



PRAIRIE WOODS
ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

12718 10th St. NE
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www.prairiewoodselc.org
pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

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PRAIRIE WOODS *Warbler*
www.prairiewoodselc.org 320-354-5894
pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us Spicer, Minnesota

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.*

Join Us!
PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER
Annual Membership for 2017

- ☐ New Member
☐ Renewing Member

SUPPORTER'S MEMBERSHIP

- ☐ Individual Membership \$30.00
☐ Family Membership \$45.00
☐ Donation of _____ amount to the Sustainability Endowment
☐ I / we are interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

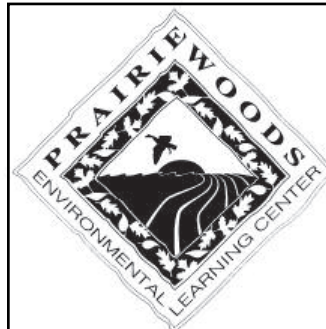
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Spicer, Minnesota 56288

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10



PRAIRIE WOODS

Warbler



VOLUME 30

SUMMER 2017

ISSUE 2

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YES! Grant Project Leader
Kathy Hoganson,
Building & Grounds
Ali Dahmes,
YES! Coordinator

THE PAVILION IS UP!

Another Dream Realized at Prairie Woods ELC-

Thanks to a broad base of generous supporters, Prairie Woods has another great resource for our visitors and students. The Pavilion was completed by Carlson Construction on the morning of June 1st, cleaned up that afternoon by a PWELC staff team effort and opened on June 2nd at 7am for a group of 220 staff and board members from Woodland Centers. (Whew! Cutting it a little close.)

The following weekend Larry and Pauline Duininck hosted over 250 people in the Pavilion at their 50th wedding anniversary. Other groups enjoying the facility have included Welcome Home Management, Upward Bound and over 300 people at an Open House on July 1st. The facility has since hosted a wedding and provided rain shelter for a couple of larger programs at PWELC which otherwise may have been cancelled. The mobile climbing wall was utilized for the first time in the pavilion on a rainy day by 40 Upward Bound students from Southwest State University.

We are thrilled to have a facility that will accommodate groups of up to 300 for special events, shelter programs during inclement weather and allow us to store valuable equipment such as the mobile climbing wall and 34' voyageur canoe during the winter months.

A huge THANKYOU to our many contributors. (see pg. 7)



SAVE the Date(s)

Music Under the Prairie Stars 10th Year! Party in the PavilionFriday, Sept. 8th
PWELC Annual Membership Meeting and PotluckMonday, Sept. 18, 2017 5:30pm. RSVPs appreciated
Halloween HauntFriday, Oct. 27, 2017



*Notes from the Executive Director*

by Dave Pederson, Executive Director

Thanks for keeping up with the news from Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. PWELC is on the go! Since November we have been traveling to Wright and Stearns County Parks to get people connected to the parks and outdoor recreation through a grant obtained by Wright and Stearns County from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. In June we traveled to Target Field in MPLS for the First ever YES! statewide awards. It was a thrill to see four of our exemplary YES! teams step out on the field before the Twins game knowing that one would accept the first ever state wide award. Later in the month representatives of our YES! program were invited to the state capitol to accept the Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award.

This summer our mobile climbing wall, big canoe and yellow boats have been generating excitement throughout the region. Meanwhile, back at Prairie Woods we have been busy keeping up with a full calendar of on-site programs, facility rentals, special events and building projects. The Pavilion was completed on June 1st and immediately put into service for a group the next day.

So life is busy and life is good at Prairie Woods. We are blessed to have excellent staff who bring their “A” game to every program throughout this busy time.

Please enjoy catching up with the PWELC news and then make plans to join us for programs and the 10th Annual Prairie Stars fundraising event in the coming weeks. Be sure to stay up to date by checking us out on Facebook and www.prairiewoodselc.org.

With your help we are connecting thousands of kids to serious fun in the outdoors and a lifetime of environmental stewardship. Serious Fun! It's in our Nature.

Thanks for all that you do for Prairie Woods!

