



P.O. Box 6552
Rochester, Minn. 55905

FRIENDS OF OXBOW

www.friendsfoxbow.org

April / May 2009

PARKS IN PERIL - YOU CAN HELP!

The job of administering Olmsted County's budget, never easy, is an especially tough one these days, as it is for many of us trying to manage our own budgets at home.

The current financial woes are being felt by nearly everybody, and parks are no exception. Funding for staff has been cut this year and is likely to be cut even more severely next year. Funds for capital improvement, already sparse, have been sliced to the minimum necessary to keep parks open and useable to the public.

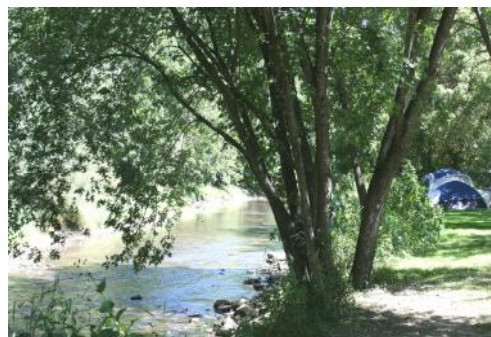
Our parks have traditionally been seen as something of a luxury, nice to have but not essential when compared to schools, highways, public safety and welfare programs, etc. This is understandable, given the great importance of these vital areas in our daily lives.

However, we must not forget the very real value of natural areas in keeping our communities pleasant, appealing places to live, and giving us nearby, inexpensive places to go to get away from the stress that can dominate our lives. Many new studies have shown that natural areas are vital to our physical and mental health as well, and can help conditions such as attention deficit disorder in our children.

There is a great deal more work involved in keeping our parks functioning than meets the eye. Road and trail maintenance, trash pickup, office work, cutting campground firewood, trail, zoo or beach maintenance, restoration of degraded areas - these are just a few of the daily tasks that assure us a safe, enjoyable experience in our parks.

Without the help of us all, parks will cease to be welcoming places to go. Please consider volunteering at your favorite park this year - not only will you be performing vital services, but you'll make new friends, learn new skills, and have a great time as well!

Here is just a sampling of the many ways you can help; some can be done from your home. Most of these require no special talents, but if you have skills to offer, we need you. If you don't, we will teach you!



A few ways you can help at Oxbow & Chester Woods Parks:

- ◆ Firewood production
- Skidding logs,
- Clearing slash,
- Splitting wood

- ◆ General park maintenance
 - Cleaning up fallen sticks and branches
 - Painting signs and trim
- ◆ Grounds keeping
 - Mowing & trimming. Spraying herbicide
 - Picking up trash and loose litter
 - Mulching trees and shrubs
- ◆ Office & Clerical help
 - Answering phone
 - Selling permits
 - Equipment rentals
 - Campground reservations
 - Cleaning & vacuuming Nature Center
 - Restock handouts & literature
 - Design and put out kiosk displays
- ◆ Prairie restoration and maintenance
 - Assisting with prescribed burns
 - Collecting seed by hand
 - Invasive weed control
 - Mowing park and picnic areas
 - Seeding site preparation
 - Harvesting seed mechanically
- ◆ Seed cleaning & processing
 - Operate seed cleaning equipment
 - Process seed for planting
 - Weigh and record seed
- ◆ Trail maintenance
 - Walk trails and clear fallen branches and debris
 - Prune and trim trail edges
 - Operate tractor mower
 - Grooming ski trails
 - Picking up trash

About Our Organization

Friends of Oxbow's mission is to support the educational, environmental and recreational goals of Oxbow Park. Our Newsletter is published 6 times a year. Copy deadline is the 2nd Monday of the month prior to the publication date. All submissions are subject to editing or revision. Copy may be submitted as typed copy to: Ruthann Yaeger, 5731 Co. Rd 105, Byron, MN 55920 or as an email to: ryegr@q.com. The Friends board meets monthly at Oxbow Park Nature Center on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Friends Board Officers

President - Peggy Morris
Vice Pres. -Dory Gardner
Secretary - Ruthann Yaeger
Treasurer -Chuck Pavesich

Friends Board Members

Everett Beck	4-09
Jean Davison	4-10
Loren Dehling	4-09
Cindy Krueger	4-10
Jen Rand	4-09
Kristin Hjerleid	4-09
Dawn Zollman	4-09

Friends Web page

www.friendsofowbow.org

Olmsted County Parks Information

www.co.olmsted.mn.us

Oxbow Park Hours

Park Grounds: 7 am -10pm

Nature Center & Zoo:

10 am to 4 pm daily

Nature Center, Zoo are closed for Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day and Easter

Want to sponsor a zoo animal?

