

The Maple Leaf

Winter/Spring 2019

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

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. 23 – Candlelight Ski
April 6 – Maple Syrup Day
Sept – Annual Meeting
Sept 28-29—Leaf Days
Oct 5-6 - Leaf Days

Advisory Committee

Denise Laymon, **chairperson**
Richard Smestad, **chairperson elect**
Alma Ronningen, **secretary**
Stu Peterson, **treasurer**
Kay & Denny Albright, **membership**
Penny Brynildson
Don & Bonnie Del Greco
Carol & Sanford Emery
Judith Engebretson
Jeff Fjestad
Bob & Kathy Hanson
Terry Heller
Ruth & Van Holmgren
Ruth Holt
Diane & Dave Knopf
Phyllis & Cliff Knutson
Bob & Karen Kreiser
Brian Laymon
John & Bonnie Nordstrom
Larry & Judy Olson
Wayne Runningen
Mary & Chuck Sorum
Scott & Stephanie Stenshoel
Becky Thompson

The **MISSION** of the Friends of Maplewood State Park is to support and encourage the Park's recreational, interpretive, educational and environmental activities through leadership, volunteerism, program development, and fund raising.

MAPLEWOOD: A TOP ATTRACTION

In a report released on November 14, 2018 from Explore Minnesota, in the CENTRAL REGION of Minnesota, **Maplewood State Park was ranked 5th in attendance for 2017**. The attendance for 2017 was 154,597. In the Central and Northwest Regions it ranks ahead of many state parks such as Buffalo River (Glyndon), Mille Lacs Kathio (Onamia), Lake Bronson (Lake Bronson), Crow Wing (Brainerd), Glacial Lakes (Starbuck), Father Hennipen (Isle), and Glendalough (Battle Lake). In the Central Region only Sibley and Lake Carlos State Parks posted more visitors than Maplewood. The events sponsored by the Friends of Maplewood, Candlelight Ski, Maple Syrup Demonstration Day, Leaf Days and other events such as Music at Maplewood continue to attract growing crowds. Attracting the most visitors in the Central Region was Grand Casino Mille Lacs. I supposed gambling is not an option for Maplewood. Hats off to Maplewood for offering a great outdoor experience for the people of Minnesota. Let's keep it getting better.



Friends of Maplewood WEBSITE

friendsofmaplewood.org

MAPLE SYRUP SEASON

As we sit inside trying to stay warm and thinking about the coming of spring, the sap is thinking it's soon time to pack its bags and begin the trip up and down the tree. I had a conversation with our Chief of Maple Syrup Operations, Bob Hanson, and he said that according to his accuweather predictions the sap will start to run at 3:17 p.m. on March 14th. So his plan is to get organized and begin tapping the trees the week of March 11th. He needs 4-5 helpers so if you can help call him at 701-412-7084.

We hope to have another good year of sap collection and we are ready to make maple syrup. If you ever want to learn about the process, or observe what they do, you can call the park, 218-863-8383 or Bob, 701-412-7084 to see if they are tapping or boiling.



If they are, come on out and watch and learn. Bring your coffee.

SCHOOL VISITATIONS – MAPLE SYRUP

Last year we had 5 school groups come to Maplewood to learn about how to make maple syrup using the new curriculum we wrote. We have sent letters to the schools in the 10 communities surrounding Maplewood State Park. Already we have been contacted by 2 groups who will be returning. It is a great learning activity and fun time for the kids to be at Maplewood.

We have a great group of volunteers who filled the need last year. We can always use more volunteers so if it is something you would be willing to do, please contact John Nordstrom at 218-841-7673 or nordlake7@hotmail.com. Oh, you'd like to help, but you don't know anything about maple syrup. Not to worry. We'll have you come and watch or I would be willing to take you through what you might be helping to guide. It is lots of fun and rewarding being able to help kids have a fun time at Maplewood.

MAPLE SYRUP DEMONSTRATION DAY

Saturday, April 6th

10:00 – 3:00 Maplewood State Park

It is a great day to visit Maplewood State Park. There will be lots of activities to make it a fun time. Of course we'll be teaching you all about collecting sap and making maple syrup. You'll be able to learn how they made syrup years ago. So you don't tap the wrong tree, we'll be showing you how to identify that sugar maple when it doesn't even have leaves.

