

Mackenzie Sugar Bush Gazette

President: Steve Siegler
V. President: RuthAnn Lee
Secretary: Deb W-Neurohr
Treasurer: Don Jackson

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

-- by Steve Siegler

I hope all is well as we wind down toward another year. It was another exciting summer and fall at MacKenzie. Our annual volunteer picnic was a great success with about forty people attending. The food and fellowship were outstanding!

Our fall festival that was supposed to be held on October 7th was postponed to October 8th due to a forecast of inclement weather. The communication skills of those involved in making the decision to postpone were superb, using social media to get the word out. The festival was attended by near record crowds and resulted in a grand day for all. The weather could not have been better!

As most have heard, the Friends are undertaking a major project involving the enhancement of the wildlife area. Help of all kinds is going to be needed for a successful completion and we will be reaching out for volunteers and donations as we progress. Look for more information to come on this project.

I want to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. Come on out and enjoy all MacKenzie has to offer at this time of year; the winter landscape is beautiful!



Friends of MacKenzie Center

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The Friends Wildlife Project by Don Lucke and John Frank

The Wildlife Project is all about providing another generation or more of children with an outdoor education opportunity that includes learning about native Wisconsin wildlife. In a recent letter of support for the project, Ben Bergey, DNR Director of Parks Division said, "This project is designed to improve the animal living spaces, trails, viewing areas and interpretive resources...[and will] ...include a modern facility design resulting in an enhanced learning environment for school groups and visitors to the property."

The design and engineering drawings have now been completed for Phase 1 which will create a new and expanded living environment for the wolves, coyotes and foxes. The design documents are detailed enough to allow us to proceed with cost estimates and a better defined path for fundraising. (cont. on page 2)

Fall Festival

The Fall Festival, held on Oct. 8th at the MacKenzie Center, was a huge success. Our last minute change of date from Saturday to Sunday (due to predicted severe weather on Saturday) proved to be a good one. Sunday's weather was beautiful and our volunteers and visitors were great about adapting to the change. Approximately 1200 people showed up to try the many activities offered and to get to know more about the MacKenzie Center. Terry Schraufnagel and the Madison Area Ukulele Initiative provided wonderful entertainment and added to the festive spirit. Thanks to our 100+ volunteers and the many donors who helped make the event not only fun, but a successful fundraiser as well. This event brought in \$5,220 to support the MacKenzie Center and its programs. Thanks to everyone who helped make this 2nd Fall Festival even better than the first!

Fall Festival 2017 Donors

Apple Berry Farm, Cross Plains
Art Woodward, Rio
Charlie Biddle, Rio
DeForest All Stop, Inc.
Home Depot, Mukwonago
Horn Feeds, Mukwonago
Impact Confections, Janesville
Jim Kampen, Rio
Lake Geneva Produce at Papa's, Eagle
Lapacek's Orchard, Poynette
Lentz Family Farm, Elkhorn
Madison Area Ukulele Initiative
Jim and Phyllis Nelson
Norske Nook, DeForest
O'Brion Agency, Portage
Pardeeville Sport Marine
Pease Produce, Wyocena
Portage Culvers
Portage Pizza Hut
Poynette True Value
Rio American Legion Post 208
Terry Schraufnagel
Shaklee Products, Poynette
Sheila Bahr, Rio
Silver Spring Campsites, Rio
St. Vincent, Rio
Stepping Stone Learning Center, Poynette
Target, Delafield
The Rio Shopper
Treinen Farm, Lodi
Walmart, Mukwanago



The Friends Wildlife Project (continued)

We're making good fundraising progress thanks to one hundred percent of Friends board members who have pledged or contributed special gifts totaling \$10,000 to the Friends specifically for the Wildlife Project. We also have applied for a grant from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and are optimistic that with the award of this grant, the matching funds provided by the Friends of MacKenzie, and year-end gifts, we will have committed funds over \$60,000 towards our \$300,000 goal moving into 2018. Thanks to all the Friends volunteers who have committed to help keep fundraising efforts moving forward.

We have started making presentations about the project to local businesses and civic groups. We offered a tour of the wildlife area for members of the Poynette Chamber in September and presented at a Lodi Rotary meeting in October. We are scheduled to present to the Portage Rotary in January. But these presentations are just the beginning!

Can you help us connect with other community groups or businesses or help with a fundraiser banquet?

During the cold winter months ahead, we need volunteers to help spread the word about the Wildlife Project to a larger audience, including local businesses and civic groups, and ultimately the general public. We could also use some help with a fundraising banquet at the MacKenzie Center. Please contact John Frank or Don Lucke if you can help us make more connections in the community and reach our fundraising goals.

johncalvinfrank@gmail.com or
heartshare@centurytel.net.

Maintenance Report: by Don Lucke

Following one of our largest wood splitting days in late May, most of our work days were focused on helping with set up for the Fall Festival event: a fresh paint job for our hay rack wagon, clearing brush and trail grooming along the hay rack route and, of course, the all-hands support for the Festival set-up day. Later in the summer we completed six work days, felling scrub trees and brush clearing in various areas around the wildlife exhibit -- this effort really opened the spaces and greatly improved the view along the North pathways, especially for the badger. Look for a surprise come maple time as we've cleared the tall buckthorn from the sugar bush area east of the Badger Den. All-in-all, volunteers put in a total of just over 350 hours on these scheduled work days. We will add a few more hours in December as we continue with support for the Center's invasive cork tree removal program.

