



Winter 2016

Hartman Harrier

Newsletter of the Friends of Hartman Creek State Park



WINTER AT THE PARK

By Mike Bergum

Another winter season is upon us and with it comes challenges for park staff.

The park does its best to prepare for these challenges by moving summer equipment to our barn and bringing up the plow, with hopes we will not need it soon, and the parks snowmobile and grooming equipment used to provide cross country skiers with a great recreational outing. The ski trails, about nine miles in all, provide an excellent opportunity to try your skills at cross country skiing. Trails range from very easy to difficult depending upon what type of experience you seek. Snowshoe trails also dot across the park providing great opportunity to experience the park in a different light.

By January the park has long been in the process of planning for the seasonal candlelight ski, hike and snow shoe event. This year's event is scheduled for **Saturday, January 28, 2017, 5 to 8pm**. The event features two trails: one for skiing and one for hiking and snowshoeing. Both trails are about one mile in length and feature luminaries spread along its path to help you find your way. If you have not experienced this type of event you are missing out! It truly is a beautiful way to experience the park in the winter.

We are always seeking volunteers to help out with the event. Volunteer opportunities range from putting out candles, lighting candles, making candles days before the event, and much more. If you are interested in volunteering please call the park office or stop in. We would love to have your help.

Winter is a special time at Hartman Creek and we hope you take the opportunity to enjoy YOUR park during this special time of year.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Ice Fishing at the Park..... 2
- New Boardmembers 2
- Candlelight Ski..... 3
- Gift Ideas..... 3
- Reflections of a Naturalist. 4
- Hellestad House..... 5
- Cold Weather Critters..... 6
- Woodpeckers 7

CONTRIBUTORS

- Mike Bergum
- Jimmy Boshers
- Sue Eiler
- Debbie Gross
- Ken Karth
- Megan Karth
- Jarrold Kehring
- Matt Kolinski
- Diane Pinkalla
- Alice Williams



ICE FISHING AT HARTMAN CREEK By Jarrod Kehring

With fall behind us, the campground closed, and deer hunting nearing the end, Hartman Creek State Park transforms from a bustling outdoor mecca into a quiet pristine winter wonderland full of activities for every winter enthusiast. Hikers get their snowshoes ready, fat tire bikers prepare for another season of winter biking, and cross country skiers wait for the first set of tracks to be set. One pastime easily forgotten within Hartman Creek State Park is ice fishing.

The park has seven different lakes that are all fishable and accessible from within the park. These lakes play host to many different species of fish that are fun to catch and can also make great table fare. Hartman Lake and Allen Lake are by far the most popular among ice fisherman, providing plenty of action for the entire family. On these lakes, you can catch panfish like pumpkinseed, bluegill, sunfish, yellow perch and even a few crappies. If you want to chase bigger fish, there are plentiful numbers of Northern pike and largemouth bass. The most popular methods used for ice fishing in the park are to jig for panfish, or to use tip ups for Northern Pike. When fishing Hartman Lake and Allen Lake, you will notice the lake levels have been drawn down slightly over the fall. This drawdown was a direct result of dam repairs that were conducted earlier this year. Many have asked park staff how this will affect the fish and wildlife that reside in these lakes. The answer is that it will have a minimal effect, other than aesthetics. The plan is to raise the water levels in the spring back to normal, when it will have the least amount of impact on the lakes ecosystems.

With the water level lower than in years past, one strategy for finding fish is to target the creek channel that flows through the lake. This tends to be deeper than the rest of the lake, which helps attract and hold fish. **Make sure whenever you venture onto these lakes that you check ice thickness**, as conditions can change on a daily basis. Ice over the channel can be thinner than the rest of the lake. No matter which lake or species of fish you choose to pursue, it's a great way to spend a day soaking up the sights and sounds around you, often times in complete solitude, with an entire lake to yourself.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We would like to introduce two new board members who were elected at the annual meeting of FHCSF in September. Welcome aboard!

