



PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

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PRAIRIE WOODS

Warbler



VOLUME 15

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ISSUE 2

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Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center Presents...

An Evening Under the Prairie Stars

an earth conscious benefit for the environmental education of our youth

Friday September 11th 5:30pm

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center Spicer, Minnesota

Join us for... * dinner under the stars * locally grown food
* cocktails in the barn * live jazz & bluegrass music
* "Green" live & silent auction items including a staycation at Madden's Resort

Call Prairie Woods for Tickets 320-354-5894

Event Underwritten By:



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

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Join Us!

PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER
Annual Membership for 2009

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.

- New Member
- Renewing Member

SUPPORTER'S MEMBERSHIP

- Individual Membership \$30.00
- Family Membership \$45.00
- 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
- \$1000

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City/State/ZIP _____

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@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

Thank you for your support.



Notes from the Executive Director

by Dave Pederson, Executive Director

As you read this issue of the Warbler, another summer is being deposited into our memory banks and we are looking forward to fall. Memories from this summer include another successful Victory Run; a productive Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale; the first Forkhorn Camp; many young smiling and sometimes straining faces wielding canoe paddles or muscling up to the top of the climbing tower; Pre-K Nature Days kids with eyes wide open as they made discoveries in the great outdoors; the sounds of banjo music plinking away at the log cabin; family reunions and wedding receptions at the Barn, Westby, Linder Tree House and the Earl B. Olson Addition; and watching an older gentleman just sitting on a bench in the bird garden soaking up the sights and sounds of a moment in nature.



organization I realize that we are building our past at the same time that we are building for our future. Our memory banks swell; our history generates interest and our lives are enriched. If you haven't made a Prairie Woods memory recently I encourage you to make a point to visit and enjoy this place that so many have worked to build. If you have a memory to share about Prairie Woods how about writing it down and sending it to us for possible inclusion in the next newsletter?

In this newsletter you will learn a bit about some of the memories that thousands of people will have as a result of their experiences at Prairie Woods. You will also learn about upcoming events and opportunities that are sure to contribute valuable memories to your own memory bank such as An Evening Under the Prairie Stars. Thanks for living like it matters and contributing to the work of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center.

Sincerely,

Dave

Prairie Woods is a place of memories and connections made with self, others and environment. As we mature as an

WANTED - NEW MEMBERS

We want you to join Prairie Woods and help us to recruit new members. Please consider contributing your time and talents to help Prairie Woods continue to grow and thrive as a premier educational and recreational resource for our region.

NICE THINGS DONE FOR PRAIRIE WOODS by People Like You

- * Deb Wilson of Usbourne Books has been selling children's books at several Prairie Woods events with 50% of the proceeds given to Prairie Woods as book credits. So far her efforts have raised \$446 for Prairie Woods. Thanks Deb!
- * MN Deer Hunter Association chapters gave scholarships to a number of campers attending our first Forkhorn Camp this summer.
- * The Cub Foods Brat Stand fundraiser netted approx. \$420. Thanks to Cub Foods and everyone who helped with the food stand. We heard a number of positive comments from the public.
- * Bob and Shirley Caine once again donated proceeds to Prairie Woods from their Celebrate Life Golf Event in Santa Rosa, California. Thanks Bob & Shirley!
- * Fitzharris Ski & Sport of St. Cloud gave us some great discounts on cross country ski gear which helped multiply funds invested by Willmar Area Community Foundation and the Paul & Sandra Vollar Family.
- * Deb Schmitzerle invested tons of time and love into the gardens in the farm site.
- * The promotions committee has been meeting regularly to prepare for the 2nd Annual Prairie Stars event. Please contact committee co-chairs Cindy Westby and Mary Merlin-Pelkey if you have suggestions or contributions for live and silent auction items.
- * Danny Kulset has been volunteering time this summer to help out with maintenance and site improvement projects.
- * Thanks to funds provided by friends and family of Dorothy Bakken, one-way screening installed on the Tree House windows overlooking the bird feeders allows easier bird viewing without disrupting the birds.
- * Members of the Danielson Family have provided funds for additional plantings and upgrades to the farm site gardens in honor and in memory of loved ones.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED: 354-5894

Full Moon Canoeing\$6/person

Thursday, September 3, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm

A full Harvest Moon will rise as the sun sets during this canoeing adventure on a peaceful pond. All equipment and introductory instruction provided. Children must be at least 7, and accompanied by an adult.

Great Annual Halloween Haunt\$8/child

Appropriate for ages 4-12

Friday, October 30, 6 pm-9 pm

Talk to creatures on 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 the most fun of the year! Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Fall Open HouseFree

Sunday September, 20 1pm-4 pm

PWELC's biggest event of the year, Fall Open House offers families a variety of activities for all ages. Come to sample many of PWELC's exciting educational and recreational opportunities, plus enjoy special exhibits and displays.

Fall Sporting Clays Leagues

Fall Sporting Clays Leagues are forming now. Call Ryan to register your team.

Pirates of the Carabiner Club\$25 per person

Mondays, Oct 5, 12, 19, 26

3:30-5:00pm

Grades 3 and up

The same great fun as the one day Pirates of the Carabiner class but we spread this one out into 4 weekly sessions.

To the Top ClubCost \$25 per person

Tuesdays, Sept 15, 22, 29, and Oct 6th

3:30-5:00pm

Grades 3-7

Join this four week club and be among a group that can say they have made it "To the Top" of the various events here at Prairie Woods. We will be doing our best to make it to the top of the indoor climbing wall, the Flying Squirrel, the Giant's Ladder and the Out door Climbing Wall. It will be a fun and rewarding time during the after-school hours.

Family Climb\$10 per climber

Oct 15 6 to 8:00pm

For families of all ages to come and climb together and spend some quality time. (Adults not required to climb) Parents, Grandparents, kids all welcome!

Squirrel Social\$10 per person

Monday, Sept 28 Grades 1-6 3:30-5:00pm

We are going nuts at Prairie Woods so we need squirrels...Flying squirrels. Come join us at Prairie Woods and get your chance to try the ride that lets you swing through the treetops like flying squirrels. We will also learn something about teamwork, safety and trying our best. We will end the class with a "nutty" snack time for the squirrels!

Pioneer Girl's Day\$8 per child

Monday, October 5, Grades 2-6 3:30-5pm

Did you ever wish you could be a pioneer girl in a Little House on the Prairie like Laura Ingalls? Come to the log cabin at Prairie Woods and dress up as a pioneer and learn some crafts. We'll make a corn husk doll and try some fabric arts of the past.

A Pioneer Christmas

Children's Afternoon- Thursday, Dec. 3, 3:30-5pm

Grades 2-6\$8 per child

Family Evening-Thursday, Dec. 10, 6-7:30pm\$20 per family

Christmas time for the pioneers was simple but fun. Come to the cozy log cabin and celebrate like the early Swedish-American immigrant pioneers. We'll make some Christmas ornaments and decorations from nature that you can take home.

PRAIRIE WOODS RECEIVED THE RIVERKEEPER 2008 AWARD FROM CURE (Clean Up Our River Environment) at the CURE Annual Meeting in February. When it rains on Prairie Woods the water makes its way into Shakopee Creek where it eventually flows into the Chippewa River and then on down into the Minnesota. We are all connected by water. We were honored to be recognized by CURE given the number of exceptional people and fine organizations working on the inseparable issues of water quality and quality of life in the Minnesota River watershed. Check out CURE at their website: cureriver.org



TIME TRAVEL PROGRAM NOTES FROM TERI WERMERSKIRCHEN

You Don't Know What You've Got Till It's Gone

I always knew we had a special place here at PWELC, but recently the depth of how wonderful our setting is for learning was really put in perspective. I was asked to facilitate a multi-day 'Pioneer Camp' that took place in a local school. While planning the camp I realized that not only does our site at Prairie Woods offer a unique setting where students can step away from the technology of the present and really immerse themselves in a different time, but we also are not tied to the restrictions of a school site. The life of the pioneers was full of hard work and peril but also simple pleasures and a slower way of life. It's hard to appreciate that when you are in a school building with televisions in each room, surrounded by traffic and asphalt. Here at the homestead site at PWELC, the kids can live in a real log cabin for the day. They can cut wood with a two-handled saw, cook over a wood stove and appreciate the wilderness and nature that surrounds them as the pioneer did.

I've got to hand it to my in-school campers, they used their imaginations and we had a great time. We did some fabric arts and tried some new recipes. But nothing beats being out at Prairie Woods, working and playing at the cabin in the woods, looking out over the vast, flower-filled prairie, hearing only the sounds of the birds and animals and trees rustling in the wind..... What a great place to learn by experience, using all your senses, your imagination and this unique and wonderful setting!

Watch for Pioneer Camp next summer at PWELC.



Birthday parties at the log cabin have been a big hit this past spring and summer! The kids dress up as pioneers, play pioneer games, and make corn husk dolls and ice cream (among other activities). Call if you'd like to set up a unique birthday party for your child.

We're revving up for another season and could use some help mending and/or sewing costumes, fixing our buggy and locating new props. Also, if anyone would like to help with a Time Travel Program, and/or you have an activity you would like to share with the kids -we'd love to hear from you.

A great big thank you to all the volunteers who help make this program such a success. A special thank you to Kristene Forman and Stephanie Klamm for sewing some beautiful dresses, to Donna Hulstrand and Marcia Kleven for ice cream makers, to Jeanette Jacobson for her spindles and know-how for a new activity and especially to Ildi Sundheim, Dean and Deanna Mortenson, Arlys Ousman who volunteer their time to help facilitate the program.



THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP & TRUSTEE MEETINGS were held on Monday, June 15, 2009 in the Earl B. Olson Addition. Thanks everyone who was able to turn out for the potluck dinner and annual meeting.

The following changes were made to the Trustee roster: Betty Croonquist, Ben Thoma and Doug Mossberg have retired from the Board of Trustees. We want to thank Betty, Ben and Doug for their years of service to Prairie Woods. County Commissioners Dennis Peterson and Richard Larson will serve on the governing board in 2009-10. County Commissioner Harlan Madsen rotated off of the governing board to the board of trustees and Commissioner Richard Falk rotated off of the board of trustees. We want to thank all of our board members for taking the time to serve.

**TEACHERS AND GROUP LEADERS CHECK THIS OUT!
FUNDING ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY PRAIRIE STARS
SCHOLARSHIP AND TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FUND + FUNDING
ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY MEEKER, KANDIYOHI AND
STEARNS COUNTY CORN GROWERS.**

A scholarship and travel assistance fund was established at the 2008 Prairie Stars Event.

The fund enabled a number of groups to come to Prairie Woods who otherwise would not have been able to attend due to financial hardship. Thank you Prairie Stars for helping to establish this much needed assistance fund.

The County Corn Grower Associations from Stearns, Kandiyohi and Meeker County have also stepped up to help groups come to Prairie Woods to take part in the History of Corn Exhibit. The exhibit tells the story of the development of corn over thousands of years up through modern times and helps raise awareness of the profound impact that agriculture has on our every day lives. Please give us a call to discuss either accessing or contributing to funding opportunities for school groups.

Volunteers Needed

- Help build a rustic shed for the Time Travel site,
- Cut firewood and assist with trail work
- Help with prairie restoration and maintenance
- Assist with newsletters, grant writing and marketing
- Help out as hosts for special events
- Drive a sandpoint well at the log cabin
- Program facilitators in all areas
- Make batches of bio-diesel with our on-site processor
- Help out with the Prairie Stars Event



Upcoming Events at Prairie Woods

SAVE THE DATE!

- THE 2ND ANNUAL EVENING UNDER THE PRAIRIE STARS FUNDRAISERFRIDAY, SEPT. 11TH, 5:30 P.M.
- FALL OPEN HOUSESUNDAY SEPT. 20TH, 1PM-4PM.
- SPECIAL HUNTNOVEMBER 13,14,15
- PWELC BIRD BANDING STATION OPEN HOUSE SATURDAYOCTOBER 3, 2009 7:30-10:00 A.M
- HALLOWEEN HAUNTFRIDAY OCTOBER 30TH, 6:00-9:00 P.M.

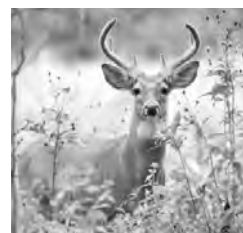
**AN EVENING UNDER THE PRAIRIE STARS-
SEPTEMBER 11, 2009... Save the Date!**

The Second Annual Evening Under the Prairie Stars Fundraiser will be held Friday, September 11th. Come out and enjoy an evening at the Prairie Woods farm site and dine under the big white tent with 300 friends of Prairie Woods. This one of a kind event will feature a sumptuous meal of local foods prepared by Chef Monte of the Green Mill, some great live music and a number of unique live and silent auction items.

A hearty thank you to the Promotions Committee members who are putting in tons of time to make this event a success: Luke and Allison Geiger, Joel Schmidt, Ron Erpelding, Mary Merlin-Pelkey, Cindy Westby and Jim Tetzloff.

Last year this event sold out so please don't hesitate to reserve your table.

If you have ideas for live and silent auction items or would like to assist with the event please contact our event co-chairs Cindy Westby and Mary Merlin-Pelkey, or the Prairie Woods Office.



**SPECIAL HUNT DATES SET-
NOVEMBER 13,14,15**

Mark Mertens, Dave Meutzel and a dedicated crew of volunteers are already making preparations for the handicapped accessible deer hunt this fall. The hunt will take place on November 13,14, &15. If you, or someone you know, may be interested in either hunting or volunteering to help with the event please call Prairie Woods at 354-5894.

5TH ANNUAL VICTORY RUN



Wow! What a day. On June 20th we held our 5th Annual Jesse John Mithaugen Victory Run. It was a beautiful day filled with beautiful people. We had just under 250 people participate in the walk/run. The results of the 5K run are posted on <http://pickleevents.com>. It was a great day filled with celebration, families, memories of Jesse and others.

A huge thanks goes out to:

- Chad Mithaugen for the water
- Precise Ice of Belgrade for the ice
- Country Stop for the watermelon
- North American State Bank for the donation toward shirts
- Prairie Woods ELC for the facility and trails
- Bayer Built for the door prizes
- Micki's for the door prizes
- Halvorson Agribility for the hats
- And all the people who helped make the day and this event a success

Save the date for next years run June 19th 2010. Let's try to double our size—everyone bring a friend and spread the word.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, once again to everyone who contributed to The Next Step Building Campaign. The new additions have allowed us to accommodate larger events such as Earth Day, Youth Energy Summit, receptions and meetings that could not have been accommodated prior to the new construction. Our facility rentals have increased 100% since the completion of our building project. We continue to hear positive comments on almost a daily basis as people step into the Linder Tree House, the Earl B. Olson Addition, the Ruth & Helen Peterson Exhibit Hall and the enlarged Strand Rooms.



Howdy from interns Becca & Martin

Prairie Woods seems to be blessed each summer with excellent interns. This year was no exception.

BECCA BELL- INTERN, ST. OLAF COLLEGE

As a recent biology graduate from St. Olaf College, I was looking to gain experience in environmental work upon graduation. I was blessed to find this internship at Prairie Woods



ELC through a friend and have loved my time here! Leaving "work" the other day, I was unusually happy and realized it was because I had spent the whole day being positive and encouraging with the groups that had visited us. What a blessing to work at a place where the

visitors are not the only ones that enjoy their time here!

I plan to continue with environmental work, possibly environmental education and will cherish the confidence in skills and passion for this work I learned while at Prairie Woods.

MARTIN NELSON- INTERN, ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY

As I am just finishing up my degree in Recreation, Sports and Outdoor Education, my time at Prairie Woods has been a great transition from college to the

workforce. I feel I have gained a lot of experience while working with the knowledgeable staff here, as well as insight while working with our participants.

It has been a great summer here working in and out of doors. I will miss my days here once the summer is over, but will be confident that I will be prepared for my new career.



Meet Gary Duncomb INTERIM ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the newest member of the PWELC staff. I have taken over the EE coordinating duties in June

from Anne Dybsetter, who is now working with the Youth Energy Summit program full time for the next year. My background is in education, having retired from teaching at the Eden Valley-Watkins ISD after 33 years. I had always stressed outdoor education in my science classes at EVW and have had a passion for nature studies and outdoor recreation my entire life. I am the president of the Meeker County chapter of Pheasants Forever and have taught the Firearms Safety course in Eden Valley for many years. Coaching, mentoring, organizing camps, canoe trips, and working with conservation groups have helped prepare me for my new position at PW. I feel it is important to introduce young people to the outdoor life at an early age to capture their interest, promote a sense of place and define their role in the natural world.



I have worked the late spring "school field trip rush" as a part-timer for the last two years at PWELC. It is a very hectic time for all the staff here at the center. A tight schedule with school groups arriving on campus daily, sometimes several in a single day, keeps us hopping. Coordination, cooperation, and planning are a must to keep the blended programs running smoothly. It was a little mind boggling to step into that world and I am so grateful for all the help that Anne, Ryan, Deb, Teri, Jeff, Ann and Dave provided to help me get started. Thanks, guys!

The summer months are a little more relaxed, but we have been kept busy with Community Ed. programs, summer camps, summer school programs, youth groups, and walk-in individuals and families. Canoeing has been the big attraction in my area. The Eco-Voyageur "Big Canoe" outreach program as been popular with youngsters and adults alike. We trailer our 34 foot canoe to public accesses and county parks on lakes or rivers in a 60 mile radius to share the adventure of being on the water, along with information on water quality, aquatic communities, and shore line development. The sunset/moon rise sessions in standard canoes have been popular with families. We cruise the PW wetlands once a month during the full moon phase, watching wildlife, studying the plant communities, and watching the spectacle of sunset and moon rise within minutes of each other.

Come and join us soon. Watch your local Community Ed. bulletin or call PWELC for programming schedules and sign-up information.



Update: EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN BY 2010

Just a few quick notes- Throughout the summer our 20kw Jacobs wind turbine and 4kw solar array have kept pace with or exceeded our monthly electricity requirements. All of our hot water needs have been provided by the Solar Skies solar hot water heater. The bank of solar hot water heaters at the maintenance building successfully heated the shop last winter and will go back into service this fall. A Fujitsu air source heat pump has been installed to heat the two main office rooms during shoulder seasons which should reduce the number of weeks that the larger biomass boiler will need to operate. Last year we successfully heated our buildings with a combination of corn and Sunrise Agra Fuel which is locally made from crop residue and sawdust. We hope to have a new high tech biomass boiler installed in time for Fall Open House.

At this writing, students from the University of Minnesota School of Electrical Engineering are installing an electric motor in our 1998 Ford Ranger. Not unlike many projects in life, the electric vehicle has encountered some bumps that have slowed progress but we are back on the road. Thanks to Adam Malovrh for his persistence in finding shop space after "Plan A" fell through. The project has received guidance from NL-S teacher Tracy Tebben and Professor Paul Imbritson of the University of MN Dept of Electrical Engineering. Tracy's students removed all internal combustion components and fabricated battery trays, Paul's students will complete the installation of all electric components.

Thanks to Kevin Anderson of the Car Connection in Willmar for helping us to find a truck. With a bit of luck and a lot of hard work we hope to have the truck operational by Fall Open House.

PRAIRIE WOODS RECOGNIZED BY UNITED WAY OF WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA

Prairie Woods was honored to receive recognition from United Way of West Central Minnesota as the Outstanding Partner Agency for 2008. United Way has provided critical funding assistance for Prairie Woods over the years and we are delighted to receive recognition as an outstanding partner.

Needs & Giving Opportunities

- Utility tractor w/ loader (diesel)
- Scholarship and Travel Assistance Fund Contributions
- Diesel pick-up (3/4 or 1 ton) for plowing snow.
- Smaller diesel passenger vehicle
- 300 gal fuel tank for storing bio-diesel
- Help build the sustainability endowment

THE ANNUAL RECYCLED OUTDOOR GEAR SALE

turned over a lot of good used gear and raised \$1200 to support youth programs at Prairie Woods. A sunfish sailboat donated by Ron Lenz took the prize as the largest donation. Happy buyers walked away with good deals on bike racks, tents, ski packages, golf balls and much more. Thanks everyone for donating items for the gear sale and please keep the sale in mind for next year as you sort through gear that you haven't used for several years. Please give us a call at any time of year if you have items to donate for the sale.



Site & Sight Upgrades

- * The bird and butterfly gardens in the Farm Site are a must see.
- * Check out the new tent sites near the Yurt on Kettle Lake.
- * New high tech biomass boiler coming soon.
- * The wind turbine and solar panels have equaled or exceeded our electric requirements since April.
- * Engan Associates are working on plans for a zero-net energy residential facility for Prairie Woods. Stay tuned.
- * An air source heat pump has been installed to provide heat for the staff offices which should allow us to reduce the number of days that the boiler system is required to operate throughout the shoulder seasons and winter.
- * A water line was installed to the barn by Thein Well.
- * The area below the Tree House is being leveled and benches added to create a sheltered outdoor classroom. A lattice work screen will separate the area from the bird feeding stations.
- * A one-way vision screening material was applied to the slanted observation windows in the Tree House. Good for the birds and birdwatchers.
- * Deb Schmitzerle continues to develop gardens in the farm site area and should be commended for a tremendous amount of work.
- * The new additions to the Education Building are working great.
- * 2 Auto-belay devices installed in the indoor climbing wall allow more climbing opportunities for groups.

THANKS ONCE AGAIN TO OUR FRIENDS AT WILLMAR AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION!

A recent Willmar Area Community Foundation Grant of \$4200 enabled Prairie Woods to upgrade archery and cross country ski equipment. We were thrilled to once again receive a grant award from Willmar Area Community Foundation for equipment additions and upgrades. Previous grants from WACF helped to fund the indoor climbing wall, the yurt, wetland walkway and canoe docks, challenge course upgrades, Time Travel costumes, an auto belay device and the list goes on.



YOUTH ENERGY SUMMIT TO DOUBLE NUMBER OF TEAMS

Is your community signed on?

“Use what you need and save what you don’t. . . . Do it for the future!” On stage at New London’s Little Theatre, the New London-Spicer Youth Energy Summit (YES!) team presented their song about energy conservation—complete with lyrics written by the students. The team was part of a planning and fundraising initiative that resulted in dramatically improved insulation and a new roof for a 1920s-vintage theater, home to many NLS school productions as well as community events.

The NLSYES! team was one of ten YES! teams that wrapped up their seasons at the end of the 2008-2009 school year, all with their own exciting projects. Other YES! student projects included

- engaging students in a carbon footprint educational campaign,
- building a model digester and energy-generating bike,
- raising greenhouse produce during the winter months,
- installing CFL bulbs in homes, and more.

The regional expansion of the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) is getting under way this summer, extending to the southern and western borders of Minnesota. YES! 2009-2010 is welcoming up to 22 teams in two hubs: the northern hub centered at Prairie Woods ELC, and the southern hub centered at Prairie Ecology Bus Center (PEBC) of Lakefield. The expansion is made possible by the Southwest Initiative Foundation, funded in part by the Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace: An Alliance for Talent Development. Does your community have a YES! team? YES! is evidence that engaged and energized youth make a difference in their communities—what projects might emerge in your area if a group of committed young people got involved? Through grant funding, up to \$2750 financial assistance is available per team for participation and projects during the 2009-2010 school year. To find out more, please contact Anne Dybsetter, YES! Coordinator, at anne.dybsetter@co.kandiyohi.mn.us or 320-354-3521, or visit www.youthenergysummit.com.



YOUTH ENERGY SUMMIT AWARDS, 2009

YES! Awards 2009 were given at the Earth Day event on April 18.

- Grand Prize: Springfield
- 2nd place: New London-Spicer
- 3rd place: Willmar
- Energy Conservation Award: Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City
- Community Engagement Award: New London-Spicer
- Carbon Footprint Award: Springfield
- Economic Impact Award: Willmar
- Long-Term Vision Award: Lac qui Parle Valley

For descriptions of these and other YES! team projects, see www.youthenergysummit.com.

Special thanks to award sponsors: University of Minnesota West Central Sustainable Development Partnership, Southwest Initiative Foundation, Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, Great River Energy, Lake Region Bank, and Ottertail Power Company.

Home on the Range Ryan Block- 2009 FORKHORN CAMP

The summer has been busy with sporting clays league, a women’s shooting sports sampler, archery club and more.

As I am writing this we are conducting our first ever Forkhorn Camp. The camp is sponsored by the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association; it is an opportunity for kids to get their Firearm Safety Certificate while enjoying a camping experience. The curriculum that we have developed for the camp is centered on the Minnesota DNR firearm safety class while using the activities and facility at Prairie Woods. We have 17 boys from all over the state and one from Arizona. They are in camp for 4 nights and 5 days staying in tents at our newly developed group campsite which is located by the yurt on Kettle Lake.



The Forkhorn Campers have experienced camping in the rain, cooking their own food, canoeing, survival training, fire building, rock climbing and the Flying Squirrel in addition to learning about firearm safety, hunting ethics and other outdoor skills for safely enjoying the great outdoors. Next year we hope to offer more Forkhorn I camps as well as the advanced camps Forkhorn II & III. Give us a call if you are interested in camps for next summer.



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- raising greenhouse produce during the winter months,
- installing CFL bulbs in homes, and more.

The regional expansion of the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) is getting under way this summer, extending to the southern and western borders of Minnesota. YES! 2009-2010 is welcoming up to 22 teams in two hubs: the northern hub centered at Prairie Woods ELC, and the southern hub centered at Prairie Ecology Bus Center (PEBC) of Lakefield. The expansion is made possible by the Southwest Initiative Foundation, funded in part by the Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace: An Alliance for Talent Development. Does your community have a YES! team? YES! is evidence that engaged and energized youth make a difference in their communities—what projects might emerge in your area if a group of committed young people got involved? Through grant funding, up to \$2750 financial assistance is available per team for participation and projects during the 2009-2010 school year. To find out more, please contact Anne Dybsetter, YES! Coordinator, at anne.dybsetter@co.kandiyohi.mn.us or 320-354-3521, or visit www.youthenergysummit.com.



YOUTH ENERGY SUMMIT AWARDS, 2009

YES! Awards 2009 were given at the Earth Day event on April 18.

- Grand Prize: Springfield
- 2nd place: New London-Spicer
- 3rd place: Willmar
- Energy Conservation Award: Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City
- Community Engagement Award: New London-Spicer
- Carbon Footprint Award: Springfield
- Economic Impact Award: Willmar
- Long-Term Vision Award: Lac qui Parle Valley

For descriptions of these and other YES! team projects, see www.youthenergysummit.com.

Special thanks to award sponsors: University of Minnesota West Central Sustainable Development Partnership, Southwest Initiative Foundation, Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, Great River Energy, Lake Region Bank, and Ottertail Power Company.

Home on the Range Ryan Block- 2009 FORKHORN CAMP

The summer has been busy with sporting clays league, a women’s shooting sports sampler, archery club and more.

As I am writing this we are conducting our first ever Forkhorn Camp. The camp is sponsored by the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association; it is an opportunity for kids to get their Firearm Safety Certificate while enjoying a camping experience. The curriculum that we have developed for the camp is centered on the Minnesota DNR firearm safety class while using the activities and facility at Prairie Woods. We have 17 boys from all over the state and one from Arizona. They are in camp for 4 nights and 5 days staying in tents at our newly developed group campsite which is located by the yurt on Kettle Lake.



The Forkhorn Campers have experienced camping in the rain, cooking their own food, canoeing, survival training, fire building, rock climbing and the Flying Squirrel in addition to learning about firearm safety, hunting ethics and other outdoor skills for safely enjoying the great outdoors. Next year we hope to offer more Forkhorn I camps as well as the advanced camps Forkhorn II & III. Give us a call if you are interested in camps for next summer.



THE PRAIRIE WOODS 34' VOYAGEUR CANOE IS READY TO TRAVEL TO A LAKE NEAR YOU. Get your kids out on to the water and help them learn to care about their local waters and local environmental issues. Call Gary to discuss a customized adventure for your class or youth group.

The Flying Squirrel A Prairie Woods favorite

DEB ANDERSON- CHALLENGE COURSE COORDINATOR

“Fly on Bailey!” “Fly on Eli!” “Fly on Ashton!” ... This call can be heard echoing through the trees on most days here at Prairie Woods and it is a sure sign that there is someone on the Flying Squirrel having a great time!



The Flying Squirrel is a big favorite at Prairie Woods and a great activity for teambuilding, improving communication skills, overcoming fears, lifting self-esteem, and it is also just plain fun.

“What is this Flying Squirrel thing?” is a question we hear a lot. So, to help you visualize, I can explain. The Flying Squirrel is sort of a group (people) powered elevator. We get participants harnessed up and then clipped into one end of a rope that goes 40 feet in the air to a pulley and back to the ground. The rest of the participants clip into the other end of the rope and when given the signal, they take off running (or walking). Of course when they take off with their end of the rope the person clipped to the other end is lifted up and goes soaring through the air. It is an amazing feeling of flying for the flying squirrel and a thrill of accomplishment for the people who helped get them there. The view from way up there is pretty awesome too.



To schedule your group on the Flying Squirrel give Prairie Woods a call and ask for Deb so you too can hear... Fly on (___your name here___)!

THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF VOLUNTEER JOE GARTNER PRAIRIE WOODS IS ON THE MAPS! *MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) is a project to gather data on songbirds from throughout the Western Hemisphere. Thanks to the efforts of a small band of volunteers Joe was able to establish netting sites this summer and began to train volunteers for an ongoing effort. The project has received support from the Charles and Marjorie Dickman Family as well as Ron Erpelding and the family and friends of Dorothy Bakken.*

Joe's report: The PWELC Bird Banding Station successfully completed its first summer season! Birds banded included Red-eyed Vireo, Hairy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Brown-headed Cowbird, Red-winged Blackbirds, American Redstart, Brown Creeper, Baltimore Oriole, and more.... Birds were banded during seven mornings from early June through early August. Ten net sites were established that will be permanently monitored in the upcoming summers. Eventually the data collected will help us to learn about our local bird's survivorship and productivity. Simply put: how many birds breed here in the summer; how long do they live; how many come back to this same site; and how many young are being produced? The data also becomes part of a national data base maintained by the Institute of Bird Populations for scientific use in determining the status of songbirds.



You are invited to a PWELC Bird Banding Station open house on **Saturday, October 3 from 7:30 – 9:30 A.M.**



Once at the turnoff for the PWELC, watch for signs that will direct you to the specific location. Come see which birds are at the site in autumn! Learn about bird banding. For more information about this project call Joe Gartner at 320-848-6239 (evenings) or email him at jgartner@blh.k12.mn.us.



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