Ruth Holt  
Jerry Jacobson/D. Mae Ceryes  
Cris Kling  
Diane & Dave Knopf  
Phyllis & Cliff Knutson  
Bob & Karen Kreiser  
Bonnie & John Nordstrom  
Sonya & Dan Oehler  
Larry & Judy Olson  
Wayne Runningen  
Mary & Chuck Sorum  
Lila & Alex Stoffel  
Becky Thompson  
Yvonne & Lyle Tweten

## SUGAR SHACK FUND RAISING

Our fund raising campaign has slowed down since the turning of the calendar to 2016. If you remember our goal is \$100,000 to build the Sugar Shack. \$50,000 to come from our checking account and \$50,000 to come from our fund raising campaign. As of the end of January, our fund raising has raised \$38,575. How have we done this?

- 1- We developed a Sugar Shack brochure which we mailed out to all Friends of Maplewood members and handed them out to other individuals that might be interested in making a donation. Of the 333 brochures mailed out, we received 35 back with a donation total of \$5880.00.
- 2- We developed a power point presentation that we have used twice at a Rotary meeting (PR) and a Kiwanis meeting (DL). This presentation talks about the Friends of Maplewood, our Maple Syrup program at Maplewood, the history of the Sugar Shack building project, and how our building will help to educate school groups and other individuals about maple syrup.
- 3- We have applied for grants with various groups, trusts, and organization. Some we have received, some have been denied, and others are still on the drawing board as we continue the process of applying for grants.

With renewed excitement we are looking to continue to present our power point presentation in communities in the surrounding area. On the drawing board we are working on 3 grant proposals and are looking for more to which we might apply.

So our goal is in sight. This newsletter brings to you another chance to make that extra donation to the Friends of Maplewood for the Sugar Shack that will get built this next summer. **Remember if you would like to make a donation, make the check payable to "Parks and Trails Council of MN" and mail it to Friends of Maplewood, PO Box 259, Pelican Rapids, MN 56572**

## Maplewood's Sugar Shack Construction Set for Spring 2016

The Friends' "Sugar Shack Committee" continues its work with the DNR Parks and Trails division finalizing plans for the new "sugar shack" building. The 20' X 28' building will be located in the northwest corner of the parking lot area opposite the existing Trail Center facility.

Preliminary work has already begun with DNR survey crews identifying the exact building location and a crew from Lake Region Electric Coop drilled in the underground electrical feed to the building site in September. Construction is set to begin this spring (2016) and the maple syrup interpretive program will move into the new building in time for the 2017 maple season.

The building specifications and design by DNR architects recently received required approval from the MN Dept. of Labor and Industry (DOLI). Final details on building specifications and construction coordination are underway with meetings between DNR representatives, Friends' volunteers and local contractors involved in the project.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is a current update on fund raising efforts. Final fund raising through donations and grant applications remains a priority. The plan is to fund the project 50-50 from existing funds on-hand, with the balance from special donations and grants for the project. Although we have more to raise, response to fund raising efforts has been very positive and the Committee is confident that the necessary funding will be in the bank prior to ground breaking.

Two years ago, the Friends group received the generous donation of a complete and nearly new small-scale maple sap evaporator system which will be installed in the new building. The new building will allow the Friends group, DNR naturalists and volunteers from the MN Maple Syrup Producers Association to provide expanded demonstration and teaching of the maple sugaring process.



The arrangement between the MN DNR and the Friends of Maplewood calls for the Friends group to fund the building and provide the processing equipment, while the DNR will provide design, landscaping, parking, sidewalks, ADA access compliance and related infrastructure.

The program has become increasingly popular each season with nearly 400 students and adults participating during the 2015 season. The interpretive program is under a formal partnership agreement with the MN Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Trails. Further information, photos and ongoing updates on fund raising results and construction progress can be found on the



### MAPLE SYRUP DEMONSTRATION DAY

Maple Syrup Demonstration Day is Saturday, April 9th, from 10:00—3:00 at Maplewood State Park. We will be demonstrating maple syrup production and offering you some maple treats. Come and join us at Maplewood and learn about Maple Syrup.



### VERGAS MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

Vergas holds its annual celebration on April 9th. Some of their activities are the pancake breakfast and a 5K Maple Syrup Run at 9:00.



### MAPLE SYRUP SEASON 2016

Our maple syrup season is soon coming. We always welcome people to come and help us, or to come and learn about maple syrup. Just remember our season can not be scheduled, but depends on the weather. If you are interested in helping you can call Maplewood, 218-863-8383, Bob Hanson, 218-758-2132 or nordlake7@hotmail.com. We'll contact you when we get started.