You can always take a hike or look for the hidden maple leaves (providing we have no snow). And we'll have some ice cream topped with maple syrup for you to taste. If you get hungry we'll have brats and hot dogs for sale. It's a great time so come on out to Maplewood on Saturday, April 6th.



VERGAS MAPLE SYRUP FEST

The annual celebration of maple syrup in Vergas will be held on April 6th. The day begins with a pancake breakfast from 8:00 – noon at the Community Center. The 5K Maple Syrup Run starts at 9:00 (registration is at 8:00 at Billys) For more information you can check the website: www.cityofvergas.com

LEAF DAYS 2018

The weekends were cool with some rain on both Saturdays, but the color of the leaves were vibrant. Considering the hard rain that was falling the following Monday when I went to the bank to deposit the money, I guess we were lucky. Crowds were good and we were able to match up the amount of food prepared with the amount sold. That's a good feeling. Our profit for food, syrup, clothes, and the raffle was \$6083. A nice reward for our hard work. Speaking of hard work, we figured there were about 71 different people who volunteered and including all the time spent with planning, organizing, and packing away everything, our volunteers spent approximately 849 hours to make Leaf Days a success.

A **BIG** thank you to all the volunteers. That first Saturday some of you got very chilly, but stuck with us to get the job done. The volunteers are the reason people keep returning to Leaf Days at Maplewood to have a fun experience.

We have many different activities for visitors to try. Besides the fall colors and the hike up Hallaway Hill, our activities are the reason that people come. Do you have an activity you could share? Do you know of someone who has a talent or skill or display that would be great to share? Would you have 3-4 hours to help during Leaf Days? It takes many people, ideas, and talent to make it a success. Please call John Nordstrom, 218-841-7673 or email nordlake7@hotmail.com to share your ideas or let him know to add your name to his list of possible volunteers.

SHELVING: SUGAR SHACK

The need for additional shelving at the Sugar Shack arose when we were trying to store all the equipment and supplies for our maple syrup school program. David Knopf volunteered to build some shelves that could be installed above the windows at the Sugar Shack. Working at home in his shop he built and stained the three shelves.



One Saturday morning, David Knopf, Ron Hegerle, and Stu Peterson spent 3 hours installing the shelves. They look good and were able to hold all of the equipment that we needed to store. Thanks to David, Ron and Stu for volunteering.

WINTER at MAPLEWOOD

Ice Fishing report: Crappies and sunfish are being caught on Grass Lake. The winter trout season opened on Bass Lake on 1/12 with about 40 anglers out on Saturday with some 12"-14" trout being caught.

Maplewood has 3 **cabins for rent**. They are Muskie, Crappie, Pike. The rate is \$60 on Thursday or Sunday and \$70 on Friday or Saturday. They are not available Monday – Wednesday until April 1st.

SNOWSHOES: Maplewood has lots of snowshoes for rent at \$6.00 a pair. They have sizes for all ages.

RUNNING WILD TRAIL RUN

Where: Maplewood State Park

When: June 8, 2019

Why: Benefiting Health Resources Center of Fergus Falls

9:00am Kid's Run WILD (ages 5-7) 200 Yard Dash
9:05am Wee Run WILD (ages 4 & under) 200 Yard Dash
9:15am Kid's AWARDS
9:40am Running WILD 7K Trail Run
9:45am Running WILD 1M LIFE HIKE
11:00am 7K & 1M AWARDS

Further information:

www.runningwildtrail.com

runningwildtrailrun@gmail.com

Mary Ellen or Erin at 218-736-6050



STATS for 2018: 7K: 213 1Mile: 72 Kid's Runs: 38

51 volunteers made everything go smoothly and it was a WILD success. Plan to spend the day at Maplewood State Park and find out what the Park has to offer or better yet plan to camp the weekend at Maplewood.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Last summer found the Friends of Maplewood offering art classes, meditation classes, and 4 different music events. We had great attendance and averaged around 100 at each music event. The summer of 2019 will find us offering those same events: Music at Maplewood, Meditation at Maplewood, and art classes. The dates are yet to be determined. We always advertise our events in the area newspapers, send out emails to our members, and post them on Facebook and our website. If you are wondering about upcoming events you can always call Maplewood State Park, 218-863-8383. By the middle of May we should have a good idea of what will be happening.