*Dave***10TH ANNUAL MUSIC UNDER THE PRAIRIE STARS FUNDRAISER – FRIDAY, SEPT 8TH!**

Please plan to join us in the new Prairie Woods Pavilion for PWELC's premier fundraising event of the year. Music by the High 48s, a gourmet meal of local foods prepared by Chef Monte of the Green Mill, fun silent auction items and great conversations will round out a relaxed evening of fun and fundraising in the new Pavilion. Call today to RSVP or register online at www.prairiestars.com.

Each year we gather for the Prairie Stars event to celebrate the history and prepare for the future of PWELC. This year we invite you to bring a picture or object from your history with Prairie Woods or your connection to family and friends through the outdoors. We hope that the pictures and objects will spur some great stories and memories to be shared around the table.

STAFF TRANSITIONS

We welcome **Kathy Hoganson** as our new Building & Grounds Steward. Kathy brings a wealth of experience and a can-do attitude to the “care and feeding” of PWELC. Kathy has hit the ground running, learning the ins and outs of caring for PWELC's multiple buildings, 500 acres, 7 miles of trails, and the daily set-up, takedown and cleaning needs of multiple groups each day. The Building and Grounds Steward is absolutely essential to the work of Prairie Woods and we are pleased to have Kathy in the position.

Danny Kulset has made a move from PWELC to NLS Schools as a full-time custodian. Danny continues to help us out on an occasional basis and has shown up to volunteer as well. Thanks Danny for all of your good work.



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

**YES!**

-Ali Dahmes YES! Unit Coordinator

The Youth Energy Summit (YES!) has been busy with presenting Spring Awards, attending the MN Twins Game for our first annual State Competition, accepting the Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award, working with Kandiyohi Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force, and planning for the next YES! season.

Regional and State Awards: Twenty-nine YES! teams across the state participated in four regional Spring Competitions. Winners in each region advanced to a statewide competition. Congratulations to our West Central YES! Teams for yet another amazing year of hardworking students completing complex projects. The Spring Awards in the West Central Region were awarded to the following teams:

- All-Star Award Recipient – Glencoe-Silver Lake YES! Team
- Project Impact Award Recipient – Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City YES! Team
- Wow Factor Award Recipient – Hutchinson YES! Team
- Goal Setting & Teamwork Award Recipient – New London-Spicer YES! Team
- Community Leadership & Education Award Recipient – Lac qui Parle Valley YES! Team

Following Spring Awards, the four regional All-Star Recipients were entered into the State Competition. The First Annual State Competition Award Ceremony was held at Target Field on May 21st, 2017. This event was attended by over 100 YES! students, coaches, staff, and supporters from four Youth Energy Summit (YES!) teams (along with thousands of Twins fans). State finalists included Glencoe-Silver Lake, Wrenshall, Westbrook-Walnut Grove, and St. Cloud. Students were escorted onto the Twins field near home base during the pregame show and after a suspenseful moment, Brendon Slotterback, from the McKnight Foundation presented the first ever YES! statewide award to Glencoe-Silver Lake. It was a thrill to see the 2017 YES! State Champions on the big screen at Target Field. We are excited to return to Target Field for the 2018 awards.



YES! Coach Mike Sunblad and two
Glencoe-Silver Lake YES! Team students



YES! receives 2017 Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award.
Eric (YES! Student) Shelli-Kae Foster (YES! Program Manager); Mike Sunblad
(Glencoe - Silver Lake YES! coach); Michaela (YES! Student);
Michelle Isaacson (YES! Coordinator);

Wanda Sommers Wall (Synergy & Leadership Exchange executive director)
Back row - Cheryl Glaeser & Dave Pederson (YES! Program - Founders); Kole
(YES! student); Kevin McHenry (MN Dept. of Education Asst. Commissioner)

Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award: 8 students, staff, and supporters of the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) program attended the Character Recognition Awards Ceremony at the Minnesota State Office Building on May 25, 2017. This ceremony was made possible by the Synergy & Leadership Exchange as directed by Governor Dayton. The event focused on recognizing organizations and schools who have gone above and beyond in order to promote good character and ethical leadership. The YES! program was one of three awardees to be presented with the Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award, as the panel was impressed with the character and ethical leadership development it provides to students. Following the award presentation, the YES! group met up with Michael Varien from the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), the Commission designated to support the appropriations of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). We then went on a quick and lively tour of the State Capitol building with Secretary of State Steve Simon and later a more in depth tour with Senator John Hoffman.

