



**PRAIRIE WOODS**  
ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

12718 10th St. NE  
Spicer MN 56288  
1-320-354-5894  
www.prairiewoodselc.org  
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PRAIRIE WOODS *Warbler*  
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**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 2020*

- ☐ New Member  
☐ Renewing Member

**SUPPORTER'S MEMBERSHIP**

- ☐ Individual Membership ..... \$30.00  
☐ Family Membership ..... \$45.00  
☐ Donation of \_\_\_\_\_ amount to the Sustainability Endowment

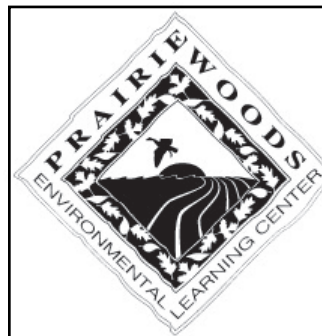
- ☐ I / we are interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

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@kcmn.us



**PRAIRIE WOODS**

*Warbler*



VOLUME 35

SPRING 2020

ISSUE 1

**BOARD MEMBERS 2020**

**Governing Board**

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Kory Klebe, EE Coordinator  
Steven Friedlein,  
Challenge Course Coordinator  
Cameron Kalkbrenner,  
Program Facilitator  
Mari Klebe, Office Manager  
Shelli-Kae Foster  
YES! Grant Project Leader  
Kathy Hoganson,  
Building & Grounds  
Taylor Templar,  
YES! Coordinator  
Patty Russell

**WE'VE GOT FAT BIKES! YES WE DO!**  
**WE'VE GOT FAT BIKES! SO, YOU DO TOO!**

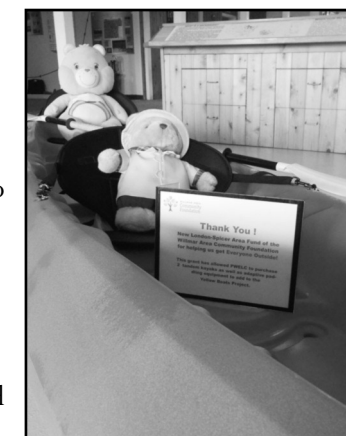
*(Fat Bikes are mountain bikes with extra wide (fat) tires which can be ridden on trails in all 4 seasons).*



We just received notice that a **DNR No Child Left Inside grant has been awarded to PWELC** to establish four-season mountain bike programs at PWELC. The \$12,000 grant will enable PWELC to purchase a fleet of 24 fat-tire bikes which will be used for instructional programs and also be available to members and the general public similar to our ski, kicksled and snowshoe rental program. Look for more info on Facebook to stay informed about fat bike programs and rentals coming soon.

**THANKS TO NEW LONDON SPICER AREA FUND  
PWELC RECEIVES GRANT FOR INCLUSIVE AND  
ADAPTIVE PADDLING EQUIPMENT**

Thanks to a \$1600 grant from the NLS Area Fund of the West Central Community Foundation, the Yellow Boats project was able to add two tandem kayaks, a kayak stabilizer outrigger and additional paddles and pfds. The equipment will make it easier for families to get out on the water with small children, and also make it easier for heavier paddlers or paddlers with disabilities to enjoy getting on the water and learning to kayak. Stop by to check out the new gear when you see the Yellow Boats Project on the water this summer, and please help us to thank the New London-Spicer Area Fund.



**CORONAVIRUS DISCLAIMER**

Just as this newsletter is going to press we are receiving alerts about dramatic measures that are being taken to curb the spread of coronavirus. Please check our Facebook page and public announcements for possible cancelations due to the coronavirus pandemic. PWELC staff will be discussing health safety measures with group leaders and working very intentionally with participants to avoid transmission of the virus during activities at PWELC. Let's all do our part!

