



P.O. Box 6552  
Rochester, Minn. 55905

# FRIENDS OF OXBOW

[www.friendsfoxbow.org](http://www.friendsfoxbow.org)

Feb / Mar 2010

## 2009 ANNUAL OXBOW PARK REPORT



### General Park Projects

After the exhausting work required to complete the new raptor exhibit last year, the staff needed a break from major construction efforts to catch up on smaller, but necessary park projects. Some examples of these include: painting the Nature Center classroom, installing new gates for the campground, Caulfield and 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge picnic areas, and erecting a new storage room in the Pines building. Phase 1 construction of Dr. Zollman's memorial was finished and involved redesigning the entrance to the Nature Center, removing shrubs and rerouting the sidewalk to accommodate the memorial. Phase two will be completed this year.

Not to be overlooked are the year-round tasks, such as: grounds maintenance, endless trash pickup, cleaning of bathrooms, and the Nature Center areas, and seasonal work such as mowing and turf management at picnic and camping areas, grooming of ski trails, sidewalk and parking lot plowing and sanding in winter.

### Zollman Zoo

Zollman Zoo improvements kept the staff busy as well. A life-sized replica of an eagle's nest built by Eagle Scout Jason Schluttner was set up, a new automatic waterer was put in the wolf pen, misting and central system vacuum systems were installed in the raptor exhibit, the quarantine facility was finished, the turkey habitat was painted, the boiler system in the otter habitat was upgraded and the zoo food preparation room was painted. And of course, there are always the ongoing tasks of animal husbandry, record-keeping, and veterinary care. Whew!

As ever, our elderly animal population continues to require replacements as old favorites pass on and new ones take their place. New arrivals in 2009 included two wolf pups purchased by Friends of Oxbow and an Eastern screech owl. The turkey vulture acquired in 2008 did not get along with its roommate, so it now resides happily at the Duluth Zoo.

Once again, we would like to thank Mr. Bob Eustice for the loan of his fine dairy calves to our summer

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**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. Copy may be submitted as typed copy to: Ruthann Yaeger, 5731 Co. Rd 105, Byron, MN 55920 or as email to: friends@friendsofoxbow.org. 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 - Jean Davison  
 Treasurer - Ruthann Yaeger

**Friends Board Members**

Everett Beck	2-11
Loren Dehling	2-11
Chad Jorgensen	2-10
Marina Kemp	2-10
Jen Rand	2-11
Kristin Hjerleid	2-11
Dawn Zollman	2-10

**Friends Web page**

[www.friendsofoxbow.org](http://www.friendsofoxbow.org)

**Olmsted County Parks Information**

[www.co.olmsted.mn.us](http://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.friendsofoxbow.org](http://www.friendsofoxbow.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*

**Otter Feeding - Feb 6 at 1:00 pm**

This program is always a good time. Otters are very active and can consume up to a quarter of their body weight in a day. Watch as the otters swim around trying to catch live fish!

**Naturalist Choice - Feb 13 at 1:00 pm**

Will we go snowshoeing, feed a few critters, or take out the indoor critters? Join us to see.

**Owls - Feb 20 at 1:00 pm**

Owls are the first birds to begin nesting and this is the time! Join a naturalist as she/he discusses the unique qualities of these spectacular birds of prey.

**Special Program Feb 27 at 10:00 am Build your own Bluebird Box. - Cost is \$5.00/box Bring a hammer! Reservations required call 775-2451****Feed the Critters - March 6 at 3:00 pm**

Join the animals for dinner and see just how crazy feeding time can sometimes get at the zoo.

**Maple Syruping - March 13 at 1:00 pm**

Join park staff for a brief history of this wonderful craft and then a short hike to Oxbow's very own sugar bush as we demonstrate how we tap our sugar maples. The program doesn't end here though - when tapping is done, we head back to the nature center for small sample of Oxbow parks very own maple syrup! Dress for the weather and possible sloppy conditions.

**Maple Syruping - March 20 at 1:00 pm - see above****Maple Syruping - March 27 at 1:00 pm - see above**

## 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.*

The Chester Woods Park program season has not yet started and the campground is closed. However, the park is open all year so come on out for ice fishing and cross-country skiing on 8 miles of groomed trails that accommodate both classic and free-style skiing.

## Save Us \$\$ and Get Your Newsletter in Full Color

Please help Friends reduce postage costs and save paper by receiving your newsletter in color, electronically.

Under no circumstances will we ever sell our mailing list or send you fundraising pleas or other spam. You will receive the newsletter in a full color PDF format that all computers can open. By saving us postage, you will also be making a little 'extra' donation to your park every month!

Please send your name and email address to friends@friendsofoxbow.com. Your next issue will come to you the quick and easy way and you can feel good about it for many reasons. Thank you for supporting this unique park.

## Park Annual Review, cont'd from pg 1



domestic exhibit as well as his help in harvesting the hay that feeds our many hooved animals.

We also want to thank Mr. Ed Kuisle for the new and popular pygmy

goats, Pat Gerken for the chickens, and our intern, Will Moore for the ducks.