Alice Williams: I was born in western Wisconsin. I graduated with a BS in nursing at UW Madison and worked in coronary care and emergency medicine. I relocated to Stevens Point, married and joined Sentry Insurance to develop and implement wellness, benefit and occupational health programs for employees in 6 different states. In 2012 I retired after serving as Manager of Health Services for 35 years. My husband and I own a 75 acre horse boarding stable near Amherst and I participate in volunteer activities like 4H, medical mission trips and hold state and national offices in the Occupational Health Nursing Association. The horse trails at Hartman Creek State Park are a special place to me, with exposure to a variety of habitats, wildlife and wild flowers. Kayaking at Pope Lake State Natural Area is also a favorite pastime. I am looking forward to volunteering on the board and have agreed to be Secretary of Friends of Hartman Creek State Park.



Jimmy Boshers: Let me introduce myself. I retired in 2011 after working for the State of Wisconsin for 32 years, and my wife Sue and I moved to this area almost three years ago from Madison to be closer to family. We purchased our retirement home just 75 yards from the west perimeter of the park so hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing and cross country ski trails are just a short distance from our driveway. With lakes to fish, land to hunt on, trails to enjoy all times of the year, we could not ask for a better place to live. We are surrounded by wildlife, birds and beautiful scenery wherever we look. It's just amazing to live here in Portage County, and next to the park. I am glad to be a member of the board of Friends of Hartman Creek State Park and was appointed to serve as Chair of the Membership Committee.



CANDLELIGHT SKI, HIKE & SNOWSHOE—JANUARY 28, 2017

Come out on January 28 from 5:00pm—8:00pm and ski, snowshoe or walk the candlelit trails of Hartman Creek around Hartman and Pope Lakes. The trails will be lit by luminaries, and snowshoe rentals will be available. Enjoy a peaceful walk in the woods through a candlelit winter wonderland.

Bring your steaks, brats or hot dogs! A large charcoal grill will be fired up and ready for anyone who wants to grill out after a beautiful night in the park. There will also be a roaring campfire nearby to warm you up, and to roast some marshmallows. Additional refreshments will be provided by Friends of Hartman Creek.

There will be more changes this year too to make sure everyone has a great time. More staff at the office and more parking are just a few things we're getting ready!

Volunteers are needed before during and after the event! Whether it's making the luminaries, putting them out and lighting them, picking them up, helping with parking, or many other things, it takes lots of volunteers. Call the park office 715-258-2372 or stop in to sign up.

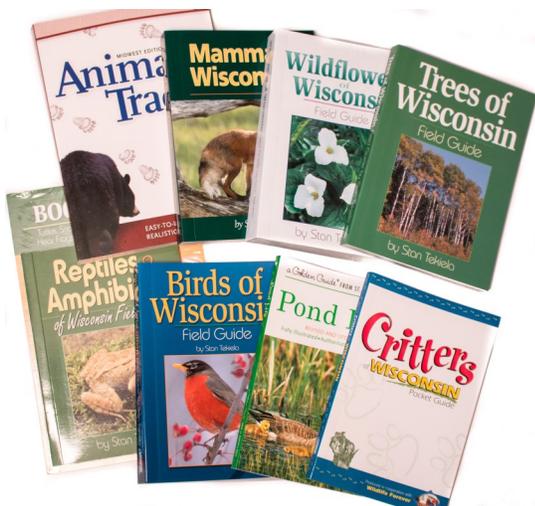
2017 PARK STICKERS ON SALE STARTING DECEMBER 1

2017 Park stickers will be available at the park office starting on December 1. **Get your sticker early** and avoid the lines for the candlelight ski (or get a couple for great gifts!)

GIFTS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Still looking for some great gifts? The Friends of Hartman Creek have a great selection of ideas, plus the 2017 park stickers are available. Stop in the office to see our wide selection of shirts, sweatshirts, books and more!

Want to know what those tracks are in the snow? What birds those are at your feeder? Find out the answers in one of the many guides in the park office.



Check out our new long-sleeve shirts, available in lots of sizes and colors.. There are also sweatshirts, hooded shirts and more. Come in early for the best selection!