## HIKING THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL

Written by Stephanie Hogan

The North Country Scenic Trail is a hiking trail running from Sakakawea, ND to eastern New York. The trail is 4600 miles in length and is the longest of the national trails and is part of the National Park Service. The route of the trail passes through 7 different states, one of which is Minnesota. The trail tries to remain an off road hiking trail but in many areas the path must follow along roadways or shared trails.

I had heard of the North Country Trail several years ago, but last summer I had the opportunity to get to know it up close and personal. A couple of chapters of the trail offered a hiking challenge last summer called Challenge 165. It covered the trail in Minnesota from Hubbel

Pond (Becker County) to Remer which is 20 miles west of Grand Rapids, Minnesota. That portion of the trail is almost entirely off road and goes through Tamarac Refuge, White Earth Reservation, Itasca State Park, and the Chippewa and Paul Bunyan forests. The trail was broken down into 25 hikes scheduled twice weekly from May into October. The hikes varied in length with shorter hikes at the west end, where we started, to hikes of 9 and 10 miles out east. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to complete the 165 mile challenge.

It is hard to put the trail experience into words because it was incredible on many levels. First, the people involved were wonderful. The hikers were from all over Minnesota with occasional hikers from elsewhere. One hike included a student from China wanting to find a Chinese wife, and the Itasca hike had folks from New Orleans who must have wondered about 50 Minnesotans hiking 7 miles in the woods in pouring rain! The core group of hikers, those you saw week after week, consisted of teachers, a musician, a doctor, farmers, engineers, activists, lawyers, and business people. These folks had traveled and spent time all over the world, and as we hiked we shared stories. There were people who knew about the plants, the animals, the trees, the different land formations as well as the history of the area. We learned in conversation as we hiked.

It was also amazing to watch the land formations change as we hiked eastward (something I didn't really notice riding in a car). During the western hikes you worried about keeping your feet dry on the shorter flat lowland trail whereas out east we were huffing and puffing going up much steeper grades in deep forests. We saw huge beaver dams, and the effect they have on the landscape, bear markings on the poles and trees, wolf scat, hundreds of birds and the footprints of deer. Sometimes we were far away from all the traffic and civilization noises of the daily routine, and surrounded in deep woods quiet.



Because the hikes were scheduled from spring into fall, we also got to enjoy the subtle week to week changes in the trees and plants. We started as the wildflowers were beginning to bloom, saw hundreds of lady slippers, the leaves just budding on the trees, and the development of many varieties of mushrooms. We completed the challenge with leaves falling and covering the hiking surface. Spring had us struggling with ticks, and summer with the heat, mosquitoes, and flies. Each season offer wonderful discoveries and interesting finds.

Lastly, the realizations of the human history of this land are humbling. One can only imagine what it must have been like to travel through those dense forests for the first time as the trappers and settlers had done. There were no blue blaze trail markings to follow and no volunteers had come before with chain saws to clear the trail of fallen trees or brush. There were no wooden bridges along the way to help in crossing swampy areas. At night there were no campsites hidden out in the woods with beautiful lake overlooks, campfire rings, benches and latrines. We traveled through the forests and the clear cut areas left by the lumber industry and hiked over the reemerging landscape left behind when the trees are gone. We followed logging rail beds in several areas and their wavy patterns left in the ground after decades of disuse. To think of the vast amount of planning and work that go into making this trail available and passable for all who choose to share it is overwhelming. I walked these miles seldom even leaving a footprint behind, but I brought a heart full of the trail home with me. I find that it is not the accomplishment of completing the challenge that was important, it is the experience, the friendships, and the memories that are the true reward.

Why is this important? This spring the trail committee is working at further development of the trail from Frazee to Fergus Falls. A section of trail already crosses thru Maplewood State Park. Presently the trail is routed on road from Frazee, through Vergas, on to Maplewood and after leaving the Park on to Fergus Falls. Hopefully you will think about offering input on trail development and share your knowledge of the area to expand this wonderful resource so close to home.

**Stephanie Hogan completed the Challenge 165 last summer. She lives on Rose Lake and is a very active, retired person.**

# NEWS and NOTES



## BEAR BENCH WINNER

Sheila Rodning of Fergus Falls was the winner in our drawing for the Bear Bench. Sheila works at INVISION eye clinic in Fergus and when I delivered the bench she was thinking of putting it into the children's area at the clinic. She has no grandkids yet and she thought it would be a good place for the bench until she became a grandma. They love to camp in State Parks around Minnesota. Thank you Sheila for investing in Maplewood State Park. Special thanks to Ron Baker for building the bench and donating it to the Friends of Maplewood. This is the second bench donated by Ron and this bench found a good home also.