### Land Stewardship

The restored prairies once again provided great beauty, color and habitat throughout the spring, summer and fall. Their enormously long root systems sequestered tons of carbon, unlike the shallow-rooted, quickly blooming exotics and lawn grasses most people plant. Other stewardship activities included planting over 200 new trees and shrubs, establishing large cedars in the bison feeding area, and moving trees to the front of the Nature Center. Control of noxious and invasive species such as buckthorn and wild parsnip continued, and prescribed burning of portions of the prairies and ditches was accomplished on more than 20 acres of park land here at Oxbow.

### Education

As you know, school classes are a crucial part of what your park does to serve your community. Over 6500 students representing 67 schools and daycare groups were served. Park staff taught 2489 students from all over SE Minnesota various aspects of their Minnesota natural history. An additional 3949 students were brought to the park by their teachers as part of their school curriculum. The miserable October weather caused several classes (570 students) to cancel their visits, so numbers are down a bit from 2008.

The top five participating schools in total class numbers (starting with #1) were: Kellogg Middle School, Kasson-Mantorville, Plainview, Chatfield Elementary and Banfield. Each of these schools had from over 100 to almost 300 students participating in environmental education classes at Oxbow Park.

Over 7700 members of the general public participated in a variety of programs such as flower identification, bird watching, making maple syrup, feeding zoo animals and building bluebird boxes, even more than in 2008!

### Events & Groups

A special event last year was the Zollman Zoo 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration put on by Friends of Oxbow. A grand time was had by all, but we felt sad that Dr. Zollman could not be present to enjoy it. Your park again played host to several other group functions and special events, including the annual Friends of Oxbow Spring Fun Fest, a Cash for Cougars party for the top donor class from Byron Elementary school, and the ever popular Friends Halloween Party. A partial list of the organizations using the park for meetings and events includes: Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Zumbro Education District, the Prairie Smoke chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts, Rochester Olmsted Council of Government Bike & Pedestrian Affairs Committee, Community Education classes, DNR Hunter education, Zumbro Valley Audubon, and Photo Safaris by Karen Davis.

### Volunteers

The invaluable Oxbow volunteers donated over 4337 hours to the upkeep, maintenance and improvement of your park, even more than last year. If the work done by Summer of Service, Community Work Service, Sentence to Serve and other work groups is included, volunteers donated over 11,000 hours to this park in 2009 - the equivalent of 5.4 full-time employees! Their work included but was certainly not limited to assisting with habitat maintenance and construction, event organizing and staffing, zoo cleaning and care, trash pickup, trail work, prairie restoration efforts and record keeping. The park simply could not function without them.

### Donations

As you are aware, your park has never charged an admission fee - a key philosophy that enables all people to return often and learn more about their Minnesota natural heritage. This policy makes the generosity of the surrounding community critical to the park's survival as a top tier resource and attraction.

To preserve this special gem of a park, grateful and generous visitors gave over \$31,000 in unrestricted donations this year. So far, an additional \$41,000 in donations from Friends 'Be a Builder' campaign, park visitors and Friends of Oxbow members has been restricted for construction of the new Wildcat Exhibit. A display in the Nature Center, made and donated by Friends member Cindy Krueger, enables you to see how the "construction" is progressing as our donations come in. Actual construction will not begin until the entire \$85,000 cost of the exhibit is in hand.

Due to this great generosity of our many members and donors, Friends of Oxbow was able to fund two additional interns this year for summer and fall, which

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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!

<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	\$25 - 49	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal
<input type="checkbox"/> Partner	\$50 - 99	
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$100 - 249	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ranger	\$250 - 499	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$500 - 999	
<input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropist	\$1000 - 4999	
<input type="checkbox"/> Director Circle	\$5000 and up	

*Be sure to ask your company if it matches donations!*

Name:

Address: (home and/or email - please print clearly)

C/S/Zip:

I prefer to receive my newsletter in color by email

*Make checks payable to Friends of Oxbow.*

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Welcome to a New Board Member



Friends is delighted to welcome Chad Jorgensen of Byron to our board of directors. Chad has been very active in his community for many years both as a Cub Scout Den leader and Grade school soccer coach. He is also on the board of directors of the Rochester Isaac Walton League.

Chad graduated from the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in 1994 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He is currently Engineering Supervisor for Caterpillar Forest Products in Owatonna, MN.

Chad and his family enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing, kayaking, gardening and raising a few chickens.

"I am interested in helping people learn to enjoy nature.... Increasing my participation in Friends of Oxbow will allow me to work with people who want to participate more in outdoor activities".

Chad's many talents will definitely be a boon to both Friends and the Park!

## Annual Review, con't from pg 3

helped to cushion the blow of losing a 6 month maintenance position due to budget cuts. Without this outpouring of support, we could not possibly assist the park staff in this vital way.

### Visitation

Since your park does not charge admission, it is difficult to obtain an accurate count of the tens of thousands of visitors welcomed during the year. There were over 1600 campground site rentals (each site generally has at least two occupants), and an estimated 60,000+ people explored the park hiking trails, nature center and zoo.

This is just an overview and obviously doesn't cover everything the staff has accomplished, such as countless additional everyday tasks and maintenance duties that would take a whole book to document!

The staff would like to thank all the volunteers and visitors without whom there would be no Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo!