



# PRAIRIE WOODS

## Warbler



A publication of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center in cooperation with Prairie County Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council

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WINTER 2006

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## THE WIND TURBINE IS UP!

Prairie Woods took one more step toward our goal of becoming a 100% renewable energy campus by 2010 with the installation of a 20 kilowatt Jacobs wind turbine. The turbine will provide clean wind-generated electricity for decades to come. The Jacobs turbine is manufactured in Minnesota by the oldest wind turbine manufacturer in the United States.

We expect that the wind turbine will generate both electricity and interest in renewable energy for years to come. A big thanks to Kandiyohi County and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative for investing in this project.



### FACILITY EXPANSION UPDATE. THE NEXT STEP CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

In the last newsletter we reported on a matching gift challenge offered by Earl B. Olson. Mr. Olson pledged \$100,000 toward facility expansion with the provision that Kandiyohi County and Prairie Woods would each raise an additional \$100,000.

Mr. Olson's gift inspired the Prairie Woods governing board to set a goal of raising a total of \$400,000 for the building project and the sustainability endowment during our NEXT STEP capital campaign. At this writing we are pleased to report that we have received approximately \$340,000 in contributions and pledges toward a \$400,000 project plus in-kind pledges of over \$10,000.

The NEXT STEP capital campaign will allow Prairie Woods to expand and enhance our education building with two beautiful multi-purpose additions and an expanded exhibit area. The west addition will be named in honor of Earl B. Olson, a major supporter and early contributor to Prairie Woods. The Tree House Addition will be named in honor of the Linder Family who through the Harry Linder Trust provided critical support for Prairie Woods at a time near our inception. The Olson and Linder families invested in Prairie Woods at a time when Prairie Woods was little more than a dream shared by a few. The dream of Prairie Woods has now developed into a great and growing reality that will serve generations to come.

("Expansion" continues on page 9)

## Upcoming Events at Prairie Woods

WINTER OPEN HOUSE.... FEBRUARY 18, 2007, 1 PM TO 5 PM

WINTER TRAILHEAD: Call for Ski Rental & Trail Hours when the snow falls!

*DON'T MISS THE CHANCE TO ENJOY OUTDOOR FUN WITH YOUR FAMILY THIS WINTER!*

www.prairiewoodselc.org  
pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us  
1-320-354-5894



## Notes from the Executive Director

### Work and Fun For All...

Welcome to the winter edition of the Prairie Woods Warbler. Once again we have more news to share than we can fit into a newsletter.

The articles in this newsletter reflect the vitality and growth of Prairie Woods: Project Eco-Voyager, the NEXT STEP capital campaign, tip-up of the wind turbine, Conservation Days, the wheelchair-accessible deer hunt, the butterfly garden, another record breaking year, Will Steger's presentation on global warming, a benefit concert by Michael Monroe, the arrival of Henry (Anne and Jeff's new baby) and more. Lot's of exciting news!

So sit back and enjoy a quick read through Prairie Woods, and if you see something that piques your interest please give us a call.

There is plenty of work and fun for all and we are always looking for partners to get involved as volunteers, contributors, and program participants.

The mission of Prairie Woods is to promote an individual and shared commitment to the responsible use, management and preservation of our natural resources. In the months and years ahead we will work ardently to promote environmental literacy and inspire strong environmental stewardship. We invite you to join us in this important and fulfilling work.

Thanks for being a partner with Prairie Woods!

*Dave*

### First Tuesday Tours of Prairie Woods

Call to reserve a morning coffee time in the Westby Observatory on the first Tuesday of each month for a group of friends, family members or associates who you would like to introduce to Prairie Woods. Prairie Woods staff and board members will be available to give a short presentation on Prairie Woods as well as tours for those who are interested. Help us spread the word about the great programs and facilities at Prairie Woods. Let's continue to grow the membership at Prairie Woods one friendship at a time

### Upcoming Event...

#### Winter Open House Sunday, February 18th

*Join us as we usher in another season of spring programs!*

Wind Turbine site visits  
Open Climbing Wall  
Cross-country skiing

Renewable energy demonstrations  
Interpretive Trails  
Family Fun for all!