## SUMMER 2015 CLASSES in REVIEW

The 2015 summer classes have come to a close. Attendance this summer was down from past years but families who attended the activities were treated to the park's beauty and some fun learning. In June, a group of mothers and daughters went on the photo walk, a 1-mile hike that led past spring flowers, buzzing bees and a glimpse of some stunning Trumpeter Swans. And those who attended the Plant a Pocket of Prairie children's class learned about the prairie grasses and the restoration process in the park as well as helped plant some milkweed for the Monarch Butterflies. The Cloudy with a Chance of Meatball's Class in July talked about our ever-changing weather in Minnesota with hands on science experiments and take home crafts. The Digital Scavenger Hunt in August had many teams combing the campground in search of items to photograph. Three teams in each division won a S'mores basket to enjoy around their campfire. The Campfire cooking class was "It's in the bag!" The class taught shared tips on how to take some of the work out of campfire cooking and learned how to make omelets in a bag. YUMMY! The final event of the season was the Halloween Fun Festival. We were blessed with a truly gorgeous day and over 120 parents, adults, grandparents, aunts and uncles enjoyed an afternoon of crafts and carnival games at the Josh Hanson Memorial Picnic Shelter. Then in the evening they went trick or treating through the main campground where campers had decorated their sites for Halloween with lights, pumpkins, and all things spooky for a chance to win the campsite-decorating contest. The evening wrapped up with roasting marshmallows and visiting around the campfire. Thanks everyone for a great season.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Friends of Maplewood want to thank Mary Knutson for her hard work and dedication in volunteering to teach these classes at Maplewood. Mary has decided to take the summer of 2016 off. Maplewood State Park will miss her classes.

# NEWS and NOTES

## MEMORIALS

Remember the Friends of Maplewood when you are giving a memorial. All donations are used to improve Maplewood State Park. Mail them to the Friends group and a thank you receipt will be sent to you.

### IN MEMORY OF

Helen Knopf  
Marvin Ronningen

### GIVEN BY

Erik & Twila Aslesen  
John & Bonnie Nordstrom

## THRIVENT

Friends of Maplewood is now enrolled as a participating organization in Thrivent Choice. If you are a member of Thrivent, you can direct your Choice dollars to the Friends of Maplewood State Park. We appreciate your donation. We have received \$461.00 since our last newsletter.

## DONATIONS



We appreciate Gary Keller, who donated his Pay It Forward check from Bell State Bank for \$1000.00 to our Sugar Shack fund. Gary has a cabin on Lake Lida. He also became a member of the Friends of Maplewood. Thanks Gary.

## HELP NEEDED

In May we will be cleaning and staining the logs on the Josh Hanson Memorial Picnic Shelter. We need workers. You can volunteer by calling 218-334-6567 or emailing [nordlake7@hotmail.com](mailto:nordlake7@hotmail.com).

## LIFETIME MEMBERS

We have 37 Lifetime members.  
We are happy to announce our newest.

JoAnn & Brent E. Frazier, Pelican  
Hebe & Jim Shipp, Pelican  
Underwood Lions Club

## THINGS WE NEED

Do you have one to donate or one we could buy??

1. Apple Press—like to demonstrate at Leaf Days how the early Maplewood settlers took apples and made apple sauce and apple juice.
2. Corn grinder used to grind corn into meal
3. Information about using the ground corn to make corn bread in a dutch oven as the early settlers used to do.
4. Old barn / shed wood that we can cut up and use for the kids to make bird houses or bird feeders.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

\$66,018.79 in our checking account

## RUNNING WILD

### TRAIL RUN

5th Annual



Where: Maplewood State Park

When: Saturday, June 11, 2016 9:00

Why: Benefiting Health Resources Center  
of Fergus Falls

3 Events to choose from:

- Running WILD 7K Trail Run
- 1 mile trail run/hike
- 200 yard kids run WILD

# PLEIN AIR EVENT



The second annual plein air event, held on September 19th, was well attended by artists from around the region. The guest presenter, Raleigh Kinney found Maplewood State Park to be a well kept secret; a real gem in the middle of Otter Tail County. He arrived two days ahead of time to tour the park and to acquaint himself with features of the Park and to do some preliminary sketches for his Demo painting. Early Saturday morning, participants were greeted by Phyllis & Cliff Knutson who served fresh coffee and breakfast rolls, courtesy of the Friends of Maplewood. It was a crisp Autumn morning so

the hot coffee was a perfect welcome. Park Manager, Don Del Greco extended words of welcome to the event participants and related both historical and current information about the Park Prairie Restoration project. Following a presentation of specific considerations that artists need to be aware of as they go out into nature to paint, guest artist Raleigh Kinney provided a painting demonstration that motivated workshop participants to begin their own paintings. Participating artists selected their individual locations and subjects from the Lake Lida area just below the Josh Hanson Memorial Shelter. With guidance from Raleigh, the artists painted for two hours at which time the group re-convened back in the Shelter for a formal critique of individuals works. The weather cooperated beautifully. The participants at this years gathering are waiting to hear details of the Third Annual Plein Air event at Maplewood. Thanks to all who helped out and supported this event.