**Upcoming Events**

Earth Day and Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale .....Postponed Until June  
YES! State Awards at Target Field .....Sunday, May 10th.  
Paddle the CROW .....Saturday, June 6th, 9am-Noon  
West Central Bowhunter 3D-60.....August 8th & 9th  
An Evening Under the Prairie Stars.....Friday, September 11th  
PWELC Annual Membership Meeting & Potluck







## Notes from the Executive Director

by Dave Pederson, Executive Director

Greetings from PWELC! We had a great winter at Prairie Woods with some of the best ski conditions that we've seen the past several years. The snow came early and stayed on the trails which made for a good xc ski season and some really good kicksledding. The overwhelming consensus has been that the Red Sleds Rock! The annual Winter Fun Day was once again a big hit, and we had a ton of fun bringing our kicksleds to Spicer Winterfest. Yes, it was a good winter for getting kids outdoors and it feels like we are carrying some great momentum into Spring.

Now, Spring is in the air and it's time for EARTH DAY! , Paddle the CROW, a deluge of school field trips, community education programs, the culmination of YES! team projects and the YES! state awards at Target Field. The Yellow Boats Project, Big Canoe, and Mobile Climbing Wall are ready to go and we already have a busy outreach schedule booked for the summer.

PWELC is bustling with activity and energized to leave this world better than we find it. Virtually every day we have the opportunity to impact young lives and encourage them to be connected and caring stewards of our environment. We have fun doing it but make no mistake it is Serious Fun- fun with a purpose! We can't do it without your help! It has taken great effort from kind, generous and thoughtful people like you to build the staff, programs, equipment and facility infrastructure that makes it all possible. Together, we have accomplished a lot, and together, we will thrive and continue to touch lives for generations into the future.

Thank you!

Dave



A perfect blue sky ski day



Big Canoe

# HELP WANTED

On August 31, 2020, Dave will step down from the role of Executive Director and pass the torch to the next lucky person who will work with a tremendous staff and board to move PWELC to the next level.

The PWELC Governing Board is currently carrying out a search for the next Executive Director.

If you know of an excellent candidate please contact PWELC Board Chair, Jim Tetzloff.



## CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

Online Membership renewal is now available through the PWELC website (prairiewoodselc.org). Please renew your membership today and encourage your friends, family and neighbors to join us as well. *Thank you for remembering PWELC in your charitable giving and estate planning.*

## 7TH ANNUAL TOMMY SWENSON MEMORIAL ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT

We were thrilled to receive a \$3000 gift from the family and friends of Tommy Swenson, resulting from proceeds from the 7th Annual Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament. This year over 220 people enjoyed the tournament on the ice of Green Lake during a mild winter day. Proceeds from the fishing tournament have helped PWELC to purchase outdoor sporting equipment and offer youth sporting programs at a reduced cost. Big thanks to Mary Peterson and Gene Kubesh for coordinating the annual fishing tournament!

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



## YES! YOUTH ECO SOLUTIONS UPDATES

-Taylor Templer- West Central YES! Coordinator

Youth Eco Solutions (YES!) has 23 teams across the state this year with 6 teams in the West Central Region including New London-Spicer Middle School, New London-Spicer High School, Lac qui Parle Valley, Yellow Medicine East, ROCORI, and Minnewaska WIN Academy. These teams are working on a variety of projects including a 38 acre prairie restoration, a water capture system, an outdoor education day for elementary students, aquatic invasive species surveying and more! This year YES! offered 14 customized Winter Workshops to our YES! teams. These workshops help teams better understand environmental topics to successfully accomplish their projects and connect them with resource experts in their community. The West Central Region had three main workshops including *Southern Prairies*, *Help Our Waters*, and *Renewable Energy*.

The *Southern Prairies* workshop was held on February 26th at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall. Beth Markhart from WEST, Inc., Sara Reagan from Pheasants Forever, Diana Macziewski from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Shelby Flint, professor of Biology at SMSU were invited to present on prairie habitat, native plants, soil, and water quality. Students learned that native prairie plants have extensive root systems that play an important role in holding soil in place to prevent erosion, improving the soil's ability to infiltrate water, improving soil health, and reducing runoff and wet conditions on the landscape.

The *Help Our Waters* workshop was held at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center on March 11th. This workshop focused on aquatic invasive species, water testing, and water quality. Local experts including Jon Morales, Watershed Program Manager for the Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District, Eric Katzenmeyer, AIS Specialist for the MN DNR, and Russ Hilbert, AIS Coordinator for Kandiyohi County were invited to present. The workshop gave students the information they will need to survey lakes in Kandiyohi County this summer by kayak.

