



The Maple Leaf



Member Update

Friends of Maplewood held many **summer events** this last year, averaging 95-105 people for most events. Peak inside to read about some of our favorite memories from music in the park, raptors in Minnesota, owls of the area, wild edibles, birding, archery, photography, flyfishing and casting, and meditation.

The spring **maple syrup** program included 410 students, teachers, and parents. The Friends of Maplewood are pushing for completion of the well at the Sugar Shack and park personnel have made it a high priority in 2024.

Horse lovers travel hundreds of miles to ride the 21 miles of Maplewood trails. Improvements have been made to the entrance road and the road around horse camp. Campsite markers will be added to help with parking issues and site access.

The much-anticipated completion of the **Maplewood segment of the Heart of Lakes regional trail** in 2024 is generating lots of buzz for the park. The 4.2-mile segment in Maplewood is all that remains to complete the 32-mile-long trail. As soon as the exact route through the park is known, we will let our members know, as park officials have indicated the "final-final" decision is imminent.

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Join Us!



**Maplewood State Park
Candlelight Walk, Ski, Snowshoe
Saturday, February 24, 2024**

Maplewood State Park is a winter wonderland and this popular event is a must-do! Join us on a one-mile trek around Cataract Lake, lit by 150 candles. Ski, walk, snowshoe, or just chat around the campfire with friends, enjoy hot chili, smores, bars, and hot drinks. Chili will be ready to serve by 5:00 p.m., and candles will be lit from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Maplewood State Park will have a limited number of snowshoes for rent. Skis are not available.

A vehicle pass is needed if you don't have one (\$7 daily, \$35 annual) and skiers need a ski pass (\$10 daily, \$25 annual). Both can be purchased at the park office on your way in.

We hope to see you there!

Member Update (continued from page 1)

Other developments include:

- ♣ A **new logo, website, and Facebook** makeover.
- ♣ A **targeted media strategy**, including press releases, radio, and tv interviews.
- ♣ An **AED**, or automatic external defibrillator, donated to Friends for use in the park.
- ♣ **Pelican Rapids Chamber of Commerce** membership.

Friends held our annual meeting on Wednesday, September 6, at the Josh Hanson Memorial picnic shelter. New business included a vote **to transition the Friends of Maplewood to a 501(c)3 organization**. A nine-member Board of Directors was elected. The decision will spark opportunities for growth for Friends of Maplewood. Benefits include:

- ♣ Exemption from federal, state, and local income taxes, unemployment, and other taxes.
- ♣ Eligibility for public and private grants and special funding.
- ♣ Reduced postal rates and tax-exempt financing.
- ♣ Protection from financial liability for directors and staff.
- ♣ Ability to receive tax-deductible contributions from donors.

Work is underway to launch a **volunteer recruitment drive**. We anticipate increased traffic in the park and want to be ready when it happens. Families, work groups, athletic teams, scouting troops, classrooms, and civic groups are welcome to volunteer at the park.

We are researching an **online store** that would sell Friends of Maplewood clothing, mugs, hats, scarves, and other items with our logo. Maplewood State Park items would be included.

We count on our membership for ideas, energy, financial support,

Friends of Maplewood Board of Directors

Scott Stenshoel, President
Denise Laymon, Vice President
John Nordstrom, Treasurer
Angie Stevenson, Secretary
Lynn Carlson
Judi Engebretson
Jerry Pederson
Stu Peterson
Linda Today



2023 Friends Annual Meeting

***Time to renew your 2024 membership if you haven't already!**
See the form on the back of this newsletter.

(If you are not sure, send us an email at friendsofmaplewoodstatepark@gmail.com and we'll check it out for you.)

Friends of Maplewood Goal

Our goal is to work with park management on various projects and events so that you and your family can enjoy the park year-round.

Park Update by Park Ranger Don DelGreco

The 2022-23 winter brought 97" snowfall, and combined with this summer's drought conditions, a warm and sunny September created a remarkable and unique recipe for this fall's spectacular fall colors. The beauty lingers well into fall at Maplewood. This year, the red sugar maples were exceptionally vibrant, captivating leaf lookers far and wide. 2023 Leaf Days on September 30 - October 1 welcomed more than 3,000 vehicles, translating to more than 9,000 visitors in two days.