*Mark your calendar today!*

### Giving Opportunities

- ◆ Sponsorships for groups to attend Prairie Woods programs, from \$1 to \$20 per student.
- ◆ Gifts to the Sustainability Endowment, any amount.
- ◆ Next step capital campaign contributions.
- ◆ 40 to 60 hp diesel tractor with front-end loader & snow blower.
- ◆ Diesel car or truck in good condition, to use as a program vehicle.

### Volunteer Opportunities

- ◆ Building & painting notice boards and signs for special events.
- ◆ Hosting and helping at special events.
- ◆ Assistance with newsletters and mailings.
- ◆ Gardening and beautification of the grounds.
- ◆ Research local history for Time Travel programs.
- ◆ Develop educational displays about renewable energy and other topics.
- ◆ Prairie restoration and maintenance.

*Please Consider Prairie Woods. . . IN YOUR ESTATE AND GIVING PLANS.*



## Community Network: Giving News

### THE 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE DEER HUNT

This year six hunters with physical disabilities were able to participate in the special deer hunt coordinated by Dave Meutzel and Mark Mertens. The hunters, each with an able-bodied partner, set out before dawn to specially constructed blinds via ATV and trailers specifically designed to transport people in wheelchairs. The hunters returned to the barn at lunch to warm up around the big wood stove, enjoy great food and share stories from the day. Everyone saw lots of deer and other wildlife including a flock of 25 wild turkeys. Partners in one blind reported seeing 14 deer. The hunt helps to manage the size of the deer herd at Prairie Woods and provides an experience that is obviously highly valued by the hunters and volunteers.



Hats off to Dave Meutzel, Ryan Newville, Mike Anderson, Joey Wangen, Larry Kleinhuizen, Mike Gjerde, and Mark Mertens for a lot of hard work and fundraising to make it all happen. Hunt assistants included Maria Fischer, Josh White, Randy Kardell, Jack White and David Hollander. Hunters included Randy Fischer of Olivia, Aaron Cross of St. Cloud, Fred Paul from New London, Jeremy Carlson of Prinsburg and Dick Thuringer from Hutchinson.

**The blinds are available throughout the year for wildlife observation. Plan to spend some time this year sitting in one of seven blinds placed throughout Prairie Woods. Call the Prairie Woods office to learn more about the viewing blinds.**

**A special thanks to the following businesses and individuals who donated time, money or materials to make this year's hunt a success!**

- Spicer American Legion
- Spicer SAL
- Spicer Legion Auxillary
- New London American Legion
- New London SAL
- Willmar American Legion
- Kandi Roofing
- Bergh's Fabricating
- Fabric Wholesalers
- Perkins Lumber
- Dave Muetzel
- Ryan Newville
- United Building Centers
- Kandi Steel
- Fabric & Textile Warehouse
- Charles Koch
- Mike Young
- Bill Johnson
- Kandiyohi County
- Randy & Maria Fischer
- Mike Gjerde
- Mark Mertens

### 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GOLDEN TRIGGERS FUNDRAISING EVENT

Golden Trigger committee members and Prairie Woods Trustees Bill Johnson, Steve Martinka, Jim Tetzloff and Brad Michelson continued the tradition of great food, great fun, and great fellowship at the 4th Annual Golden Triggers Event held in August at Prairie Woods.

The Golden Triggers Fundraiser has raised approximately \$30,000 over the past four years to help support youth and family programs at Prairie Woods. Members of Golden Triggers are mature sportsmen and sportswomen who are dedicated to conservation, outdoor education and the preservation of lifelong sporting traditions. Contributors to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Golden Triggers event included: Bill and DeeDee Johnson, Orvis and Doris Pattison, Stacy and Judy Fladeboe, Roger Strand, Lon Chappell, Milan Schmiesing, John Holm, John Lindstrom, John and Joy Holbrook, Wally Gustafson, John Gilbertson, Bob Hodapp, Phil Iverslie, Dean and Paulette Lindquist, Jon Pederson, Gerald and Eileen Sweep, Tom and Julie Deboer, Fred Anderson, Larry Duinick, Duane Hanson, Lee Duinick, Ron Erpelding, Steve Martinka and Jim Michels.

Contributors of silent auction items and door prizes included Laib's Gunsmithing, Mel's Sports Shop, Elmquist Jewelers, Clair Verch, and anonymous donors. Thanks to Dave Duinick and also Cashwise Catering for providing excellent food for the evening.