Thank You to all MacKenzie volunteers, your contributions make a huge impact to the Center and are greatly appreciated!



2018 Friends of MacKenzie Calendar

<u>January 9</u>	Board Meeting
<u>January 18</u>	Annual Meeting
<u>January 21</u>	Learn to Ice Fish
<u>February 9</u>	Snowshoe Hike
<u>February 13</u>	Board Meeting (Seating new Board members, election of officers)
<u>February 15</u>	Maple program Training
<u>March</u>	Maple program
<u>April 7</u>	Maple Festival
<u>May 16-17</u>	MOHEE
<u>June 8-10</u>	Pope & Young Event

Friends of MacKenzie to Celebrate their 40th Anniversary in 2018 – by Ruth Ann Lee

The Friends of MacKenzie wish to express their sincere appreciation and thanks to all members, volunteers, and MacKenzie staff over the past 40 years. The organization was founded in 1978 by Ingeborg "Ingie" Lothe, and although she knew it was the first Friends group of its kind, I'm sure she didn't realize that the Friends of MacKenzie Center would become a model for other Friends groups within parks statewide.

From the very beginning the Friends group supported the work of the Center and the goal of supporting environmental education to the youth that visited. Although not always easy, the Friends group was persistent in finding successes and reinvigorating members, volunteers and staff to give perspective and motivation in reaching the Center's mission and goals.

In recognition of this anniversary, we are planning to incorporate this celebration into our events all year long. It all "kicks off" with the Friends Annual Membership Meeting on January 18th. Come and participate in a panel discussion on the property and Friends' history with past staff and volunteers. Let's remember "the good ole days" as we look forward to all the new opportunities that 2018+ will bring us.

MacKenzie Center Property Report: By Samantha Kueffler, Property Manager

The beautiful weather has welcomed many visitors, students and scouts to experience the MacKenzie Center over the past few months. Since July, the property has hosted over 4600 students for day and overnight education field trips. I am thrilled to announce that of 57 visiting groups, 24 were new to the MacKenzie Center! In addition to our education programming, the property hosted four Learn to Hunt events this fall, allowing students to experience the Center while learning to be responsible, safe hunters.

Staff and volunteers have been working diligently on many improvement projects across the property including invasive species removal, facility repairs and upgrades, and the development of interpretive signage. The forests are also changing as the removal of a prohibited species, *Amur cork* tree, has begun property wide and a forest regeneration harvest occurs on the south end of the property. The wildlife exhibit has also seen many improvements from brush and invasive removal to the installation of new automatic waterers and a bison shifting gate. Great enhancements are occurring property-wide!

Volunteers should look for more information to come on a new volunteer hour recording system. While the log book will remain in the Finishing House, a new online recording system will be available in January! Also, many new family-friendly events will be held at MacKenzie in 2018. Be sure to check in soon for event dates and details.

Thank you all for supporting me through my first six month as property manager of the Center. I am eager to experience another season at MacKenzie. As always, thank you to all of you for your work and dedication to the MacKenzie Center.

DNRMackenzieCenter@wisconsin.gov

Changes Coming for Distribution of the Sugar Bush Gazette

As a way to save time and money, this will be the last issue of the "Sugar Bush Gazette" that we will mail to all members and volunteers. Starting in 2018, we will send the newsletter via email to everyone for whom we have email addresses and only send hard copies to those for whom we do not have an email address. If you don't receive this issue electronically, it means we don't have your current email address. Please be sure to fill in your email address when you become a member or renew your membership. You can also send an email with your first and last name and email address to friendsofmackenzie@gmail.com. This will also ensure that you get other notices in a timely manner. Thanks for helping us use technology for better communication!

Gift Shop – Sue Brockel

The Gift Shop in the lodge has several new items. Both the long sleeve t-shirt and the full zipper sweatshirt were requested. These items, along with our normal list of merchandise, will be available at the annual meeting or upon request. Give Sue Brockel (608-846-4145) a call if you would like to visit the shop. The shirts and sweatshirts make great Christmas gifts and the trinkets could be super stocking stuffers.





Time to Renew Your Membership

Memberships in the Friends of MacKenzie come up for renewal each January, so now is a great time to take care of that. You can use the form in this newsletter, find one in our brochure or online, or pay in person at the annual meeting on January 18. Even though many of you contribute many volunteer hours (which makes a huge difference in keeping the Center running and enabling the Friends to do so many things), you might also wish to become a member. The dues help fund scholarships for schools and other groups when they come to MacKenzie for day and overnight trips (often used for transportation costs), to purchase materials for projects and for the upkeep of the property, and so much more. This year we have a special opportunity to support the wildlife project and honor the Friends of MacKenzie's 40th anniversary year with an extra donation. Please consider renewing or becoming a new member today!

2018 Friends of Mackenzie Membership Dues

Individual \$30.00 Annually \$ _____

Wildlife Donation \$ _____

Family \$40.00 Annually \$ _____

Life Member \$300.00 \$ _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

In addition, 2018 marks the 40th anniversary year of the Friends of MacKenzie. Please consider an additional gift of \$40.00 that will be used to help to directly support the new Wildlife Project. The Wildlife Project is a large remodel of the wildlife area; focusing on improving visitor trails, viewing area, animal living spaces, work spaces and interpretive resources. This project is a multi-year project and phase #1 should break ground in 2018!

Name/s: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Please fill out the information above and send it to:

Friends of MacKenzie Center
W7303 County Highway CS & Q
Poynette, WI 53955

Thank You