REFLECTIONS OF A WISCONSIN MASTER NATURALIST

By Debbie Gross

Many of my fondest summer memories are of camping at Hartman Creek State Park and working on Junior Ranger books with my kids as we explored the park together. Over the years, our priorities changed and sadly, our visits became few and far between.

This past Labor Day weekend, we finally returned to take our 5-year old granddaughter on her very first camping trip. I was excited to find that the Junior Ranger (currently the Wisconsin Explorer) Program was still available. We listened to birds, wind, water, leaves, and other sounds in the park. We smelled trees, dirt, moss, picnic tables, and more. We turned over logs to see what happening underneath and went on several hikes. It was a wonderful weekend and was just what had been missing in my life.



For the most part, Hartman Creek was just as I had left it and it felt like a welcome homecoming to be back. The weather had been perfect and we hated to leave and return to our busy lives. As we were visiting with the park office staff and my granddaughter was picking out her new Explorer patch, I saw a brochure for the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program being offered at Hartman Creek and got very excited. It was almost like a Junior Ranger Program for adults! I couldn't wait to sign up, and I am very glad that I did.

The class was led by two amazing women, Mary Trainor and Sue Eiler, lifelong learners and adventurers who have both devoted their lives to sharing their knowledge of the outdoors and love of the park. We spent five full Saturdays being submersed in nature and meeting with expert foresters, ecologists, geologists, and biologists. We caught, sorted, and identified over 50 aquatic species in Hartman Lake and conducted various water tests along Hartman Creek. We learned how to identify several tree species, about forest succession and regeneration, about the historical and cultural background of the area and how human impacts influence our state. We studied geology on the Ice Age trail and learned about glaciers and watersheds. We were visited by a barred owl and a turkey vulture (and their handlers) and learned about other wild residents of the park. We were introduced to the medicinal and nutritional value of some local plants and did a little taste testing too. We learned about controlling and eradicating invasive species and how to deal with nuisance birds and animals. We had a lesson on trail building and led interpretive hikes and talks with our classmates.

As part of the course, we all worked on a capstone project that was or will be carried out on public lands. My project was a demonstration on how to harvest, store, and plant milkweed seeds and how important the milkweed plant is for the survival of the Monarch butterflies. (See photo).

As graduates of the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program, we have all pledged to volunteer time as interpretive guides, citizen scientists, and stewards of our public lands. Budget cuts often hit the environmental and natural resources departments the hardest. Our state and federal parks and wildlife areas need volunteers to help promote and maintain these treasured areas.

Please consider enrolling in the next Master Naturalist Program, becoming a volunteer, joining a friends group, visiting regularly, or sharing your appreciation of the outdoors with others. Help ensure that our children and grandchildren will one day be able to bring their children and grandchildren to great parks like Hartman Creek.

UPDATES ON THE HELLESTAD HOUSE By Diane Pinkalla

If it's open, people will come.

In last year's winter issue of the *Hartman Harrier*, I lamented that in 2015 the Hellestad House had been open only 25 times, tallying 426 visitors. Part of the problem was that the cabin had critter issues necessitating a lengthy closure, and the other part was a shortage of docents.

This year we were open 56 days during the regular season (Memorial Day through Labor Day) and 15 days post-season (September to mid-October), hosting 1,213 and 465 folks respectively. That totals 71 open times and 1,678 visitors, almost triple the openings and quadruple the visitors of last year!



Jim Abbott, Park Naturalist (position paid by Friends of Hartman Creek State Park), usually opened the cabin two afternoons a week, June through August; I came in most weekends, June through mid-October, and seven other docents volunteered from one to nine times each. Highest general attendance in the cabin, 78 visitors, occurred Saturday, June 4, a free admission day, when we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the park. The only day with more visitors, a weekday in late September, was when 100 students and four adults from Weyauwega-Fremont schools visited.

Touchable items in the heirloom cradle, a rock that floats, and timely wildflower arrays were new and popular additions to the nature displays. There were at least two notable sightings from the house: One day five Sandhill Cranes descended into the clearing east of the cabin and strutted around in full “prehistoric” voice for several minutes, long enough for a visitor to record them on his phone. And on an October Saturday my 8 year old granddaughter came with me as a student volunteer; she was standing in the doorway when she witnessed a large snag suddenly topple over “if a tree falls in the forest,” indeed!