Thanks to the generosity of many, more folks have been introduced to yet another way to enjoy the glory that is Maplewood State Park.



## LEAF DAY 2015



The leaves weren't at peak, nor did they ever get there, but the weather was OK, and the people still came. Not a record breaking year, but lots of people out enjoying the beauty of Maplewood State Park.



Our activities continue to attract crowds. We try to schedule a variety of activities and demonstrations. Always looking for new ideas. [nordlake7@hotmail.com or 218-334-6567] Wagon rides and hikes continue to be popular. Even our Little Library, down by the campground, was popular over Leaf Days. Out of 59 books, there were only 21 left. People do enjoy reading around the campfire.

Our sales of food, clothing, and maple syrup brought in a profit of \$5300. Thanks to all our volunteers who helped out this last year. 59 different people worked at different times over the 4 days. Clear your schedule for next fall as we continue to need helpers.



# THE RANGER REPORT



**PARK MANAGER**  
**Don Del Greco**

## **Minnesota State Parks and Trails - Celebrating 125 Years**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Division will celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Minnesota State Parks throughout 2016.

2015 marked one of the busiest summers on record for Maplewood State Park and the entire State Park System. Maplewood's beautiful forests, colorful prairies and sparkling lakes hosted nearly 138,000 guests this past year and we are gratified to see the increased numbers of new and returning park guests enjoying the wonder and beauty of Minnesota's natural treasures.

We are thankful to the Friends of Maplewood for your ongoing partnership with Minnesota State Parks and Trails in our working together to help preserve some of the most beautiful places in Minnesota by helping provide places where you can bond with your family and friends and build memories that last a lifetime. Statewide, many Commemorative Anniversary Events are scheduled throughout the upcoming year and Maplewood has been selected as one of five State Parks to host two new **125th Anniversary Events:**

- **Commemorative Snowmobile Ride** scheduled for February 27 and 28 at the Maplewood State Park Trail Center.

- **125th Community Picnic Celebration** is scheduled for July 17 at the Josh Hanson Memorial Picnic Shelter.

We cordially invite all Friends of Maplewood members to join in the various festivities throughout the upcoming year as we celebrate the 125th Birthday party of Minnesota State Parks and Trails.



### **2015 Deer Hunting at Maplewood State Park**

Nearly 100 deer hunters participated in the 2015 special deer hunt at Maplewood. The 4-day deer hunt (November 7<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup>) was a good, safe, and wonderful experience for hunters. To manage the deer herd within the park, a special deer hunt has been held each year since the early 1980's. The purpose of the hunt is to protect native plant diversity and restoration efforts from over-browsing by deer.

Hunters who desire to participate in the park hunt need to apply through the DNR Electronic Licensing System (ELS) in early September. The DNR ELS system issues licenses through 1,500 license agent locations throughout Minnesota or via the DNR Web site at [mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov) or via a toll free telephone number (1-888-665-4236). The DNR License Bureau notifies the 100 successful applicants by early October and specific hunt information is sent to each successful applicant.

Approximately 370 hunters applied for the 100 available licenses. Unsuccessful applicants will gain a preference point for the next year's lottery. The more preference points a hunter has the better chance at getting drawn. (Successful hunters usually have three or four preference points, which means they had applied for 3 and 4 years).



A total of 44 deer were harvested during the 2015 Special Deer Hunt.



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## CANDLELIGHT SKI

**SATURDAY, February 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:00-8:30**



Plan now to attend the Candlelight Ski at Maplewood State Park. The 1 mile ski trail will be lighted with 150 candles. Come and enjoy the evening. If you don't ski, stand around the campfire, chat with friends, and enjoy hot chili, bars, and hot drinks. Maplewood State Park has 12 sets of snowshoes that you could try out.

We will have the chili on and ready to serve by 5:00. So come early to Maplewood State Park and ski some of the 8 miles of trails that afternoon. After an hour or so of skiing, come and join the Friends at the Trail Center for supper before going out on the candle lighted trail.



Remember, if you come to go skiing, you do need a Ski Pass. \$6.00 daily ski passes are available at the Park and a 1 year ski pass (\$20) can be purchased at most sport stores [Maplewood can sell them also]. Of course Minnesota Park Stickers are required. Questions can be answered at Maplewood State Park, 218-863-8383. If snow is questionable, call before you come.