Go to:

www.friendsofowbow.org

Programs and Events at the Parks

Oxbow Park

*In case of inclement weather, call 775-2451 for program details
All programs are appropriate for all ages unless otherwise noted*

Naturalist Choice – April 4 at 10:00 a.m.

Come on out to the park and spend a little time with one of the naturalists. Will you be going for a hike? Feeding critters? Howling with the coyotes? No one knows! Fun is guaranteed!

Woodcock Hike – April 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Let us introduce you to the delightful spring courtship flight of the timberdoodle! They will dazzle you with their sunset courtship flight. Dress for cool, wet conditions. After this, you'll never experience spring without pursuing the humorous bog sucker! (Ages 10 and up)

Otter Feeding – April 18th at 3:00 p.m.

Get set for some fun! Otters can get nasty during dinner, and they usually don't share with one another. Come and watch them eat - they bicker, they growl, they steal each other's food. In the end, none are worse for the wear!

Wildflower Hike – April 25 at 10:00 a.m.

Join us for a relaxing morning taking a closer look at some of Oxbow's spring beauties. A pleasant hike in Oxbow's forest will leave you dazzled with the natural beauty of spring! (Ages 10 and up)

Turkey Calling – May 2 at 10:00 a.m.

Listen and you can hear a thundering gobble crack the silence of a spring forest. Venture out with a naturalist to invade the wild turkey territory and talk turkey. (Ages 5 and up)

Children's Zoo Time – May 9th at 10:00 a.m.

This is a great time for the youngsters to come in and see a few of the zoo critters up-close. A naturalist will discuss a little of the natural history of the animal and you may even have the opportunity to touch one! Great fun for all!

ZOLLMAN ZOO SPRING FEST!! Saturday, May 16th, 11 AM -3 PM**Raptor Feeding – May 23 at 3:00 p.m.**

Come and learn more about the spectacular birds of prey in our area. We'll share a few facts about their natural history while you watch them feast on their daily dinner!

Tree Identification – May 30 at 10:00 a.m.

Let us share some basic tree identification tips with you! This "how to" class is great for anyone interested in learning more about "trees and such." (Ages 10 and up)

Chester Woods Park

*A \$5.00 daily or \$25.00 annual vehicle pass is required to enter Chester Woods Park.
Call 287-2624 for program information, registration and in case of inclement weather.*

Woodcock Watch– Thu., April 16th at 7:30 p.m.

Join Jim Peterson from the Audubon Society to watch the spring mating dance of the timberdoodle

Friends of Chester Woods Clean-up Day - Sat., May 2nd. 10:30 a.m. meeting - work at 1 p.m. Help us get the park ready for summer! See new areas, learn some history and enjoy a potluck lunch.

Moonlight Paddle – Sat. May 9th at 8:45 p.m.

Bring your own canoe/kayak, life preservers required. Will cancel for thunderstorms. Launch at 9 PM

Frogs & Toads - Sat., May 16th at 7:00 p.m.

Live animals presented with short hike to follow. We'll practice capture techniques, so dress for wet!

Dam Hike - Sun. May 24th at 11:00 a.m.

Best dam hike you'll ever take! Learn some history and lore. Park will provide hot dogs, chips & Kool-Aid. Free, but donations gladly accepted. Please register with staff at 507-287-2624. All ages.

Byron Third Graders Win “Cash for Cougars” Party at Zollman Zoo! By R. Yaeger



3rd graders hold check for \$2683! Photo by Ruth Hanson, Byron Review

Friends of Oxbow has been raising money toward a new Wildcat Exhibit at the Zollman Zoo. The Byron Elementary School classes K to 4th grade chose to help us earn money for our cougar's new home by participating in a Cash for Cougars campaign from March 2nd to March 13th. The class that brought in the most money each day got to keep the plush cougar mascot for that day. The first class to win the cougar got to name it - they called it Courage!

By the end of the campaign, Molly Peterson's third grade class (left) had collected \$1372, earning the right to keep the cougar in their classroom. The total raised by the students was an astounding \$2683!

For their impressive effort, this outstanding class and the Student Council will be honored at a special Pizza & Pop Party to be held at the Zollman Zoo

when the weather gets warm enough. They will enjoy a special behind the scenes tour of the zoo, will get to feed some of the zoo animals and each student will receive a keepsake gift from Friends. Thanks are also due to the Byron Elementary Principal, Abe Rodemeyer, for his support of the students efforts. Student Council Advisors for the project were Katie Romence and Beth Grossbach.

But wait - it gets even better! An Olmsted County Deputy Sheriff's Assoc. member heard about the children's campaign and wanted to help. The group decided to donate a most generous \$500 bringing the total to \$3183! Our organization is honored to be Friends with such a generous and supportive community.

We would like to offer a challenge to any schools in the surrounding area – would your class like to participate in this fun event? If so, please contact Friends of Oxbow at friends@friendsofowbow.org or call Oxbow Park at 775-2451 for more information.

Photo Contest Now Being Judged

The Friends of Oxbow Photo Contest closes on March 31st. The response has been excellent with over 150 entries taken from all areas of the park in all seasons, many of very high quality.

The judges are a panel of professional photographers from Rochester and surrounding areas. They will meet in April to screen the entries and may need to meet again to decide on the top three prizes and three Honorable Mentions. All winners will have their photos reproduced in the 2010 Oxbow Park fundraising calendar that Friends will produce. We hope to have it ready for purchase this fall. Be sure to look for it!

In addition, the Grand Prize winner will receive a \$100 gift certificate from Best Buy. Second and Third place winners will receive \$50 and \$25 certificates, respectively.

The prizes will be awarded at our 2009 Zollman Spring Fest on Saturday, May 16th.

Park Report by Celeste Lewis, Naturalist

Temperatures are once again getting above the freezing mark, and daylight is lasting longer and longer each day. Dare I say it... spring has finally arrived! It seems like everyday that I go outside I hear a new bird call that I did not hear the day before!

We have just begun maple syruping again. This is always a favorite of our visitors, volunteers, and staff alike. Last year we produced approximately 4-6 gallons of syrup and hope to do it again this year. Spring classes will start up in the middle of April and I am anticipating another great year of school participation.

Snow removal has kept staff plenty busy this winter, but we have also been working on fabricating new gates for the picnic areas, painting the trash and recycle bins, as well as discussing and designing a future memorial for Dr. Paul Zollman.

On an up note, the zoo has acquired three new Raptors. We are now home to a beautiful Golden Eagle, another Barred Owl, and another Turkey Vulture. These three birds are making a wonderful addition to the newly constructed raptor exhibit.

FRIENDS OF OXBOW
PO Box 6552
ROCHESTER, MN 55903-6552

Friends of Oxbow

Yes, I'd like to be a Friend of this great Park!

____ Friend \$25 - 49 Renewal
____ Partner \$50 - 99
____ Patron \$100 - 249
____ Ranger \$250 - 499
____ Sponsor \$500 - 999
____ Philanthropist \$1000 - 4999
____ Director Circle \$5000 and up

Be sure to ask if your company matches donations!

Name:

Address:

C/S/Zip:

Make checks payable to Friends of Oxbow.

Mail to: Friends of Oxbow
PO Box 6552
Rochester, MN 55903

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FRIENDS OF OXBOW

APRIL / MAY 2009

New Friends Board Member



Friends of Oxbow is pleased to announce the addition of a new member to its Board of Directors. Dawn Zollman, wife of the late Dr. Paul Zollman for whom the Zoo was named, has joined our board.

Dawn grew up on a farm at Willmar MN with three siblings. She has worked at

Mayo in surgery for 29 years. "As Dr Zollman's wife, I would like to help Friends of Oxbow carry on his interest in supporting the park and zoo. I will work hard to help keep the zoo free of admission, one of Dr Zollman's goals" she said.

We are delighted to have her and look forward to working with her for many years to help support this lovely park that was so important to Dr. Zollman.

Looking For Fun in the Sun?



Enjoy helping kids have a good time? Friends of Oxbow Annual Zollman Zoo Spring Fest will be held on Saturday, May 16th, rain or shine. We need volunteers, so come out and join the fun! There's a little of everything to do from helping serve food or take tickets to playing games with children. You'll have a great time!

If you can help, call the park at 507-775-2451, give the staff your name and phone number, or email us at friends@friendsofow.org.