As always, there are many new developments and projects at the park in 2023:

- The new shower building opened on Memorial Day weekend, and campground occupancy has surged.
- Park shop remodel and new restroom improvement project was completed.
- The horse camp gravel road partnership project is now completed. Thanks to the Friends of Maplewood for supporting and sharing graciously in this Partnership project.
- Signage for the Sugar Shack was added.
- The Heart of Lakes Regional Bike Trail final design is under final review for completion in 2024.

In 2024, the Beers Lake Island backpack campsite will provide a unique canoe or boat in "backpack wilderness camping experience."

We are excited to announce that the "Minnesota Bound" (Ron Schara productions) film team recently visited Maplewood State Park. They will be releasing a "story featuring the fall colors and remarkable features of Maplewood State Park." Watch for a release in the fall of 2024.

Congratulations to Assistant Park Manager Kristina Somes, on her new Records Management Officer position with the DNR. Kristina's many talents and gifts have greatly blessed Maplewood, and we sincerely appreciate her excellent service at Maplewood State Park.

A sincere thank you to Maplewood's team of talented employees. Together, they have provided excellent public service this year and shown remarkable resiliency and creativity in caring for the park, each other, and thousands of visitors each year. Maplewood staff includes Kristina Somes, Terry Harthun, Karla McCellan, Robyn Jaros, Daniel Sakawa, Norah Freedman, Anne Buchholz, and Jared Lund.

Thank you, Friends of Maplewood, for your kind, gracious, and faithful support of Maplewood State Park throughout the seasons and in future years. We appreciate this treasured partnership and welcome the opportunity to gather and work together in the future.

Maplewood State Park's remarkable natural beauty and abundant natural resources attract, on average, 144,000 guests each year. Maplewood's ever-changing seasons welcome many new and returning park guests seeking wonder-filled outdoor experiences.

The wonder and beauty of Maplewood has captivated people for generations. Ancient peoples who called this place the 'land of the rustling leaves' and newcomers alike have sought refuge and refreshment in the park's abundant resources and natural beauty.

Friends of Maplewood Mission

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. Founded in 1994.

Spring Brings Flowers and Maple Syrup Days!

The snow and cold did its best to slow down the syrup, but it didn't stop the fun. We celebrated Maple Syrup Days on April 1 and everyone enjoyed learning how syrup is made. During three days in May, we hosted maple syrup education for schools. More than 400 students and parents participated. Students learned about identifying maple trees, tapping maple trees, cooking sap, how Native Americans made maple syrup, and the difference between pure maple syrup and artificial maple syrup.

Underwood School 6th graders, Frazee 4th graders, and Detroit Lakes (Rossman) 4th graders have been attending for years. This year, 150 2nd graders from Alexandria and Fergus Falls joined the fun.

Nice weather, excited children, and great volunteers make maple syrup education so much fun. It takes 11-12 volunteers to make it all happen. It's a great way to spend time outdoors at Maplewood.

If you'd like to volunteer to help, email us at friendsofmaplewoodstatepark@gmail.com. We'd love to see you!



From students:

"I was surprised that sap looks clear like water. I did not know that maple syrup comes from trees. They tap trees that are 40-50 years old." And their favorite fun fact was that it takes 40 pails of sap to make one pail of maple syrup.

"The ice cream with maple syrup was delicious! That was nice of them to serve us ice cream after lunch in the shelter."





Summertime – The Best of What Might Be

This was one of the best summers for Friends of Maplewood events with fun for people of all ages and interests. Special thanks to Sue Nyhus for her meditation classes, Greg Stetz for wild edible foray, Wayne Runnigen for birding for beginners, Sheri Meester, Brent Frazier and Kristina Somes for archery classes, Detroit Lakes Photography Club for nature photography class, and Scott Stenshoel who taught flyfishing and casting.