PWELC and YES! partner with Kandiyohi County Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force:

This summer, the New London- Spicer YES! team guided by YES! Coordinator Ali Dahmes is working with the Kandiyohi AIS Task Force to build up the AquaHunter database and help educate the public about aquatic invasive species. 12 NL-S students have been using the PWELC yellow boats on Kandiyohi County lakes and rivers to collect, identify, and report native and non-native (invasive) plants and animals.

In the fall, the YES! AIS team will join PWELC staff and area natural resource professionals to put on a River Rally Day for NL-S 4th graders. We are grateful to Stephanie Felt, outgoing AIS Coordinator, for her enthusiasm and assistance with involving young people in the effort to control aquatic invasive species in Kandiyohi County.



Please remember Prairie Woods in your estate planning and annual giving.

*Time Travel* - Mari Klebe*Busy days at the Pioneer Cabin*

When a group visits the Pioneer Cabin some absorb what they can in an hour. Others spend the entire day immersed in the experience. Either way, most people leave with an awe for life “back in the day.” On dreary, raining days they found out what life was like without lights in the house. On hot, sunny days they experienced what life was like without air conditioning or even fans. On cold, winter days they felt heat from a wood burning stove. Every group discovered that no matter the weather, 1888 work still had to be done. They experienced sawing wood with a cross cut saw, doing laundry with a wash tub & wash boards, beating rugs, dipping candles, grinding coffee, carding wool and sweeping the cabin. All groups also experienced some of the “fun” of 1888. Some learned a called dance, others made toys, played tag, graces (hoops & sticks), blind man’s bluff and Swedish kubb. The 765 visitors the Pioneer Cabin has had so far this year have all left with a feeling of living history for a moment.

Please call Mari to plan a trip back in time with your group at Prairie Woods.

**NICE THINGS DONE FOR PRAIRIE WOODS BY PEOPLE LIKE YOU!**

Thanks to **Terry Myllenbeck** for donating hours of his time as well as equipment to help with clearing windfall from our xc ski and hiking trails.

Anderson Larson Attorneys sponsored PWELC for Community Spotlight for the month of August on 106.5 the Train.

Brian Nelson- donated wildlife mounts and wildlife art prints and photographs.

Dick Doll assisted by **Jeff Illies** maintained the purple martin house and banded birds from the growing colony.

Thanks to **Roger Strand** eleven youngsters in Nature Day Camp, were able to watch hatchlings jump from the wood duck nesting box installed by Roger. The kids had first watched the commotion of the hatchlings in the nesting box via remote video feed and then rushed to the Tree House windows when the hatchlings began to jump from the box. Priceless.

Dave Opsahl delivered a unique full-size model of a deer constructed of cardboard triangles by **Bill Opsahl**. Kids at Nature Day Camp and the Pavilion Open House thoroughly enjoyed painting the deer.

Joani Easterlund stopped by for a visit on a road trip from Washington and donated a tent & snowshoes for the recycled outdoor gear sale.

Sheldon & Karen Peik donated items for the gear sale.

Dean Mortenson, Danielle Steffen, Marti Carlson volunteered for Time Travel programs.

NLS 5th Grade, DREAM Academy & Prairie Lakes Youth Programs – completed service projects.

Kathy Lutz, Lee Thompson, John Uhlman, Todd Marxhausen, Mike Bundy, and Troy Heck helped out on the shooting range.

Huge THANKS to Lakeland Broadcasting – Underwriter Sponsor for Music Under the Prairie Stars!

Prairie Woods- A Natural Choice for Weddings, Reception, Family Reunions, and Corporate Retreats.

*High Notes from the Challenge Course* - Steve Friedlein, CC Coordinator

I would like to start by thanking all of the dedicated staff who made this spring and summer possible. Starting in April, Prairie Woods ELC has been running programs non-stop. Programs have been taking place on site at the Learning Center, as well as on the road with outreach groups. Most days we’ve had multiple programs and multiple groups. This requires a dedicated team of staff members to pull this off. Thank you team!

Since May our mobile climbing wall and staff has traveled to Quarry Park in St. Cloud, Warner Lake County Park near Clearwater, Sibley State Park, Sinclair Lewis Park in Sauk Center, Wright County Parks open house in Buffalo, and Bonanza Valley Days in Brooten connecting hundreds of people with their community and introducing them to outdoor opportunities in their own backyard. By the time you read this, the mobile wall will have been at the Rockin Robbins Concert Series at Robbins Island for four dates plus the Meeker County Fair. Other dates on the schedule include Kandiyohi County Fair, Viking Sports Show in Alexandria and Prairie Pothole Day.