So, do you have a skill that might be interesting to Maplewood campers and visitors? We plan to add events such as a class on mushrooms, the story of maple syrup, photography in nature class and yoga out in nature. These classes would run about 60 to 90 minutes and offer Maplewood visitors an activity to attend. Could be for adults, kids or families. Last year we had members like Sue Nyhus, who volunteered to teach Meditation at Maplewood. We know there are more people with skills who could spare a couple hours one weekend (or during the week) and help to expand what Maplewood has to offer. If you have a skill, or know of someone else who does, contact John Nordstrom at 218-841-7673 or email nordlake7@hotmail.com. It will be appreciated.

Meditation at Maplewood dates will be May 18, June 17, July 16, and August 15
6:30 pm to 7:15 pm Josh Hanson Memorial Picnic Shelter

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

Jerri Baker

Donna Mae Johnson

GIVEN BY

Ron Baker

Lyndon & Kim Johnson

IN HONOR OF

Denny & Kay Albrights 50th

Denny & Kay Albrights 50th

Denny & Kay Albrights 50th

Ed & Loretta Jensons 50th

John & Bonnie Nordstrom 50th

GIVEN BY

John & Bonnie Nordstrom

Ed & Sharon Fjestad

David & Bonnie Weaklend

David & Bonnie Weaklend

Denny & Kay Albright

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. The following sent Choice Dollars .

Kathryn Anderson

DONATIONS

Joan Ellison—money donation

Dean Haarstick-labor to redo Maple Syrup arch

Jay Arvidson— 4 bags corn Leaf Days

Davis Scott— money donation

Vergas Lions Club—money donation

TREASURER'S REPORT

\$39,526.29 in our checking account

\$1747.03 in our Parks & Trail account

LIFETIME MEMBERS

We have 52 Lifetime members.

We are happy to announce our newest.

Richard & Jennifer Smestad
Vergas Lions Club

Home Depot

We'd like to say thank you to the Home Depot in Fergus Falls and St. Cloud for their donation of the woodworking kits we use for kids during Leaf Days. They are very much appreciated, and the families enjoy being able to build something together during their outing to Maplewood State Park. Thanks

THINGS WE NEED

Remember to save:

Large buttons

Nice feathers

Maple leaves (not real ones)

Light cloth for dolls

Milk jug caps

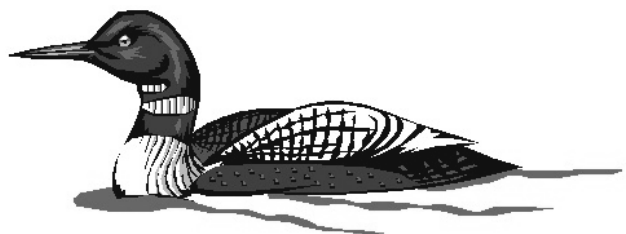
Unique nature items

Gallon apple cider jugs

Old barn / shed wood for bird feeders

Just call. We'll come pick them up or you can drop them off at Maplewood State Park.

Thank you in advance.



THE RANGER REPORT



HEADLINE STORIES 2018

PARK MANAGER Don Del Greco

2018 has unfolded to be one of many picture – perfect days and nights for the thousands of park guests that come to explore the beauty and wonder of Maplewood State Park. The spectacular 2018 fall color season lingered well into October offering colorful memories to thousands of leaf-lookers and wrapped up another season of wonder-filled days for the special guests that visit Maplewood each season.

Please join us in reflecting on a few of the updated highlights and stories of 2018 as noted below.

-Maplewood Attendance 2018: 2018 continued the trends of strong visitation numbers with the over 140,000 guests welcomed to experience Maplewood's wonders.

-Lestina Island Acquisition: We are humbled and pleased to announce the recent acquisition of a special land resource to Maplewood's boundaries. The 14.75 acre island on South Lida Lake was purchased from Dale and Bonita Lestina, longtime landowners and faithful stewards of this property. The island is a remarkable parcel and will be preserved as part of Maplewood State Park. Research and evaluation of this unique and treasured parcel is in process.

-Park Staff: Please join us in welcoming three new employees to Maplewood State Park this year: Resource Program Building and Grounds Worker, Lisa Bjorgo, Building and Grounds Worker, Dale Westley and Natural Resource Worker, Grant Lonz. Park staff have worked efficiently and effectively to maintain and operate the park during a busy seasons of serving visitors and project accomplishment. We are thankful for their excellent work and resiliency.