### THROW A STICK- HIT AN EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Prairie Woods has been blessed over the years to have hosted a number of Eagle Scout projects such as information boards, ski trail signs, benches, fences and woodsheds.

Recently, Eagle Scout candidate Colin Murphy organized a crew from New London Troop 237 to spruce up the granary at the Prairie Woods farm site. The scouts did a great job of scraping and painting the building as well as completing some badly needed repairs on the steps. Thank you, Scouts!



**DO YOU KNOW OF A GROUP OR ORGANIZATION THAT WOULD LIKE TO HEAR A PRESENTATION ON PRAIRIE WOODS? GIVE US A CALL. 354-5894**



## Event Updates

### 400 ATTEND PRAIRIE WOODS' FALL OPEN HOUSE & BIRTHDAY BASH

Hold wide the doors! A crowd of more than 400 community members spread out across Prairie Woods' campus on September 17 for our Annual Fall Open House. Traditionally Prairie Woods' biggest event of the year, the 2006 Fall Open House featured clean and renewable energy options as well as a sampling of PWELC activities.



Recent high energy prices and a growing concern about global warming, as well as a push for local economic development, have put energy issues at the front of public attention. A presentation at the wind turbine site during Open House

educated visitors about wind energy's potential in our area. Other renewable energy technologies on display were solar panels and corn-burning heating systems.

Guests also took part in an array of "just for fun" activities at Fall Open House. A scramble up the outdoor climbing wall was the highlight for many a young—and young at heart—visitor (see photo above). An archery shoot took place in the barn, and historical re-enactors set up an encampment at the American Indian History Village. Barrett Steffen, local fiddler, provided lively music.

The 2006 Open House was also an opportunity to celebrate 10 years of quality educational programming at Prairie Woods. Cupcakes (thanks, Karen Schneider!) and drinks added enjoyment to the birthday bash. After its official founding in 1992, Prairie Woods held its first programs in 1996. That first year, about 800 people participated in activities at the PWELC farm site. Ten

*Whether you really enjoyed the Fall Open House, or you're sorry you missed the festivities, plan to attend*

### **Winter Open House**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18**

**1 PM TO 5 PM**

### BUFFALO FISH FINEART HOSTS *Michael Monroe Concert*

Good music, good art, and good company. . . together, these ingredients blended into a fantastic evening of entertainment at Buffalo Fish Fine Art on September 16. Allison and Luke Geiger, owners of the Willmar art gallery, hosted a benefit concert for Prairie Woods with Minnesota musician Michael Monroe. The gallery provided an intimate setting for several hours of live music in a variety of styles. Thanks to Allison and Luke for their efforts in putting together such a fine event. A host of other supporters included Nelson Cleaners, Westside Liquors, and Grand Rental Station.

The Geigers also assembled a silent auction of fine art, including pieces by area artists: Bill Gossman, Bonnie Hinz, Diana Keller, Nan Karr, Kay Strand, Bob Carls, Jamie Iverson, Joanne Meierhofer, The Riverside String Band, and Joel Osmond. Please help us thank Buffalo Fish Fine Art and all the event donors.



Proceeds from the concert are earmarked for art and nature education at Prairie Woods. Keep an eye out for articles in future newsletters about upcoming art and nature projects.

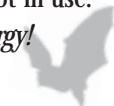
### **Halloween Haunt**

*It was a dark and stormy night. . .* Well, actually it was a lovely night for a Halloween party. Hoards of small witches and bats. . . and cheerleaders, clowns, turtles, and others. . . ventured to Prairie Woods for the annual Halloween Haunt. Plenty of pumpkin guts were shed, more than a hundred beautifully carved jack-o-lanterns went home to doorsteps all over the neighborhood, and the evening's tricks and treats were enjoyed by all. Special thanks to New London-Spicer High School's Peer Helpers, who volunteered their time to help out with the evening, and to Country Stop, Inc. who donated 100 pumpkins.

### **DO YOU HAVE VAMPIRES IN YOUR HOME?**

The typical American home has 20 electrical appliances that bleed consumers of money. That's because the appliances continue to suck electricity even when they're off. Features such as timers, clocks, memory and remote "on" and "off" switches suck power even when the appliance is not in use.

*Put them on a power strip to save money and energy!*





## Event Updates

### “EYE-WITNESS TO GLOBAL WARMING”

#### POLAR EXPLORER WILL STEGER DRAWS 425 PEOPLE TO LEARN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

An Antarctic ice shelf 1250 square miles in area—and more than 10,000 years old—disappears in 35 days. Greenland’s glaciers, storing about 10% of the world’s fresh water, begin a dramatic slide into the sea at speeds much faster than scientists expected. Polar bears drown as they swim out to hunt on Arctic ice that is now a hundred miles farther north than a few years ago.

These are just a few of the effects of climate change highlighted by Will Steger and J. Drake Hamilton during a presentation in Willmar on October 15. Prairie Woods sponsored and organized the event, held at Ridgewater College to accommodate a large crowd. We were not disappointed. Additional chairs were pulled out as the crowd streamed in, 425 people in all.

Steger, considered the most famous world explorer alive today, is a tireless educator on environmental issues. He and J. Drake Hamilton, Science Policy Director for Fresh Energy, help communities come to grips with the realities of global warming. While significant climate changes are taking place all over the Earth, polar regions are suffering much more extreme impacts. After more than twenty years of polar exploration, Steger is able to bring news of these changes back to the rest of us—who may never venture to the North Pole by dogsled in -100 degree temperatures.

J. Drake Hamilton followed up Steger’s compelling slide show with practical actions we can take to begin to slow climate change.

Carbon dioxide is released by burning fossil fuels: coal and natural gas for electricity and petroleum for transportation. As a greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide acts as a blanket to trap the sun’s heat in the atmosphere. Using less fossil fuel is the most effective way to keep a cap on carbon dioxide levels.

“Eye-Witness to Global Warming” was a collaboration between Fresh Energy, a nonprofit focused on energy efficient economies, and the Will Steger Foundation, an environmental education organization. Along with Prairie Woods, co-sponsors were Ridgewater College Student Senate, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, and the Izaak Walton League of New London.

#### Actions You Can Take

- Drive smart:** Get your engine tuned up and keep your tires inflated. Both help fuel efficiency.
- Drive less.** When possible, choose alternatives to driving (public transit, biking, walking, carpooling), and bundle your errands together so you’ll make fewer trips.
- Choose an efficient vehicle**
- Buy energy-efficient appliances.**
- Replace your light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.**
- Weatherize your home or apartment.**
- Choose renewable energy.**
- Recycle!** Less energy is spent recycling than making new.

## News & Developments

### PWELC TRUSTEES RECEIVE AWARDS

The Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) presented 20-Year Anniversary Awards to Ron Erpelding and Wilt Croonquist of Willmar and Kent Gustafson of St. Paul on July 27th at PWELC. The award was created by SWIF to honor 20 individuals, organizations, or businesses for significant contributions to the SWIF that have helped the foundation achieve its goals over the course of its 20-year history.

“We are forever grateful to people like Ron, Wilt, and Kent for the leadership and insight they have provided to the foundation over the years,” said Sherry Ristau, SWIF president. “This award is just one way we can say thank you to these outstanding leaders.” Shown at right are Croonquist, PWELC executive director Dave Pederson, Ristau, Gustafson, and Erpelding.

In addition to engraved pottery vases, the award recipients received \$1,000 grants from the SWIF to be awarded to the



program of choice serving southwest Minnesota. Erpelding, Croonquist, and Gustafson chose Prairie Woods ELC to receive their awards.



## Environmental Education Notebook

by Anne Dybsetter

We had a lovely autumn at Prairie Woods, learning about water, energy, food systems, and so much more. The topic that seems to be simmering at the top of public consciousness, though, is climate change. As you read on the previous page, Prairie Woods has been working to help our community understand this issue. Climate is so fundamental to all aspects of nature we depend on. . . and we can no longer take it for granted. As temperatures drop and our beautiful state settles into winter, please take the time to learn about—and think about—what climate change might mean to you. This has been called the defining crisis of our time. Now is the time to act on it.

### On the Road with the Big Canoe: EcoVOYAGEUR

Did you see the crowd in that canoe?!? Project EcoVoyageur debuted this fall on a river or lake near you, with our 34-foot voyageur canoe filled to capacity with 15 kids. Three pilot programs took place in September and October, with 190 students participating from threeschools. Central Minnesota Christian's 5th and 6th grade classes paddled the Minnesota River in Granite Falls. Buffalo Lake-Hector's 5th grade and 7th grade classes toured Lake Preston. Fifth graders from Eden Valley-Watkins braved a breezy day on Lake Koronis.

In addition to being "all in the same boat" while maneuvering the Big Canoe, students spent portions of their day learning about the distribution of water on



Earth, water conservation, and local watershed issues. Area natural resource agencies helped make these learning

experiences possible: Hawk Creek Watershed staff in Granite Falls; Renville County representatives at BLH, and the North Fork Crow River Watershed staff at Lake Koronis.

Thanks to these collaborating partners, as well as **Northern Environmental Support Trust, the Charles Dickman Family, Willmar Area Community Foundation and Tebben Enterprises**, EcoVoyageur will be available to sixteen more schools in 2007. Get your students "all in the same boat." Give us a call to schedule a spring program.

### What Can We Learn Today? CONSERVATION DAYS 2006

Early in October, Kandiyohi County's sixth graders descended on PWELC for a day of learning and fun. Conservation Days 2006 was generously supported by Great River Energy and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, as well as the area professionals who lent their expertise to make the days a success.



This year, students learned about fisheries from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

(DNR) personnel, and about water from representatives of both DNR and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The Soil and Water Conservation Service discussed "dirt" (above). Students pedaled a bike to generate their own electricity, and learned about power from staff of both Willmar Municipal Utilities and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative. Kandiyohi County's Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste department sent representatives. Dr. Roger Strand shared his passion for wood ducks (above, right). DNR Forestry personnel taught tree identification and tree coring. All together, students participated in eight learning stations throughout their day at Prairie Woods.



A total of 544 students attended from Willmar, New London-Spicer, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa, MACCRAY, Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City, and Community Christian School.



## Time Travel Update

by TeriWermerskirchen

Second graders from Prairie Woods Elementary recently traveled back in time to experience pioneer life on a brisk November day in 1888. After donning their pioneer dress of pinafores and bonnets for the girls and vests and caps for the boys, they were escorted back in time to the log cabin homestead of Anders Danielson. There, they took turns helping with chores, preparing lunch, making a toy, and learning stories and songs about immigration. Although they had to warm up at the wood-burning stove at times, it only lent to the authenticity of the experience. When a special guest arrived, they showed her what they had made, shared the meal they had prepared, and told her of some of their favorite things about America.

Returning to 2006, the students said they had really enjoyed their day in 1888--especially preparing the food, and would gladly go back (although one boy thought traveling to the time of the dinosaurs would be great too.) They also would like to have a person from the past come to their time so they could tell them about computers and video games and so forth.



The Time Travel program is a unique and effective learning opportunity. By immersing the students in the daily life of Swedish immigrants, using real characters from a shared historic site, and using all their senses, the students have an experience that facilitates learning on many levels.

- \*They can feel what it was like to live in the year 1888
- \*They can feel what it was like to be a recent immigrant
- \*They can begin to imagine life before computers, video games and cell phones.
- \* They can learn how our relationship to the environment has changed over time.
- \* They can make connections to their own family history.

If you would like to bring out your class, or are interested in being part of the Time Travel drama, please call PWELC for more information.

### Program Wish List

Many generous donations have made the Time Travel program possible. If you want your treasure to find a meaningful place, consider donating them to the program.

- We are presently in need of:**
- coffee bean grinder
  - rug beaters

## Highlights from the Challenge Course

by TeriWermerskirchen

"This is just like my life" said the young woman as she fought for the next rock on the wall. Climbing the wall, the Giants' Ladder or any of the other events at PWELC' Challenge Course is so much more than a fun afternoon outside, away from school or work. Like the young woman equating each rock with an obstacle she had hurdled in her life, challenges at the PWELC Challenge Course are experiential tools that help each person reflect on their own unique obstacles and challenges and how they deal with them personally and as a member of a group.

For Peer Helpers, college resident assistants, and other mentors and leaders, scaling the wall is an opportunity to listen to how they themselves deal with a challenge. If you are telling yourself it is too hard, or that you can't do it- how would you encourage someone coming to you feeling that way? The physical challenge of the wall is an opportunity to reflect on how that feels and to empathize. How do you get yourself through this challenge, so you can help others through their tough spots?

For groups of athletes, a class of students or adults in a working environment, the Challenge Course is an eye opening opportunity to recognize what helps you work together as a group. Are you willing to trust your peers to hold you 40 feet in the air? Can their encouragement help you scale the wall? How do you react when there are difficulties? How does each person contribute to the solution of a problem? What does it really take to work together as a team? Dealing with fear and frustration together as a group can be a very enlightening and bonding experience.