We had three music events. *Off the Hook*, a Pelican Rapids favorite, performed in June. Tim Eggebraaten the *Off Duty Chief* kept the crowd laughing and entertained with his music and stories. Dean Aamodt, a music educator who spent part of his career in Pelican Rapids, shared some of his favorite music and then played guitar and had a campfire sing-along. About 100 visitors at each event were entertained with a great, uplifting show and shared laughter.

The Nature Connection, out of Bemidji, presented two programs at Maplewood. Raptors of Minnesota included a rough legged hawk and a turkey Vulture. In August, Amy Granlund returned with an owls program and brought a great horned owl and barred owl. Both programs were well attended with 100 visitors. Interesting facts generated a great discussion and appreciation for these magnificent birds.



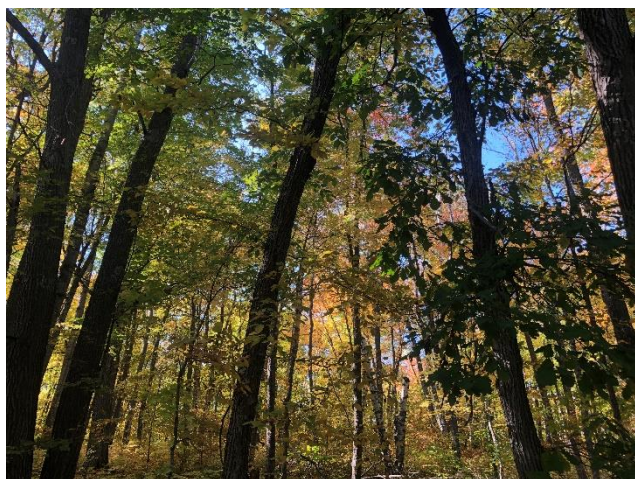
Leaf Days Exceed Expectations

Maplewood State Park exceeded her own expectations this year with warm weather and vibrant trees. Families packed into cars and on horses and bicycles to join walkers and lookers for a spectacular fall display. Hallaway Hill continues to wow visitors with her beauty and some not-for-the-meek hiking. Approximately 3,000 cars visited the park during Leaf Days on September 29-30, or about 9,000 visitors.

Thirty volunteers pulled together to host the two-day event. Our early settler activities like rope making, doll making, corn shelling, apple juice making, and other activities made fun for everyone.

Leaf Poetry was a new event encouraging creativity for our little visitors as well as the adults. Enticed by getting a free bag of fresh popcorn for writing or coloring a Leaf Poem, more than 500 bags of popcorn were given out, and many others for donations. Along with our other concessions, food sales brought in a profit of \$2,153.

Volunteers are rewarded with smiles and laughter each year from visitors thankful for Maplewood State Park.



Park Ranger Don Del Greco Reflections

This autumn, a retired state legislator stopped at the park office. "Last year at 92, I climbed Hallaway Hill and I am back again this year for a return trip."

This spring, a young student on a maple syrup field trip, was able to accompany his classmates in the Action Chair as they climbed Hallaway Hill. The Action Chair continues to transform lives, enabling people with physical challenges to experience the wonder of Maplewood.

Recently, a 4-year-old "Leaf Looker" experienced the gift of color using the "EnChroma" color blind glasses that he and his parents checked out from the Maplewood Park Ranger station. Alongside his parents, this delighted and grateful young lad stopped back at the Ranger Station with a gift in his little hand, "a bright yellow maple leaf to share with park staff".

An elderly gentleman, after hiking up Hallaway Hill, focused his eyes on me and made a bee-line over to talk to me about fall colors. He shared that he had been seeking peak color all his life. With a tear in his eye, he asked, "Park Ranger, is this peak color?" I responded, "Yes. Peak color is the day that you are here."

