



# 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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### PRAIRIE WOODS FACILITY EXPANSION PLAN PLACED ON FAST TRACK BY *Earl B. Olson* MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE.

Prominent philanthropist, Earl B. Olson, founder of Jennie-O, has offered a \$100,000 matching gift challenge to spur contributions for facility expansion at Prairie Woods.



A rendering from Engan Associates Architects shows the proposed expansion of Prairie Woods' Education Building.

Mr. Olson contributed his gift with the stipulation that Kandiyohi County will contribute \$100,000 to new construction and that Prairie Woods will raise an additional \$100,000.

We are extremely grateful for the support of Mr. Earl B. Olson and his family. Thanks to Mr. Olson and Kandiyohi County, each dollar contributed by Prairie Woods supporters will attract two more dollars toward the construction of a West Addition and Tree House Addition. We hope that all of our readers will consider contributing to the matching challenge and become a partner with Prairie Woods in developing a premier outdoor learning center for our region. Engan Associates is busy preparing architectural documents with construction planned for Spring of 2007. 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.

### PWELC WELCOMES THE "BIG CANOE"

This summer PWELC gained a new addition to water-education programs: a 34-foot voyageur canoe, with seats for up to sixteen paddlers. The purchase of the voyageur canoe was made possible by a donation from Charles and Marjorie Dickman. Mr. Dickman, a retired pharmacist originally from Hector, Minnesota, now resides at Green Lake. He is shown at right with his daughter, Mary O'Malley.

("Big Canoe" continues on page 5.)



### Upcoming Events at Prairie Woods

- ♦ Golden Triggers ..... August 27
- ♦ Fall Open House and PWELC Birthday Bash ..... September 17, 1 pm to 5 pm  
\* \* *Don't miss PWELC's biggest public event of the year! More on page 2.* \* \*
- ♦ Great Annual Halloween Haunt ..... October 28, 6 pm to 9 pm



## Notes from the Executive Director

### LOTS OF NEWS, LOTS OF WORK, LOTS OF FUN . . .

Once again, we are pleased to bring you a newsletter jam-packed with good news about progress and plans at Prairie Woods.

The Earl B. Olson Matching Gift Challenge is certainly big news. You'll also be interested to read about Project Eco-Voyageur, the wind turbine, the new wetland walkway, intergenerational dialogues and the completed self-guided interpretive trail at the Indian History Village. Other highlights include a report on a very successful Earth Day Event, completion of a trailer-mounted solar array, program updates and news on the upcoming Fall Open House. (Breathe.) You will also learn that Prairie Woods was honored to be mentioned in the will of Lake Florida neighbor Harwin Rudeen, and that two of our trustees, Ron Erpelding and Wilt Croonquist, were singled out for recognition by the Southwest Initiative Foundation. We are blessed with having more good news than can fit into one newsletter!

Last year Prairie Woods served approximately 11,000 participants from 56 school districts from throughout west central and southwestern Minnesota. This year in May alone we

served approximately 3000, and we are well on our way to another consecutive record-breaking year. It is gratifying to see our program numbers continue to increase and our service area continue to expand. Every one of our staff members is working very hard to provide high quality, hands-on learning experiences and excellent facilities for our visitors.

Growth at Prairie Woods is fueled by hardworking staff and volunteers, generous contributors, supportive state and local government, a large network of collaborative programs, corporate gifts and partnerships with foundations. Support from our friends is absolutely essential for the continued growth of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. Together we are creating an organization and a place that will provide enjoyment and education for generations to come.

So please take a few minutes to enjoy our news and the excitement about our growing capacity for service at Prairie Woods. Thank you for the time, talent and resources that so many of you are directing to Prairie Woods. Thanks for being a partner with Prairie Woods!

*Dave*

### Upcoming Event. . .

#### FALL OPEN HOUSE AND PWELC BIRTHDAY BASH

*Join us to help celebrate 10 years of quality programs at Prairie Woods!*

Wind Turbine site visits  
Corn furnace and corn stoves  
Solar panel demo

Climbing wall  
Living history  
Archery

Renewable energy information  
Shooting range tours  
Interpretive trails

*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.
- ◆ Building Fund contributions to help meet the Earl B. Olson Matching Gift Challenge.
- ◆ Heavy-duty utility trailer for hauling riding lawnmowers.
- ◆ 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 Open House and other 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.