"This is hard." I often hear. Think about how you deal with something difficult. Do you walk away? Do you give up before you start? Do you keep trying the same rocks? Or are you willing to try a new path? Will you take a risk and really reach? What an empowering experience it is to reach a goal you didn't think you could achieve! What bonding experience to know that together with your peers you can hurdle obstacles and tackle difficult situations.

The PWELC Challenge Course is a unique opportunity to step outside your comfort zone, gain insight into how you deal with difficulties and to grow both individually and/or as a member of a group--to meet challenges and reach new heights.



## Challenge Course Highlights

**YOU CAN DO IT! WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!! FLY ON, JAGUAR!**

Guest Column by Mimi Knutson, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Volleyball coach

You might have heard team-centered comments like these if you stepped into the BBE volleyball gym the past two seasons. After using the PWELC challenge courses and staff-led teambuilding activities, these words became part of a skill (attitude) that we continued to work on. As a volleyball coach for the past 8 years, I have seen the role of team building become more of a necessity in our sports programs, but it's hard to find that extra time when skills and game play need to be covered. I truly believe that we wouldn't have had the successful years we have had without making this a practiced part of our season, and I would like to recognize that the staff at PWELC has helped us in this area. They have worked with us the past two years to combat areas of weaknesses and build on the strengths in our communication and attitudes that can inhibit our game. As a coach you can teach certain skills and do what you can to put together a skilled team, but a true team needs to work well together and that usually doesn't fall into place. The activities that we participated in were fun and meaningful, but the most rewarding part was to witness when the athletes transferred it to their practice and game. I thank the PWELC program (especially Deb) for working with us. We have had fun experiences that have made a difference that we all can use in and out of sports!!

-Mimi Knutson, Head Volleyball Coach BBE



## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO REGISTER: 354-5894

### Family, Adult, and All-Age Programs

#### **Open Climbing** (all ages, families welcome)

Whether for fitness or just something fun to get you out of the house, try open gym on the climbing wall. Great family activity!

By reservation only—call by Thursday to reserve climb time.

Families welcome.

- ◆ Saturdays: 9 am to 12 pm
- ◆ \$10/climber (includes orientation and belay session.)

#### **Holiday Family Climb** (all ages, families welcome)

I'm bored! School's out for the holidays and the kids are tired of being inside. Come share some quality family time and get some exercise after the holiday feasts. Prairie Woods' climbing wall is open and waiting for your family to come and have some fun.

- ◆ Thursday, December 28, 6 pm to 9 pm
- ◆ \$10/climber

#### **Beginning Cross-Country Skiing** (all ages)

A good choice for beginning skiers who want to get a jump start into a great sport for fun and fitness.

- ◆ Saturday, January 27
- ◆ 1:00-3:00pm
- ◆ \$15 per person

#### **Intro to Skate Skiing** (all ages)

This class will introduce you to the Skate style of Cross-country skiing. The class will go over the basics and help you to be able to enjoy the fun of a new skating technique.

- ◆ Saturday, February 3
- ◆ 1:00-3:00pm
- ◆ \$15 per person

### More Events, Activities and Clubs for Students

#### **Partners in Climb** (Grades 3-7)

It's all about teamwork. Find a friend and head out to Prairie Woods ELC. This program will be using the climbing wall and games to explore teamwork and what it takes to be a good friend.

- ◆ Thursdays, January 18 and 25, February 1 6 pm to 9 pm
- ◆ 3:30-5:00 pm
- ◆ \$30 per person

#### **Winter Adventure Club** (Grades 3 through 6)

Get outside and explore this winter! Skiing, snowshoeing, nature activities, and games will be led by Prairie Woods staff. Have an adventure with new friends and try new things you always thought would be fun.

- ◆ Tuesdays, January 23 and 30, February 6 and 13
- ◆ 3:45-5:30 pm
- ◆ \$35 per student

#### **Archery Club** (ages 10 and up)

Learn the basics of shooting bow and arrow, using Olympic-style target archery techniques. Get tips on form and accuracy, as well as participate in fun archery games. Each class will end with the all-time favorite "Dollar Shoot."