2023 MEMORIALS

Remember the Friends of Maplewood when you are considering a memorial. All donations are used to improve Maplewood State Park. Mail donations to Friends, P.O. Box 259, Pelican Rapids, MN 56572

IN MEMORY OF

Marion F Stoll
Jerrilyn Sundby Baker
Jane Roberts Baker
Shorty & Elva Ohman
Merilyn Fischer
Josh Hanson
Dick MacGregor
Harry & Esther Nettestad
Connie Michealson
Connie Michealson
LaDonna Fjestad
Herb & Eileen Kohler &
The Resort on Beers Lake
Jerry & Martha Haugen
Marv Martinson
Elsie Emery
Jerry Thompson
Our Parents
Erwin Baer
Maxine Evenson
Gerald Evenson
Herb Grunewald
Orville Portz

Bill Stutsman
Evar, Laura, Erwin,
& Glenn Fladmark
Lyle Preston
Thomas Fradet
Bill & Dorothy Johnson
Maxine Ballard
Chester Trites
Chester Trites
Chester Trites
Connie Breitzman
Jon McGregor
Jon McGregor
Violet Stephenson

IN HONOR OF

Our Family
"The Cousins"
Park Maintenance
Orlean & Pat Rudie
PRHS Class of 1966
Terry Heller, a Wonderful brother
Our Family
Westby Family
Ruth Holmgren

GIVEN BY

Eugene J. Stoll
Ron Baker
Ron Baker
Erv & Iris Ohman
Rod Mittelsteadt
Galen & Sharon Vaa
Diane MacGregor
Pam & Vaun Bruhn
Dale & Elizabeth Michealson
Paul & Connie Miller
Dale & Elizabeth Michealson

Sue Kohler
Richard & Kathy Arntson
Kathy Russ
Sanford & Carol Emery
Tim & Kris Thompson
Mike & Sheri Nettestad
Jerry & Deb Hauge
Kathryn Evenson
Kathryn Evenson
Shane Grunewald
Sue Kohler, Frank Kohler,
Keith Kohler, Eric Kohler,
Mary Brinkman
Van & Ruth Holmgren

Robert & Mary Bowers
Cliff & Phyllis Knutson
Lyndon & Kimberly Johnson
Scott & Kristen Rehak
Everett & Deb Ballard
Jean Varholdt
Sharon & George Gorton
Chester & Melanie Trites
Dennis Breitzman
Carol Boole
Bonnie McGregor
Clint Stephenson

GIVEN BY

Mark & Jackie Scott
Gene & Noreen Smestad
George & Sharon Gorton
Pam & Vaun Bruhn
Kathryn Evenson
Georgia & Melvin Duncan
Orlean & Pat Rudie
Ann Marie Westby
Everett & Deb Ballard

2023 FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Wayne Quibell
Nancy & Gary Emery
Dave & Joan Ellison
Dotty Egge
Dennis & Lisa Ouren
Lyle Haugrud
Don & Sue Kunelius
Duane & Mary Fettig
Paul & Barb Haberman
Jon & Bonnie McGregor
John & Liz Tredennick
Dan & Denise Lund-Smith
Wayne & Melanie Runningen
Keith Phillips
Kirk & Janet Lindberg
George W. Soule
Doris Chapman
Dave & Sharon Kline
Tom Colman

NEW LIFETIME MEMBERS IN 2023

Susan & Norm Anderson
Katie & Vance Nichelson
Tom Colman
Ed & JoAnn Jameson

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.

In 2023, we received \$320.

Kathryn Mary Anderson Carol Ann Emery
Clifford Knutson Bonnie Nordstrom
Gregory Wayne Slotto



FRIENDS OF MAPLEWOOD

2024 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Send application to: Friends of Maplewood
PO Box 259
Pelican Rapids, MN 56572

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: PARKS AND TRAILS.
Electronic payment will be available in 2024!

Choose one: ☐ I am a new member. ☐ I am renewing my membership for 2024.

Choose one: ☐ Single \$10 ☐ Couple \$15 ☐ Family \$30 ☐ Lifetime \$500

☐ I am interested in hearing more about volunteer opportunities! **(check if interested)**

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

_____ Additional Donation in MEMORY OF _____

_____ Additional Donation in HONOR OF _____

friendsofmaplewoodstatepark@gmail.com

<https://friendsofmaplewood.org>

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Friends of Maplewood
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Pelican Rapids, MN 56572