Also, we had a great time towing the mobile wall in the 4th of July Parade in Spicer where we threw out PWELC frisbees, which was a huge hit. I kept hearing children in the crowd yell: “I’ve climbed that wall!” which was a great honor and exciting to witness.

Summer has been super busy and super fun. We look forward to more excitement this fall both at home and on the road. *Dates are already filling in for next year so please call today* to discuss bringing the mobile climbing wall to your event or setting up a program for your group at Prairie Woods.

Look for the Mobile Climbing Wall at these upcoming events:

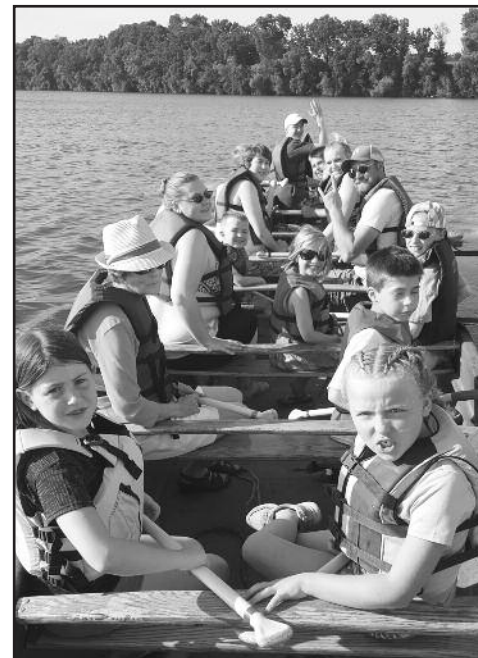
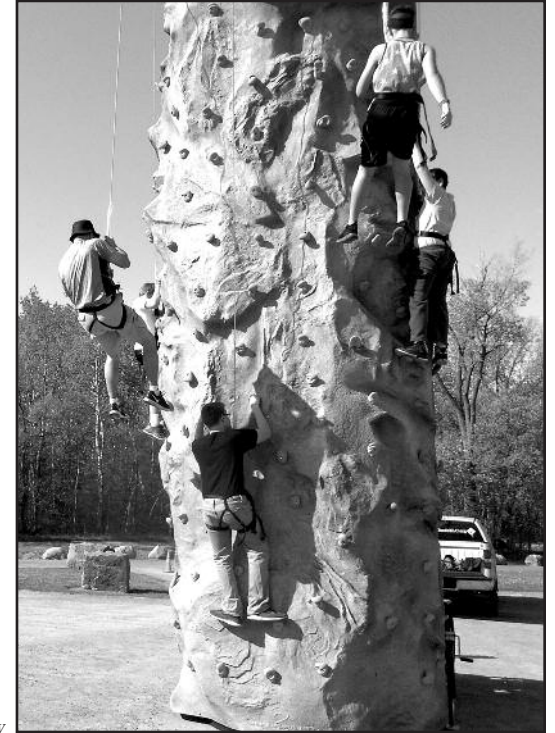
***Kandiyohi County Fair:** Saturday August 12, 2017 (FREE)

***Viking Sportsmen Youth Outdoor Activity Day** (Alexandria):

Sunday August 27, 2017 (FREE)

***Prairie Pothole Day:** Saturday September 9, 2017 (FREE)

Eden Valley-Watkins students climbing The Pinnacle at Quarry Park, Stearns County



*Eager Voyageurs at Collinwood Regional Park
& Campground in Wright County*

Prairie Woods is on the road connecting people to the parks and the great outdoors in Wright and Stearns Counties.

Thanks to a grant from the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment, PWELC has been able to partner with Wright and Stearns County Parks to provide a variety of programs during 2017 and 2018. Summer programs included 2 Summer Kickoff events at Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park near Monticello and Warner Lake County Park near Clearwater featuring the big canoe, portable climbing wall, Yellow Boats and the Lorax puppet show. Other summer programs included a series of kayaking, canoeing, and rock climbing experiences in various parks in Wright and Stearns County. In the fall we will be back to working with school groups in their local county parks and preparing an exciting calendar of events for Year Two of our collaboration with Wright and Stearns County Parks.