Please consider this your invitation to visit the Hellestad House next season. Even if you have been there before, you may find something new to peruse including changing displays and a collection of field guides. There's plenty of space on the calendar for more volunteer docents too, and orientation is available. Call the park office for details.

(Hellestad House, a log cabin originally built in the 1800s near Scandinavia, Wisconsin, was reconstructed near the Allen Lake picnic area. It is used as a nature and history center and is staffed during the summer and fall by volunteers. Diane Pinkalla, a retired teacher who became a Master Naturalist Volunteer, has spent many hours welcoming visitors to the house and providing interesting exhibits).

MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEER TRAINING COURSES HARTMAN CREEK STATE PARK

SPRING 2017—April 22, 29, May 6, 20, June 3

SUMMER 2017—August 14-18

www.wimasternaturalist.org www.friendsofharmancreek.org

Are you fascinated with nature? Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge and skills with others? Modeled after the Master Gardener program, the Master Naturalist program is developing a corps of informed volunteers throughout the state. You can become a WI Master Naturalist Volunteer!

COLD WEATHER CRITTERS By Megan Karth

Humans survive the cold by either migrating to warmer areas (snowbirds) or making adaptations to our environments, not that different from other animals.

When the leaves start to fall, we tighten up the house, stockpile fuel, and gather our winter garb to insure we can maintain a safe body temperature inside and out. Many of us change our diets too, craving heavier, calorie-rich foods that would have been crucial to the survival of our ancestors, but generally just add inches and pounds to us.

The plants and animals of Wisconsin have adapted over millennia to maintain their winter survival too. In the animal world, just like us, they migrate or adapt.

Many **birds** fly south where they can survive without much change in behavior except maybe a diet modification. Some birds even move into Wisconsin from the north (think Snowy Owl) because more food is available than in their summer range. Those who remain here may seek protection in a hollow tree, or in conifers and areas thick with brush, and will have a constant need for food to maintain energy stores. They can fluff out their feathers for more insulation and even shiver like we do, to increase body temperature and eat snow for water, though a fluid water source is preferred. The human intervention of bird feeding, along with climate change, has extended the season for some avian friends, and each year there are winter sightings of species previously unknown here in winter. Birds like turkeys find enough to eat as long as the snow is not too deep.

Mammals have adapted many strategies for winter survival, including hibernation and torpor. Both are states in which body temperature, heart rate and respiration are severely decreased to conserve energy. In hibernation an animal stays in a small space for a lengthy period without waking up while animals in torpor enter this state for shorter periods, from a few hours to days or weeks at a time. Some species like bats, chipmunks, ground squirrels and woodchucks, are true hibernators and will enter a den and not awaken until spring. Bears winter with an extreme, almost hibernation form of torpor, badgers, chipmunks, and other species have a less severe torpor, while skunks, raccoons, and some squirrels will seek protection in dens for up to weeks at a time in severe cold, but come out to feed periodically. Flying squirrels cluster in groups of up to 20 to maintain body heat. Foxes stay awake but may seek a den in extreme weather. Use of dens, in a cave or hollow or by digging into earth or sand, is a way animals adapt their environment. For efficiency, dens are often reused by a variety of species. Living beneath the ground, whether hibernating or not, moderates temperature and protects from wind and water, so less calories are required. Mammals also grow denser coats to survive winter.



Amphibians also use various strategies for winter survival. Leopard, green and bull frogs overwinter on the floor of ponds, streams and marshes, below the freezing line. Peepers, chorus and wood frogs winter in leaf litter under logs or rocks near water bodies and can freeze solid, making their own antifreeze that allows body fluids to freeze while cells are protected. Toads survive by burrowing and some salamanders burrow on the forest floor, below the freezing line, often under logs or rocks. All have very decreased metabolism in the cold. A severely cold, dry winter without snow cover is very hard on these species and can result in high mortality.