The *Renewable Energy* workshop was to be held at St. John's University on March 18th. The purpose of this workshop was to introduce students to clean energy, what it is and how they can be a part of the solution to reducing emissions through alternative energy sources. Unfortunately this workshop had to be canceled.

YES! teams are finishing up their projects to prepare for regional judging. The West Central/Northwest regional judging will be held at Dahmes Stainless Inc. in New London on April 21st, where students will get to showcase their work. Students will be judged and scored by local experts to determine regional winners who advance to state. YES! will be celebrating their 3rd Annual State Competition Award Ceremony at Target Field on May 10th where teams will be presented with awards on home plate during the pregame show! Last year the event was attended by over 100 YES! students, coaches, staff, and supporters.

Major funding for this program was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). We would also like to thank Waste Management, United Way of West Central Minnesota, Kandiyohi Power Charitable Trust, and Kandiyohi County AIS Taskforce for their support.



Lac qui Parle Valley Students Making Native Seed Bombs



Students determining soil texture at the Southern Prairies Workshop



NL-S Middle School Students at the Help Our Water Workshop



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





### Time Travel - Mari Klebe

## 1888 – A time when a tweet was from a bird, a text was a book, hard work made you sweat, and fun was fun!

Thursday, February 13th, 2020. Sunny, hardly any breeze and a high of -3 degrees. Welcome to Pioneer Winter Survival! 8 youth braved that February day to see if they had the grit to take on winter, pioneer style. The program started with a lesson about clothing and the mammals whose hides and pelts were used for warmth. They sat on a bison hide, large enough to fit all of them, in front of a wood burning stove in the barn. That led to heading outside and using the kicksleds to get from the barn to the cabin and back again. They were introduced to different fire building techniques; bow drill, flint and steel and good old matches. Everyone had a successful fire with matches. The program ended with dipping candles that they got to bring home. Chilly toes, fingers and rosy cheeks were warmed up by the wood burning stove and doing the Norwegian Stomp (a great lumberjack type movement I learned thanks to Mike Bundy – it really works). Then it was time for everyone to hop into their heated cars and head home to supper.

If winter survival isn't your "thing" but a day in the life of a pioneer sounds great to you, consider signing up for Pioneer Day on Wednesday, July 15th from 9am-4pm. Anyone entering grades 3-6 is invited to be a pioneer for the day, including making your own pioneer lunch for \$35. More details are in the Community Education section.



Candle Dipping...Dip by dip, layer by layer



Never too cold to kicksled

### SOME OF THE NICE THINGS DONE FOR PRAIRIE WOODS BY PEOPLE LIKE YOU:

- \* **Jan Wogen** donated numerous fish mounts in memory of Jon Wogen.
- \* **Greg and Maggie Harp** donated skis and poles.
- \* **Holmqren Appraisals** donated their services.
- \* We were honored to receive memorial gifts from the **family and friends of Jim Michels**, a long time supporter and friend of PWELC.
- \* **Paul Rock and Ron Halvorson** donated time grooming ski trails in the Track truck.
- \* **Scott & Kristi Glup and Dennis & Karen Peterson** made donations through Thrivent Choice Dollars.
- \* **Philip & Margaret Lord, and Charles & Sharon Olson** donated monetary gifts that were used to purchase kicksleds to add to our fleet.
- \* **Laura Jill Negen Photography and Leroy Dahlke** donated to our general fund.
- \* **Jeff Olson and Jenna Trantum** donated to the Sustainability Endowment.
- \* **Myron and Carol Van de Ven** donated materials, labor and funds to the Farmhouse Project.
- \* **New London-Spicer Area Fund of the West Central Community Foundation** awarded PWELC a grant for adaptive paddling equipment for the Yellow Boats Project.
- \* **Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament** donated \$3,000 for youth programming.
- \* **Lake Lilian Sportsmen's Club, Central MN Safari Club, Henderson-Lewis Posts 545 of Spicer** donated to the Limited Hunt of PWELC.



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



The winter of 2019 -2020 was wonderful. Along with having a solid winter outdoor recreation season, we also had great moments indoors. Our rock climbing gym and indoor teambuilding programs were hopping with participants of all ages. School students, birthday parties, community education and corporate groups all visited for various programs during the winter. Our annual Winter Fun Day event was a big success, and seeing several hundred people enjoy our kicksleds at Spicer Winter Fest was a hoot! Now, after a relatively quieter March, we turn our attention to a very busy spring, summer and fall. Our calendar is packed with school field trips in April and May and then we'll jump into summer.

This summer, PWELC will offer multiple opportunities to take part in one of our many community programs. The Mobile Rock Wall will make its annual summer tour throughout the area at different events. PWELC will also offer a paddling series that gives participants the chance to kayak area lakes as well as the Crow River with our guides. Please don't hesitate to contact us to learn more about these community offerings or to schedule a private experience for your group. We're always happy to help plan your next outdoor adventure. Climb on!



Cold Spring 4th Grade Field Trip to Waner Lake County Park



Paynesville High School Snowshoe



Winter Fun Day 2020 Indoor Climbing Wall

### SUMMER 2020 ADVENTURE SCHEDULE

Friday, June 26th.....	Kayak the Crow River
Saturday, July 11th .....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at Bonanza Valley Days in Brooten
Tuesday, July 14th .....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at Rockin' Robbins in Willmar
Saturday, July 18th .....	Kayaks on the Mill Pond at New London Water Days
Tuesday, July 21st.....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at Rockin' Robbins in Willmar
Tuesday, July 28th .....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at Rockin' Robbins in Willmar
Friday, July 31st.....	Explore Ringo Lake (Kayak)
Saturday, August 1st .....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at the Meeker County Fair in Litchfield
Tuesday, August 4th.....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at Rockin' Robbins in Willmar
August 5th,6th, 7th, 8th.....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at the Kandiyohi County Fair in Willmar
Saturday, August 22nd .....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at Raymond Harvest Fest
Friday, August 28th .....	Portage to Lake Florida (Kayak)
Sunday, August 30th .....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at Youth Outdoor Activity Day in Alexandria
Saturday, September 12th .....	Mobile Rock Climbing Wall at Prairie Pothole

#### RENEWABLE NOTES:

The new 8kw solar array on the pavilion has been happily putting out kilowatts, spring winds are powering the Jacobs wind turbine and our electricity meters are moving toward a net gain for the year. PWELC now has 40kw of generation capacity (20kw wind turbine, 20kw solar pv) as well as solar and biomass heating systems which have reduced our carbon footprint and have dramatically reduced our annual energy bills. Thanks again to our Prairie Stars and MN Solar for the recent 8kw installation on the pavilion.

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



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*EE Notes* - Kory Klebe**“WEATHER OR NOT”**

In our Environmental Education classes we spend a lot of time in the environment talking about the environment and the impacts that we have on it. In the office we probably spend just as much time talking about the weather that will impact these classes. This winter was no different.

Although there were several groups that had to reschedule because of the weather, every group was able to make it out and enjoy winter programs and the hills were crawling with happy kids skiing, snow shoeing, and kick sledding.

As of this writing we have just finished up with our winter groups which was just in time as we hit 40 degrees at the end of Feb. Now we are working our way through the “mud” season before hopefully some nice spring weather with bright sunshine and light breezes for our packed April and May school trip season.

Then we will see whether the weather will hold out for summer programs like Paddle the Crow the 1st Saturday in June and Yellow Boat paddle adventures throughout the summer. Whatever the season, and whatever the weather, plan to join us for some great outdoor fun with PWELC.

*Little skiers conquering their first hill.**Paddle the Crow 2019**The Hills are crawling with Snowshoers***HOME ON THE RANGE-** Kory Klebe

Important range dates this summer:

**April** .....Sporting Clay league – call to sign up a team.

**May 2nd**..... MN DNR firearm safety field day for the online course. Call Kory to sign-up.

**June 21-25** ..MDHA Forkhorn I overnight firearm safety camp. Pre-registration required.

**July 28th** ....Youth Sporting Clays sponsored by Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament.

**Aug 8th** ....Youth range night (.22's and sporting clays) put on by Pheasants Forever.

*Also, remember that you are welcome to schedule your private group on the sporting clays range.*

*Youth groups, corporate outings, families or just a group of friends.*

*Give us a call to reserve a date.*



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

**UNITED WAY OF  
WEST CENTRAL  
MINNESOTA**

has awarded two grants to support PWELC youth

programs in 2020. \$12,000 was awarded from United Way for Everyone Outside for Serious Fun! and \$3,500 was awarded to help support Youth Eco-Solutions (YES!) teams in our area during 2020. United Way has been a great partner over the years and we are pleased that PWELC can use United Way funding to provide services to many other recipients of United Way funding such as scouts, treatment programs and youth groups in our area. Thanks to all who support the United Way of West Central Minnesota.

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## HELP CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY AT THE ANNUAL PWELC EARTH DAY EVENT ON APRIL 18TH FROM 8AM-1PM.

The day will feature a pancake breakfast (free-will donation), a live performance of The LORAX by the PWELC Puppet Theatre, the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale, a wood duck box build with the Prairie Pothole Conservation Association, and the chance to talk with a number of natural resource professionals and conservation enthusiasts. *Guaranteed: lots of fun and learning for all ages.*

Please help promote the event by displaying the poster insert provided at your home, community center, church or on your refrigerator, and bring your family and friends out for a fun day of learning on Saturday April 18th from 8am-1pm.

A new addition this year will be a Fun Run by Miles4Mentors for youth age 10 and under.

Pre-register at [miles4mentors.com](http://miles4mentors.com) to reserve a T-shirt. Thanks Paul Cool and Miles4Mentors.

*Special thanks to Maria Novak for doing a super job on the Earth Day poster again this year.*

*Also, a big thanks to our Earth Day event partners: North Fork Crow River Watershed District, Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District, Kandiyohi County SWCD, MPCA. Please thank these folks for co-sponsoring Earth Day when you see them in the community.*

**PRAIRIE WOODS ELC SUMMER 2020****KAYAK PADDLING SERIES**

Join the Guides from Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center for an exciting adventure on the water. Kayaks, gear and instruction will be provided. Advanced registration required. Maximum of 18 participants per trip. Sign up for one or more.

**Kayak the Crow River**

Date: Friday, June 26th 2020

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Meeting Location: Mill Pond Swim Beach

Cost: \$20 per person (PWELC Members \$10 per person)

**Explore Ringo Lake**

Date: Friday, July 31st 2020

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Meeting Location: Ringo Lake Public Access

Cost: \$20 per person (PWELC Members \$10 per person)

**Portage to Lake Florida**

Date: Friday, August 28th 2020

Time: 3:30pm – 5:30pm

Meeting Location: PWELC Farm Site

Cost: \$20 per person (PWELC Members \$10 per person)

**Indoor Rock Climbing Gym**

All ages welcome.

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. Advanced registration required. Sign up for one or more. Meet at PWELC Main Building.

Date: Thursday, June 4th 2020

Date: Thursday, July 2nd 2020

Time: 4:00pm – 5:30pm

Cost: \$10 per climber/per session

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

## SPRING IS HERE AND IT'S TIME FOR THE RECYCLED OUTDOOR GEAR SALE!

Time to check the garage, attic, closets and the yard for those outdoor equipment treasures that you haven't used for a few years. Your gently used gear will be sold at Earth Day to support youth programs at Prairie Woods. Past sales have featured canoes, kayaks, camping gear, fishing boats, fish houses, bikes, skis, snowshoes, clothing, waders, decoys, and most anything one could imagine. Surprise Us!

Please give us a call if you have items for the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale and we can help to arrange pick-up or drop-off of your donations. THANKS!



**RED Sleds Rock!- Thanks again to our kicksled donors.**

*We now have a fleet of 27 kicksleds that will accommodate a wide range of sizes from small to XL. Trust us, everyone gets a kick out of kick sledding.*

**NEEDS AND GIVING OPPORTUNITIES**

-**Mountain bike enthusiasts** needed to help maintain and expand the mountain bike trails.

**Challenge Course Gear Replacement Needs**

Climbing Rope – 660' Spool ..... \$650 @ goal (2)

Climbing Harnesses ..... \$60 @ goal (15)

Climbing Helmets ..... \$65 @ goal (10)

TruBlue Autobelay ..... \$2,500

**Wish list for EE and Shooting Range**

1 doz .22 dummy rounds = \$15

2 doz minnow pond nets = \$120

6 flint and steel fire starting kits = \$150

Steel shotgun trap shells = \$85/case

Study skin pelts – rabbit, wood chuck, deer, squirrel, opossum (with tail)