-North Country Trail Realignment Project: Many thanks to a crew of Volunteers from the NCT who provided time, & excellent labor & talent to improve a section of trail south of the Knoll Campground.

-New Horse Campground/Day-Use Area Vault Toilet: A new vault toilet has been installed at the Maplewood Horse Campground. The project will welcome the horse community with a "state of the art" vault toilet which will serve the public many years to come. Horse Pass dollars funded the project.



Friends of Maplewood Partnership projects:

-Sugar Shack - Maple Syrup programming 2018: Thanks to the Friends of Maplewood for providing for excellent programming for many school groups throughout the second year with full operation of the Sugar Shack facility.

-Volksmarch Walk: Partnered with the NorthStar Trail Travelers to host the 20th annual walking event.

-Shade Tree Planting Project: Partnered with the MN Parks and Trails Council to plant 15 large maple trees in park office and campground complex.

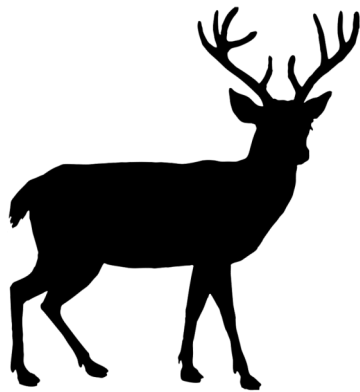
Staff Accomplishments / Projects:

- Celebrating Safety:** We are recognizing & celebrating an excellent year for Maplewood's safety program. All staff continue to work with a high safety standard, promotion and passion.
- Hallaway Hill Re-route Project
- Hazard tree inspection/removal project & brushing of park roadside for traffic safety.
- Installation of new shelves and remodel of park shop maintenance/storage shops.
- We are celebrating an excellent year for Maplewood's safety program. All staff
- Provided great hospitality and public service to over 140,000 treasured guests.

2018 Events:

- Candlelight Ski, hike, & snowshoe Event
- Friends of Maplewood Annual Maple Syrup Demonstration Day
- Horse Enduro Maplewood West Competitive Ride
- 7th Annual Running Wild-Maplewood State Park 7K Trail Run
- Leaf Days

Thank you for your kind, gracious and faithful support of Maplewood State Park throughout the seasons and in future years to come. We welcome the opportunity to see you again and look forward to gathering together to enjoy the wonder of Maplewood.



2018 Deer Hunting at Maplewood State Park

Jeff Fjestad , Assistant Park Manager

Nearly 100 deer hunters participated in the 2018 special deer hunt at Maplewood. The 4-day deer hunt (November 3rd -6th) was a good, safe, and wonderful experience for hunters, young and old alike. The 2018 season greeted hunters with cooler seasonal temps and perfect weather. 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 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 400 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).

For the 2018 season, each hunter had the opportunity to purchase a bonus tag, along with their regular deer license, to use during the park hunt. The bonus tag enabled each hunter to harvest an additional antlerless deer. A total of 75 deer were harvested during the 2018 Special Deer Hunt.

Hallaway Hill Trail Project Completed

Dear Friends of Maplewood,

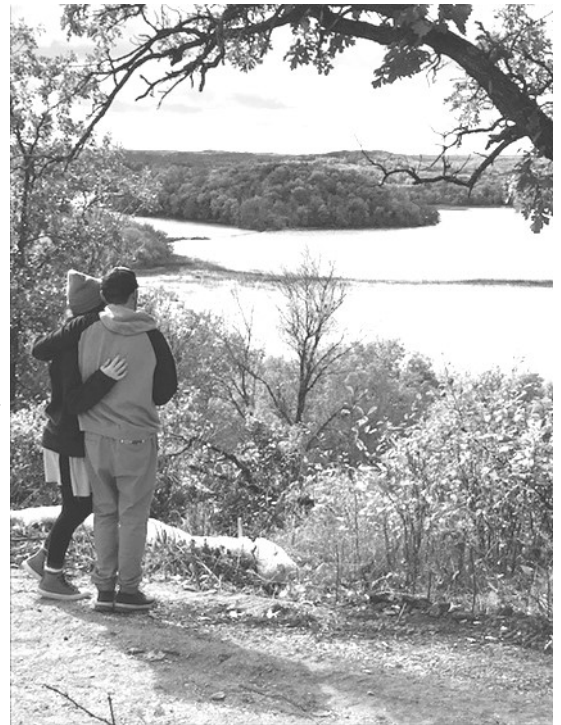
We thank you and deeply appreciate the generous and timely funding support for the Hallaway Hill Overlook Trail project. Your funding support of \$15,000 in partnership with other funding sources has enabled us to proceed with accomplishing the realignment and improvement of the beloved trail.

The popular and scenic Hallaway Hill overlook trail has offered an exceptional hiking experience with breathtaking views of the Maple-leaf hills for generations of park visitors. The trail has been very heavily used and “appreciated” so much that rerouting the trail is necessary to address safety issues as erosion is threatening the integrity of the existing trail. The new alignment will provide for a safer, smoother, and sustainable route to the top of the most popular hiking trail in Maplewood State Park.

Preliminary construction began on August 13th with brushing and mowing of the new route. Additional construction continued through autumn with completion in early November. The new 7/10 mile long trail corridor will provide current and aspiring trail users direct benefit from an improved trail alignment that permits greater access through a series of strategically designed switchbacks and rest areas to accommodate climbing the steep topography to the higher trail elevations on route to the scenic overlook. Many new and extensive panoramic views will be available for hikers as the trail will wind and traverse through colorful prairies, and shady hardwood forests on its route to the “top-of-hill”.

The project involved numerous stages including the hauling and placement of 270 yards of class 2 crushed granite along with the installation of erosion control features such as biodegradable erosion logs, erosion mat, and sod berms. Thus far the water shedding design of the trail has performed well. The good news is that the combined talents of many staff and strategic partners accomplished this project well under budget and ahead of schedule.

The trail was re-routed and temporary signs installed September 28, allowing leaf day visitors to use the new and the old trail to get to the top.



There were many steps to the trail creation. The construction team included Fergus Falls trail staff, OAS & administrative staff, who took charge of ordering supplies and tracking costs, Maplewood staff, DNR Engineering, NW Region Resource staff, and Ottertail County STS. GREAT TEAM-WORK!

Pre-construction planning started in 2015-16 with DNR engineers designing and laying out trail routes with cuts and fills, elevations and rest areas.

Resource and park staff opened the corridor with saws and mower in early September, temps were in the 90's.



Sweco mini-dozer and Skidsteer were used for cutting the new trail corridor and moving the sod from the new trail to the old trail for its rehabilitation. DNR Parks and Trails crew have amazing skills with these machines.

Gravel was delivered onto park drive and hauled up the hill with two gravel haulers. Timed rotation of park and resource staff allowed for hauling continually for 10 hours/day rotating through breaks. The gravel was leveled with the tried and true steel bedspring (thanks STS!) and then packed with a vibrating roller. Experienced crew members worked masterfully to set grades and slopes.

Native seed harvested from Maplewood and adjacent parks and winter rye was seeded and then covered with an erosion blanket. The old trail corridor and the edges of the new trail will display a rich mix of flowers and prairie grass.

Many older folks, smaller children, and those using canes and strollers have hiked up the hill on the new trail. The comments were overwhelmingly positive on how much easier it was and the views being stunning. The new trail is perfect for side by side hiking and encourages conversations up and down the trail.

The Friends of Maplewood have always been a treasured partner with Maplewood State Park. Together we have been able to accomplish many projects, including the Josh Hanson Memorial Picnic Shelter and the Sugar-Shack facility. We have also been able to team together to provide the public many unique opportunities with popular events such as the annual Leaf Day celebrations, candlelight skiing and maple syrup programming.



Meet Herbert, also affectionately known as "Ruffie" the ruffed grouse. This kindly bird greeted park guests and worked along-



As always, your passionate support is expressed in your Mission Statement: "The mission of the Friends of Maplewood State Park is to support and encourage the Park's recreational, interpretive, educational and environmental activities through leadership, volunteerism, program development, and fund raising." This project will provide future generations the opportunity to continue to experience the beauty and wonder of Maplewood.

With deepest gratitude we thank you for your generous contribution.

Sincerely, Donald Del Greco, Maplewood State Park Manager

Jeff & Harper Fjestad



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Friends of Maplewood
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Pelican Rapids, MN 56572
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CANDLELIGHT SKI

SATURDAY, February 23th
6:00-8:30



Last year was the great snow event so we are excited about our **Candlelight Ski in 2019**. 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, smores, bars, and hot drinks. Maplewood State Park has 12 sets of snowshoes that you can try out. No skis are available.

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 if 16 or older. \$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.