Reptiles include snakes, turtles and (uncommon) lizards. Snakes hibernate below the frost line, often for 6-7 months at a time. Some make a hole in the ground or use tunnels made by other animals or follow the paths of roots. Others gather in masses called “hibernacula” in crevices in rocks, quarries or old foundations. 10 of the 11 species of turtles in Wisconsin overwinter on or under the floor of a water body for protection.

COLD WEATHER CRITTERS (continued)

Fish survival depends on the species, but there are a variety of adaptations used. Their metabolism slows, they decrease their activity, move to an area in the water body that meets their needs. They need oxygen but not as much food, and digestion is slowed. Trout and whitefish are cold water species and survive well, usually going to deeper, quieter pools. Walleye, panfish and northern are cool water species and do OK, but are less active. Bass and muskies get sluggish in winter and bullheads actually burrow into the sand and muck on the bottom of the water body. Some catfish enter a state almost like hibernation. Of course not all fish make it through the winter, but significant winterkill, (caused by low oxygen, not cold) generally only happens when the ice and snow are so thick on water bodies that the oxygen rich stores are depleted. Shallow, weedy water bodies are most vulnerable to O₂ depletion.

Insects are so varied that they have adapted many strategies. Some lay eggs under bark or in soil near their host plant, some lay eggs on a host insect, some live underground, some like to live in human habitations. And of course there are numerous other creatures in our waters and soil that have adapted to the cold.

The bottom line is, those not adapted to surviving Wisconsin winters don't live here but winter hardy creatures are everywhere at the park, and even in your back yard. With climate change and human intervention, conditions change, and so do the adaptations of living things. We invite you to be observant of your neighbors in nature and learn their habits. Friends of Hartman Creek SP has some great field guides for sale in the park office that can answer questions about the critters we share space with. And Wisconsin DNR and other websites make accessible a ton of scientific information on any creature you could think of. Stay warm!

WOODPECKERS By Sue Eiler

Suet feeders are popular spots used by many species in this seasonal winter weather. The high fat content provides needed calories and energy for cold-weather survival. Woodpeckers are especially wonderful to observe, displaying some of their adaptations for insect eating. Special, stiff tail feathers form the third point of a tripod, giving the bird stability while working to excavate for food. Strong legs, sharp claws and toes in which two face forward, two backward, allow for scaling vertical surfaces with little effort. Bristles over and around the beak cover the nostrils, filtering any debris from excavating cavities and digging for food. An extra-long tongue, coated with a sticky substance, actually wraps around the skull, extending two to three times the length of the beak. Backward facing barbs extend from the tongue, creating a type of hook capable of piecing and snagging beetle larva from their wooden chambers. The skull bones, too, have the adaptation of being extra thick to absorb the shock of repeated beating of wood.

Park forests are perfect habitat for many species of woodpeckers, with mature and sometimes diseased trees providing ample food and shelter. Each woodpecker has its own signature nest hole size, from the diminutive Downy's perfectly round 1 1/4" size to the magnificent Pileated's rectangular 3" x 4". These birds perform a vital service in eating moths, bugs, carpenter ants and wood boring beetles that plague trees. In turn, damaged trees provide nesting habitat.



Friends of Hartman Creek
State Park

N 2480 Hartman Creek Road
Waupaca, WI 54981



friendsofhartmancreek.org



The Friends of Hartman Creek State Park was organized for educational and charitable purposes to assist the Wisconsin DNR with interpretive, scientific, historical, educational and related services at Hartman Creek State Park.

To accomplish these goals the group has sponsored interpretive and environmental educational experiences including a paid naturalist in summer, provided educational materials for sale, and provided financial support for programs, facilities and resources at the park.

SUPPORT THE PARK & JOIN THE FRIENDS GROUP!

Help us continue to keep Hartman Creek State Park the great place that it is!



Name _____

Type of Membership:

Individual (\$10)____ Family (\$25)____ Organization (\$50)____

Individual 5 Year (\$40)____ Family 5 year (\$100)_____

Mail To:

Friends of Hartman Creek
N2480 Hartman Creek Rd
Waupaca, WI 54981

Address _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

*Also can be dropped off at
the park*

Would you like to be contacted about volunteering opportunities? Yes No

Best way to contact you: Email Phone