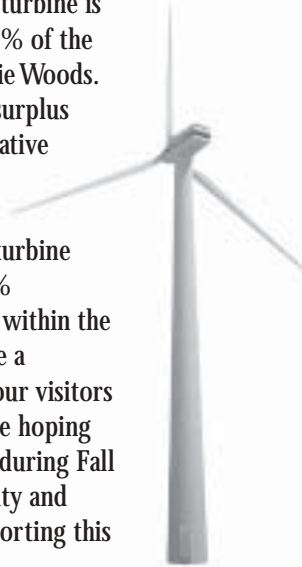
*Please Consider Prairie Woods. . . IN YOUR ESTATE AND GIVING PLANS.*



## Community Network: Giving News

### WIND POWER COMES TO PRAIRIEWOODS

Thanks to major support from Kandiyohi County and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, when wind blows this fall it will spin a 30-foot rotor blade on a 20 kilowatt Jacobs wind turbine, situated on a 120-foot tower at Prairie Woods. The turbine is expected to produce approximately 60% of the annual electrical power needs for Prairie Woods. The grid-connected system will send surplus power out to Kandiyohi Power Cooperative customers when the turbine is producing more power than is being consumed at Prairie Woods. The wind turbine is a major step toward our goal of 100% renewable energy use at Prairie Woods within the next five years. The turbine will provide a centerpiece for our efforts to educate our visitors about renewable energy options. We are hoping that the turbine will be commissioned during Fall Open House. Thanks, Kandiyohi County and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative for supporting this project!



### PRAIRIEWOODS RECEIVES \$5000 BEQUEST FROM HARWIN RUDEEN ESTATE

We felt highly honored to be mentioned in the will of Lake Florida neighbor Harwin Rudeen. Harwin, a life long sportsman and very accomplished marksman, was particularly interested in encouraging young people in the safe and ethical participation in shooting sports. Funds from Mr. Rudeen's estate will help support youth programs on the shooting range at Prairie Woods. We also want to thank Harwin's family for directing over \$600 in memorial funds to Prairie Woods. Directing funds to Prairie Woods via a will ensures that one's legacy will serve many generations into the future. We are extremely grateful that Harwin thought enough of Prairie Woods to remember us in his will.

### PWELC TRUSTEES RECOGNIZED BY SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION.

Prairie Woods Trustees, Ron Erpelding and Wilt Croonquist, were honored at the recent 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Southwest Initiative Foundation as two of the twenty most influential people in the development of the Foundation in its first twenty years of operation. Southwest Initiative Foundation has been instrumental in the development of Prairie Woods, and we are delighted that Ron and Wilt were singled out for recognition for their work on behalf of the foundation. Way to go, Ron and Wilt!

### WILLMAR AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AWARDS \$4000 GRANT TO OUTFIT PROJECT ECO-VOYAGEUR.

Once again our friends at Willmar Area Community Foundation have stepped forward to sponsor yet another exciting program innovation at Prairie Woods. The most recent grant from Willmar Area Community Foundation enabled Prairie Woods to purchase life jackets, paddles, a mooring cover and a large geodesic dome tent (shown below) to help launch Project Eco-Voyageur. Past grants from WACF have helped Prairie Woods build an indoor climbing wall, purchase safety equipment for the challenge course, add high events to the challenge course and acquire a 24' diameter yurt. Thank you, Willmar Area Community Foundation for all the great support!!

(For more about Eco-Voyageur, see page 6.)



### SCENIC BYWAY GRANT

### PROVIDES FUNDS FOR INTERPRETIVE TRAILS

Next summer expect to find three additional interpretive trails to enjoy during your visits to Prairie Woods. Thanks to a federal Scenic Byways grant, Prairie Woods is in the process of developing learning trails that point out natural, ecological and historic features through the prairie, woodland, and wetland. Along with the American

Indian History Village Interpretive Trail, these attractions will place Prairie Woods among the highlights of the Glacial Ridge Scenic Byway, a series of sites stretching from the

Willmar area to the Alexandria area.