*Home On The Range* - Kory Klebe

After a recent sporting clays program one of the participants said “I only live a couple miles away and didn’t know that PWELC had a shooting range.” For some reason, not on purpose, the Gary Westby Shooting range at PWELC seems to be one of our best keep secrets.

Just so people know PWELC HAS A SHOOTING RANGE where we shoot 5 stand sporting clays and .22’s.

There are a variety of events that happen at the range like the Spring shotgun league, youth events put on or sponsored by Pheasants Forever and Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice fishing tournament, Firearm Safety, and MDHA Forkhorn camp. We also have private parties, families and corporate groups enjoying the range.

Give us a call today to get more information or to schedule a time for your group to come out to the range.

*EE Notes* - Kory Klebe

At PWELC we dubbed 2016 “The year of water” because we were hosting the Smithsonian – Water Ways Exhibit. Well, we have also made quite the splash in 2017.

The paddling season started with our 5th annual “Paddle the Crow....CAW, CAW, CAW” (that’s the sound of Crows) which took place on Saturday, June 3rd. The trip went from Dilley Bridge north of New London to the New London Mill Pond and we had a record 56 people that took part in this event. This annual event in partnership with the Middle Fork Crow Watershed District (MFCRWD) is usually the 1st Saturday in June. Plan to join us next year.

The 34’ Voyageur Canoe has also made it to some new waters this year with trips on lakes in Wright and Stearns County including Collinwood Lake, Bertram Chain on lakes, Warner Lake and Koronis. It even made a trip on the Mighty Mississippi from Snuffy’s Landing in Becker to Montissippi County Park in Monticello.

This year we also added the **YELLOW BOATS Project**, thanks to a grant from the **Bernicks Family Foundation**. We now have a **fleet of twenty kayaks** to sweeten our programing options. The NLSYES! team has already taken them out on local lakes as they work on the “AquaHunter” project which is part of the Kandiyohi County Aquatic Invasive Species program.

Last but not least is a new program that PWELC will be doing this fall with funding from the Kandiyohi AIS Task Force. PWELC along with the MFCRWD will be doing a “River Rally” day with all of the NLS 4th graders at Neer Park assisted by the NL-SYES! team.

PWELC is in motion. Join Us! Call Kory or Steve today to set up a canoe or kayak trip for your group.



Yellow Boats Project at Bertram Chain
of Lakes in Wright County



BBE students enjoy learning outside at Spring Hill, a Stearns County park



Flotilla of boats on the Middle Fork
of the Crow River

Please remember Prairie Woods in your estate planning and annual giving.

*Thank You Pavilion Donors!!!***\$20,000 to \$75,000**

Kandiyohi County
Willmar Area Community Foundation
Cindy Westby Bequest

\$5,000 - \$19,999

Matthew & Theresa Behm
New London Spicer Area Fund
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Kandiyohi County Public Works
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Countryside Contractors/Duane Erickson
Great River Energy
Joel Johnson
Phil Anderson & Genesis Architects
Carlson Construction

Please bring corrections or any omissions to our attention.
Contact the Prairie Woods office. Thank you

PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER PRESENTS...

MUSIC UNDER THE *Prairie Stars*

AN EARTH CONSCIOUS BENEFIT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OF OUR YOUTH

FRIDAY
SEPT. 8TH
2017
5:30PM

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10TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