- ◆ Thursdays: March 1, 8, 15, 22
- ◆ 3:30 to 5:15 pm
- ◆ \$30 per student





**Expansion Cont. from page 1**

We are extremely pleased that Earl B. Olson and the Linder Family have contributed generously once again to help us achieve this NEXT STEP.

Members of the Prairie Woods Board of Trustees have also contributed heavily to the building and endowment capital campaign. We are now asking Prairie Woods members and others to help us in our fundraising efforts in order to complete construction debt-free by spring of 2007. **We can do it** just like we've always done it... **together**, with your help.

Please contact Executive Director Dave Pederson or a member of the Board of Trustees if you would like to contribute to facility expansion or to the sustainability endowment at Prairie Woods. Gifts at all levels will be recognized and greatly appreciated by thousands of visitors for years to come. Please include Prairie Woods in your legacy for future generations.



*News & Developments*

**PRAIRIE WOODS SADDENED BY THE LOSS OF TRUSTEE WILT CROONQUIST**

by Dave Pederson

“Shoot for the moon and you just might make it over the barn.” was a saying we heard Wilt use on several occasions when he was urging us to think big. Wilt was a big man with big ideas, big dreams and a big heart. Wilt and his wife Betty both played a large role in recent successes at Prairie Woods including Time Traveler programs, a connection with the American Swedish Institute and fundraising for the new additions. We will miss Wilt’s unbridled enthusiasm and support for Prairie Woods and the phone conversations that we had that always included at least one “wouldn’t it be great if...” or “I think that’s fantastic!” Wilt was a tireless promoter of Kandiyohi County and Prairie Woods. Prairie Woods has lost a great friend but we are strengthened in our resolve to realize the big dreams for Prairie Woods. Yes, Wilt, we will continue to shoot for the moon! Our thoughts and prayers are with Betty and all of Wilt’s family.



**SKI TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS**

Thanks to Michael Meyer and Jeff Vetsch, the Prairie Woods ski trails will be in great shape when the snow falls. Look for more skating lanes and several new sections of ski trail this year. Prairie Woods has ski packages and snowshoes for rent. There are no trail fees or entrance fees. Ski trails are supported in part by a Minnesota DNR trail grant. Please purchase a Minnesota Ski Pass to help support groomed ski trails in Minnesota. Come out and ski with us this winter!

**GOAL : 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY USE AT PRAIRIE WOODS BY 2010.**

Prairie Woods now has the capacity to provide over 90% of our heating needs through the use of corn and pelletized renewable fuel. We are excited to see how much electricity our newly installed wind turbine will actually produce and we are laying plans for the addition of solar panels. We also have a grant pending which would enable us to produce bio-diesel fuel on-site for use in program vehicles and equipment. We hope that someday soon we will be grooming our ski trails, and running all of our power equipment with home grown biodiesel. The process of becoming a 100% renewable energy campus involves a lot of learning for both our staff and our visitors. Visitors and students will gain first-hand experience with renewable energy and leave Prairie Woods with lots of ideas that can be applied in their homes, schools and communities.

Sustainable technology and renewable energy demonstrations at Prairie Woods now include a 20kw Jacobs wind turbine, solar panels, composting toilets, corn-burning stoves, a corn-fired boiler system, a portable solar panel, an air source heat pump, and prairie plantings which reduce lawn mowing. Each installation reduces our monthly utility costs, contributes to the local economy, reduces our contribution to global warming and attracts more visitors to Prairie Woods. Now, that’s “good” business.

**PRAIRIE WOODS WELCOMES HENRY!**

Prairie Woods staffers Anne Dybsetter and Jeff Vetsch are the proud parents of a baby boy. Henry Daniel Vetsch made a swift entrance into the world on November 5th after an afternoon hike by his parents on the PWELC trails.





**PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER**

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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 special 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 2007*

- New Member
- Renewing Member

**SUPPORTER'S MEMBERSHIP**

- Individual Membership ..... \$25.00
- Family Membership ..... \$40.00
- Organization/Business Membership ... Please call for rates.
- I / we are interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

**BENEFACTOR'S MEMBERSHIP**

- \$100 to \$499
- \$500 to \$999
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Please enclose payment to Prairie Woods ELC, and send to:

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Questions or comments? Please call us at 320-354-5894 or e-mail us at pwelc@co.kandiyohi.mn.us