## Event Updates

### CELEBRATING EARTH DAY

Imagine living in a climate like Nebraska. Only you didn't choose to move to Nebraska—you stayed right here in Minnesota, and *Nebraska's climate came to you.*

Local effects of climate change were one focus of PWELC's Earth Day event held on April 22, 2006. Also presented at the event were potential solutions to environmental concerns. About 350 people attended to learn about energy efficiency, wind and solar power, corn-burning technology, water quality, and more.



The Earth Day keynote address was given by Peter Ciborowski, analyst for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. He highlighted what you may see happening in your

backyards here in Minnesota as a result of climate change. For instance, if our climate warms by 3 degrees or more, what would the famous 10,000 lakes look like? Could the great pines of the Boundary Waters thrive? How would Minnesota's wildlife adjust? How about our crops and all of us who depend on them? See [www.pca.state.mn.us/hot/globalwarming.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hot/globalwarming.html) for more information about the basics of climate changes and its effects in your neighborhood.

Other highlights of Earth Day were free omelets for visitors, live music by the Riverside String Band, kids' activities, and the climbing wall. Organizers and exhibitors focused



on offering attendees options for making better economic and environmental decisions locally.

Sponsors of the Earth Day Celebration were Shakopee Creek Headwaters Project, PWELC, Crow River Organization of Water, Hawk Creek Watershed Project, Chippewa River Watershed Project, North Fork Crow River Watershed District, Clean Energy Resource Teams, Little Crow Anglers, and Kandiyohi County SWCD, West Central Regional Sustainable Development Project, and Spicer Sons of the American Legion.

### RACE REPORT:

by Deb Anderson

#### 2ND ANNUAL JJM VICTORY RUN

Thank you, Jesse! Once again we were able to gather in Jesse's memory and participate in the 2nd Annual JJM Victory Run. It was a great day to celebrate life, health and fitness with nearby communities, family and friends. Over 200 runners and walkers participated in either the mile or the 5 kilometer walk/run. Top placers in the mile were Perry Kinzel, 1st place; Levi Anderson, 2nd place; and Caleb Henry, 3rd place.

#### Top placers in the 5 K

| Men | 1st | Joel Gregory    | Women 1st  | Ann Day |
|-----|-----|-----------------|--|---------|
|     | 2nd | Matt Weitzel    | <i>Other places and times can be seen at <a href="http://www.pickleevents.com">www.pickleevents.com</a>.</i> |         |
|     | 3rd | Dan Bonnema     |  |         |
|     | 4th | Justin Anderson |  |         |

Special thanks goes out to Rambow, Lake Region Bank, North American State Bank, PWELC, and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative for donating t-shirts. Thanks to Bill Taunton for donating all the watermelon, and Pepsi/Chad Mithaugen for water. Also, thanks go out to all the people who donated door prizes: Micki's in Belgrade, North American State Bank, West Central Inc, Bellezza Salon, Aquatherm, and Greater Visions Photography.



The money raised by the run is being put in Jesse's Memorial Fund. We are hoping to grow this fund to do a special project of Jesse's family's choice that will bear his name. Please mark June 16, 2007, on your calendar, talk with others, and get them to join us next year for the 3rd Annual JJM Victory Run.

### GEAR SALE & MEMBER MEETING

The JJM Victory Run, Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale, and Annual Membership Meeting & Potluck combined to make a very full and satisfying day on June 17. Come to think of it, we were all pretty full and satisfied after just the potluck. The 4th Annual Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale raised about \$1400 for programs at Prairie Woods and got a lot of good used gear back into circulation. Thanks to those who contributed items for the sale, many of whom are listed on the next page.



## News & Developments

### PWELC WELCOMES THE "BIG CANOE"

(Continued from page 1)

The voyageur canoe is a fiberglass replica of birch bark canoes used in the Great Lakes fur trade in the 1600s and 1700s. Historically, voyageur canoes were designed to withstand the potentially dangerous waters of the Great Lakes while carrying large loads of cargo between Grand Portage and Montreal. Fully loaded with provisions, trade goods, and paddlers, fur-traders' birch bark canoes could weigh up to four tons. A modern version, Prairie Woods' voyageur canoe weighs 520 pounds when empty, and has a cargo capacity of three tons.

Prairie Woods will use the voyageur canoe in the new Eco-Voyageur outreach program. Local students will join PWELC staff and water resource personnel to explore lakes or rivers in their home communities. Students will learn about the ways people and communities can protect water resources. A \$15,000 grant from Northern Environmental Support Trust, Minneapolis, will allow the Eco-Voyageur program to reach 20 communities within a 70-mile radius of Prairie Woods. See page 6 for more about Eco-Voyageur.

Other supporters of the voyageur canoe are Mike Tebben & Tebben Enterprises in Clara City, who built a trailer for the canoe, and PWELC trustee Bill Johnson and PWELC neighbor Ted Olson who assisted with trailer modifications. A grant from Willmar Area Community Foundation provided life jackets and paddles to outfit the paddlers.

### AMERICAN INDIAN HISTORY VILLAGE INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

Local history enthusiast Gloria Benson generously provided a donation to fund an interpretive trail at PWELC's American Indian History Village. Five colorful signs summarize the history and lifestyles of the First People to live on this land. Spanning more than 10,000 years of human history, the village site gives examples of Paleo, Archaic, Woodland, and Historic-era dwellings. The structures were planned and built by volunteers, led by Doug Mossberg.



After officially opening at Archaeology Day in May (see below), the interpretive trail is open to the public. Are you curious about the people who hunted woolly mammoths just after the glaciers receded? Are you interested in learning about the first farmers on this land? Take the time to explore this fascinating experience at Prairie Woods!



## Event Updates

### OUTDOOR GEAR DONORS

(Continued from page 4)

Larger items contributed for the 2006 Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale included a portable fishhouse and power auger donated by Brian Gieseke, a sunfish sailboat donated by Helen Ruebel, a bike trailer donated by the Michael Markkanen family, and a Schwinn mountain bike donated by Margie Rock. Thanks, everyone, who made the sale a success. Please keep next year's gear sale in mind as you clean out garages, basements and closets, and plan to attend the annual membership meeting, Victory Run and potluck!

### ARCHAEOLOGY DAY

Have you ever thrown a spear with an atlatl, held a dinosaur vertebra in your hand (check out the size of that spine!) or watched a nationally-known flint-knapper at work? If you attended Prairie Woods' fifth annual Archaeology Day, held May 13, 2006, you can say yes.

Archaeology Day was part of a state-wide celebration of Archaeology Week, hosted by the Indian History Hunters Club and Prairie Woods. Tom Ross, leader in the Upper Sioux community of Dakota people, was the keynote speaker. Ross spoke about different cultural decision-making processes and varying perspectives concerning the excavation of American Indian sites. An opening ceremony was also held for the American Indian History Village interpretive trail, with signage made possible by Gloria Benson. See above for more about the interpretive trail.

Doug Mossberg, PWELC governing board member and volunteer, did much of the organizing for the day. Thanks to Doug, to all the exhibitors and presenters who made Archaeology Day a success, to Mr. Ross, Mrs. Benson, and to the people who attended Archaeology Day to enjoy and learn about the history of people and the land.



## Environmental Education Notebook

by Anne Dybsetter

### EE REPORT, SUMMER 2006

What a fantastic summer. Thanks to an active program schedule, two great interns, and the usual duties of butterfly hunting, canoeing, and hanging out with energetic kids, not to mention working with all the great people and great projects mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, this summer has flown by.

Here are some environmental education projects to look for:

- ◆ A geo-caching course that teaches geology by introducing students first-hand to the land. Thanks to Jonathan Carlson for the expertise and research shown on these activities.
- ◆ Updated track identification in the Education Building lobby, evidence of Ryan Block's craftsmanship.
- ◆ New altatls and darts, as well as additional games added to the American Indian Cultures activities. Thanks, Ryan!
- ◆ Recycling arrays that are clear and informative for the Farm Site and Education Building. Thanks to Ryan and Jeff Vetsch, as well as West Central Sanitation for donating receptacles.
- ◆ Upcoming: Alternative energy displays, activities, and curriculum, to be used as PWELC's wind turbine takes to the air.
- ◆ Also upcoming: New lesson plans using group initiatives to teach ecological concepts.



### INTERN REPORT: RYAN BLOCK

What an impressive experience being a part of the Prairie Woods Staff this summer has been. I was employed by Prairie Woods as an intern, which will complete my degree in Natural Resources at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. It was not only great being a part of the staff and learning from them, but it was also remarkable to see what a positive impact that this place has on the youth that come through the programs.

I enjoyed seeing how the youth responded to the challenges they faced while they were here, and how the staff guided them into setting goals and then helping them achieve their goals, while instilling in them important beliefs such as team work, communication, respect for themselves, others and the environment and safe fun. What a vital role Prairie Woods is playing in developing these traits in the youth of Central Minnesota, and the highlight of my summer was being a part of that!!

INTRODUCING . . .

## Eco Voyageur

*"We're all in the same boat!"*

**PROGRAM:** In 2006-2007, PWELC is offering a new outreach program in your community. Teachers and students can explore a lake or river **near their own school** in Prairie Woods' 34-foot voyageur canoe and learn about water through hands-on experiences. The Eco-Voyageur program is open to individual classes (15-30 students) or entire grade levels (grades 4 to 7).

**LEARNING:** During the Eco-Voyage, students will discover that "we're all in the same boat" when it comes to water. Working together in groups of up to 16, they'll paddle the voyageur canoe on community waterways. Students will study water with Prairie Woods educators & local resource professionals and complete a service project. With three activity stations, the Eco-Voyageur program will take about half a day.

**GET YOUR SCHOOL INVOLVED:** Supported by a grant from Northern Environmental Support Trust, Eco-Voyageur costs just \$2 per student. Training will be provided for teachers. Select students in grades 10-11 from your school will be trained as assistant facilitators.

WORKSHOPS & PLANNING BEGIN AUGUST 23, SO  
CALL OR E-MAIL NOW TO SIGN UP OR LEARN MORE.

- ◆ FALL 2006 PILOT PROGRAMS
- ◆ CONTINUING SPRING 2007

### INTERN REPORT: JONATHAN CARLSON

I could not think of a better way to spend the summer after my graduation from Gustavus Adolphus College than to intern at Prairie Woods ELC. I have been able to use the skills and knowledge I learned while studying Environmental Studies and Geology at Gustavus to work.

I have enjoyed shadowing and then facilitating groups on the challenge course, canoeing, and environmental education programs. When not working with groups, I have been creating a new educational program combining GPS and the glacial geology of the Prairie Woods campus.

The success of my internship would not have been possible without the help of the friendly and knowledgeable staff and volunteers at Prairie Woods.



## Highlights from the Challenge Course

by Deb Anderson

### THE SUMMER'S FAVORITE PHRASE: "THIS IS AWESOME!"

"This is AWESOME!" This has been the favorite phrase of the spring and summer here on the Challenge Course. From the youngest kids to adults, we have been having a great time flying, climbing, swinging, balancing, and hanging. But this play has purpose. We have also been learning, challenging, cooperating, bonding, building, and growing. Our programs focus on team-building, leadership, communication, cooperation, creative problem-solving, community, expanding comfort zones, and challenging ourselves. It is great to make the connections between our play here and life wherever you come from.



We have again enjoyed time on the Challenge Course with Green Lake Lutheran Ministries, Decision Hills, PACT 4, summer schools, family reunions, day camps, YMCA, West Central Integration Collaborative, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H, FFA, sports teams, and church groups. Camp Sanderson did their first trip to Palisade State Park in South Dakota to climb real rock with us.

*Please give us a call if you are interested in doing programming with us. We would love to work with your group.*



## Intergenerational Programs

### GENERATIONS MEET AT FAITH LUTHERAN

At Faith Lutheran Church's Intergenerational Dialogue on April 19, about 50 congregation members joined in a discussion on environmental stewardship. Prairie Woods staff members Teri Wermerskirchen, Dave Pederson, and Anne Dybsetter helped to organize the dialogue. Pastor Matt Peterson served as emcee.

Intergenerational dialogues provide opportunities for community members of all ages to share ideas on a topic. This dialogue began with a "Circle of Generations" to highlight each generation's unique and valuable perspective. Small groups of mixed ages then joined together for a meal, followed by panel discussions. In the end, the small groups proposed several steps to involve all generations of the Faith community in environmental stewardship. Suggestions included providing a recycling center at church, promoting carpooling to church, and educating the congregation on alternative energy.



A panel of representatives from the "Civic Generation" shared views on stewardship while Pastor Matt Peterson looked on.

Thanks to Southwest Initiative Foundation for financial support of the Faith Lutheran Intergenerational Dialogue, and to all participants who attended. If your community organization would like to hold an Intergenerational Dialogue, call Prairie Woods.



Groups from both Green Lake Bible Camp and Camp Sanderson Girl Scout Camp enjoyed "real rock" climbing trips to Palisade State Park (South Dakota), facilitated by PWELC staff. The Camp Sanderson group is show above.

## Time Travel Update

by Teri Wermerskirchen

### SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION GRANT

Southwest Initiative Foundation continues to support PWELC's efforts to "connect generations and cultures through living history." In May, the Time Travel program received a \$5,000 grant to recruit and train senior citizens to serve as Time Travel facilitators and volunteers, to implement a Time Travel model for Intergenerational Dialogue, and to hold a community Intergenerational Dialogue.

*We always ask participants, "What was your favorite part of the Time Travel experience?"*

*The most common response? "EVERYTHING!"*

This spring, several seniors enjoyed a luncheon in the log cabin. By candlelight, they told stories of their youth and learned about opportunities to share their history and the history of this place by participating in the Time Travel program. Look for another opportunity to lunch in the cabin on September 26 at 11:00 am.



## 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.)

**Birding Extravaganza** (all ages, families welcome)  
Join PWELC staff and volunteers as part of the Great Minnesota River Birding Day. In small groups, we'll explore Prairie Woods' campus in search of as many bird species as we can find. Beginning and experienced birders welcome. Binoculars available.

- ◆ Saturday, September 16, 7 am to 11 am
- ◆ Free

**Big Canoe Cruise** (all ages, 4 years and up)  
Celebrate the end of summer with an adventure in the "Big Canoe," PWELC's 34-foot voyageur canoe. Up to 14 participants can join us for this guided exploration of a local lake. Children must be at least 4, and accompanied by an adult.

- ◆ Saturday, September 23, 10 am to 12 pm
- ◆ \$8/person

**Equinox Canoeing** (all ages, 7 years and up)  
Enjoy the transition from summer to fall with a relaxing paddle on peaceful water. Equipment and basic instruction provided. Children must be at least 7, and accompanied by an adult.

- ◆ Thursday, September 21, 6 pm to 8 pm
- ◆ \$6/person or \$10/pair

**Wind Energy Primer**  
Visit PWELC's wind turbine site, and learn about the process behind installing an energy-producing wind machine. If you have considered trying wind energy for your household, farm, business, or community, now is the time to learn more about it.

- ◆ Saturday, October 21, 10 am to 12 pm
- ◆ Free

*Kids Events & Activities*

**Big Bird Bash** (ages 4 to 12 years)  
This party is for the birds! Bird food, bird songs, bird searches, and more! If you wish, join an adult in Prairie Woods' Birding Extravaganza starting at 7 am, then come to the Big Bird Bash to celebrate our feathered neighbors.

- ◆ Saturday, September 16, 10 am to 12 pm
- ◆ \$5/child

*More Kids Events & Activities*

**Great Annual Halloween Haunt** (ages 4 and up, with adult)  
Wander the enchanted trail, carve a jack-o-lantern, and have a creepy critter painted on your face. Climb the Wall in costume. This Halloween party is most fun of the year! Children must be accompanied by an adult.

- ◆ Saturday, October 28, 6 pm to 9 pm
- ◆ \$8/child

**White Winter Kick-off** (ages 4 to 12 years)  
Are your fingers crossed for snow? Do you feel a cold wind blowing? Let's get together to decorate a tree for our winter bird friends, make some snowy gifts to take home, and celebrate the coming of winter!

- ◆ Sat, December 2, 1 pm to 3 pm
- ◆ \$6/child

**Fear Factor** (4th-7th grades)  
Test whether fear is a factor for you as we test your limits with high events. . . and a few other surprises. Call a couple of friends, sign up, and join the fun of this friendly competition.

- ◆ Monday, September 25, 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm
- ◆ \$10/child

**Time Travel** (2nd - 5th grades)  
Take a step back in time and spend a day as a pioneer in 1888. Churn butter, make a toy, wear pioneer clothes and do activities that kids would have done in that year of our local history.

- ◆ Thursday, September 28 or Thursday, October 5
- ◆ 3:30 to 5:30 pm
- ◆ \$10 per student

*Clubs for Students*

**Adventure Club** (3rd - 6th grades)  
Explore a variety of fun outdoor activities you've always wanted to try. Play new outdoor games, and take the opportunity to canoe, rock climb, and do other nature activities led by Prairie Woods staff.

- ◆ Tuesdays, September 19 and 26, October 3 and 10
- ◆ 3:45 to 5:30 pm
- ◆ \$30 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: September 7, 14, 21, 28
- ◆ 3:30 to 5:00 pm
- ◆ \$30 per student





## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO REGISTER: 354-5894

### More Clubs for Students

**Climbing Club** (3rd through 8th grades)  
Kids climbing the walls? Here's your answer. A healthy after school activity that will have the kids climbing, meeting new friends and using up that energy. They'll learn about climbing, safety, belaying and much more while playing climbing games and having lots of fun.

- ◆ Mondays: September 11, 18, and 25, and October 2
- ◆ 3:30 to 5:00 pm
- ◆ \$30 per student

**Youth Sporting Clays** (Ages 10 and up)  
Improve ability and learn new skills with NRA and 4-H certified instructors. Register in a group, or individually and we will put you on a team. Teams can be sponsored. Shells, clay targets, guns and instruction provided. (You may bring your own guns.)

- ◆ Mondays: September 11, 18, and 25, and October 2
- ◆ 5:30 to 7:00 pm
- ◆ \$30 per student (Note: Reduced cost made possible by donations from Harwin Rudeen estate and Kandiyohi Pheasants Forever.)



### News & Developments

#### WETLAND WALKWAY

Part the cattails and visit a wetland up close. . . at Prairie Woods, students have watched and identified egrets and great blue herons, black-crowned night herons, ducks, frogs, painted turtles, muskrats, and more from the new wetland walkway. With arms up to the elbows in pond water, students observe water critters that make up the essential wetland food chain.



Thanks go to Mike Meyer, who led the construction of the wetland walkway, as well as Lucas Youngsma and Jeff Vetsch. Materials were funded through Shakopee Creek Watershed Project and Kandiyohi County. The next step in completing the walkway is to add a wildlife-viewing blind, which will provide a genuine window into life in the pond. Thanks to the Minnesota Waterfowl Association for commenting on and helping fund this final stage of the project.

#### SOLAR POWER UPDATE

Our trailer-mounted solar power system is now producing power from the sun. The system met its first test by producing power for two exhibits at Earth Day.



Thanks to the U of M Electrical Engineering Department, Professor Paul Imbritson, student Stella Mandango, Jeff Vetsch and Michael Meyer for helping with this project. Thanks to West Central Regional Sustainable Development Project for providing partial funding.

#### PRAIRIE PLANTING



Thanks to NRCS, Prairie Country RC&D, Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District, and the USDA Plant Materials Center of North Dakota, Prairie Woods has a newly planted prairie garden in the triangle at the head of the

walkway leading up the hill to the education building.

#### ECHO VOLUNTEERS BUILD YURT TRAIL

A big thanks goes out to the volunteer groups brought to us by Decision Hills ECHO Camp in July. Campers from ECHO, which stands for Each Christian Helping Others, came to Prairie Woods in small groups and undertook a variety of projects. The most significant of the projects was constructing a stairway down the hill to the yurt, under the direction of Jeff Vetsch. Our thanks goes out to all the volunteers!



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