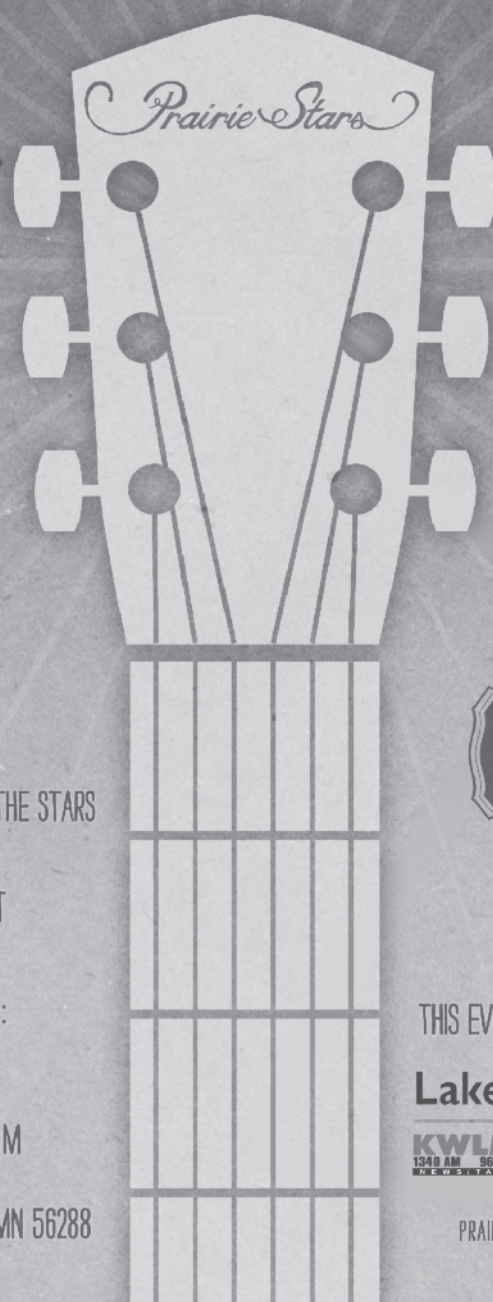
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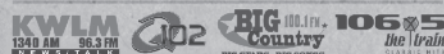
LIVE MUSIC BY



PARTY IN THE
NEW PAVILION!

THIS EVENT GENEROUSLY UNDERWRITTEN BY:

Lakeland Broadcasting



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PWELC COMMUNITY EDUCATION OFFERINGS
FALL 2017

STORY HOUR AT THE PIONEER CABIN.....
Ages: K-5th Graders

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. It will be a new book and activity each time. Kids, ask your parents if they want to come too! (meet at farmsite)

Date: Tuesday, Sept. 26
Tuesday, Oct. 17
Thursday, Nov. 16
Time: 4:00- 5:15 pm
Cost: \$5 per child (adults free)

GAME DAY AT THE PIONEER CABIN
Ages: 1st-6th Grade

Who’s up for some friendly competition? After dressing as a pioneer, unplug for an afternoon of blind man’s bluff, a three legged race, a game of graces (hoops & sticks), kubbb and many more pioneer games. If it’s raining out we’ll see how you do at jacks, pick up sticks, and card games. (meet at farmsite)

Date: Tuesday, Oct. 10
Time: 4:00 – 5:30 pm
Cost: \$6

PWELC SAMPLER.....***Grades: 1st and up***

Come experience what Prairie Woods ELC has to offer. We will visit the Pioneer Cabin to see how people lived “back in the day”, do the Flying Squirrel, Climb the wall, track some animals, and learn some outdoor survival skills. Bring a sack lunch. (meet at main building)

Date: Thursday, October 19th
Time: 8:00-4:00
Cost: \$25

HALLOWEEN HAUNT***Grades: K-5***

Talk with the creatures on the enchanted trail to find out what they are doing to get ready for winter, carve a jack-o-lantern, and climb on the wall in costume. Children must be accompanied by an adult. (meet main building)

-After visit Sibley State Park for their Jack-o-Lantern Walk
6:30-8:30

Date: Friday, October 27
Time: 6:00-9:00pm
Cost: \$8

AFTER SCHOOL ARCHERY CLUB***Grades: 4 and up***

It is a lot of fun learning and practicing the skill of archery. We will be using compound bows to improve our skills. We shoot Olympic style archery, 3-d targets, and use the Native American atl-atl’s. All while aiming to have a great time. (meet at farmsite)

Date: Tuesdays, November 7, 14, 21
Time: 4:00-5:30pm
Cost: \$30/person

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. (meet at farmsite)

Date: Tuesday, Dec. 12
Time: 4:00- 5:30 pm
Cost: \$10

INDOOR ROCK CLIMBING:***ALL AGES***

Climbing offers a chance to challenge yourself both physically and mentally at your own pace. Rock Climbing is a true adventure sport. Beginners can learn about the sport, exercise and have fun! Experienced climbers can come 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 the main building. Sign up for one or more.

Date:
Thursday, September 7th 2017
Thursday, October 5th 2017
Thursday, November 2nd 2017
Time: 4:00pm – 5:30pm
Cost: \$10 per climber / per session

