

Mackenzie Sugar Bush Gazette

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

-- by Steve Siegler

What a beautiful fall we are having! With the holidays fast approaching, I wonder where the year has gone. The annual volunteer picnic, held in August, was a success! At the picnic, a discussion was held about having a fall festival. That discussion got the ball rolling and a committee was formed with Hayley Parsons and Deb Wearne-Neurohr taking the lead. The festival was held October 22nd and attended by many. What a great time had by all! Hats off to Hayley, Deb, committee members and all volunteers. The weather was cooperative and spectacular. The Friends are working with the DNR on two exciting projects. Although they are just starting, I want to share them with you. The first is "Bucks for Bunks". The existing bunks in the dormitories are old and need replacing. Donations can be sent to the Friends of MacKenzie Center - Attn: Bucks for Bunks. Look on our webpage for more details. The second project will update and enhance some of the animal enclosures. A committee has been formed and has met with architects. Hopefully this project will take off in the near future.

Thanks to all for another great year at MacKenzie and hope all have a safe and happy Holiday season.



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

Friends of MacKenzie Center

W7303 County Road CS & Q

Poynette, WI 53955

608-635-8105

friendsofmackenzie@gmail.com

Thanks, United Community Bank!

United Community Bank made a very generous offer to the Friends of MacKenzie. They donated \$1 to the Friends for every "like" they received on their Face Book page during a two week period in October. The total was just under \$150.

Treasurer Don Jackson accepted the donation on behalf of the Friends from Rebecca Sackett, Website and Social Media Administrator, United Community Bank. It's great to have the support of businesses in our community!



Fall Festival

The first ever Fall Festival held on Oct. 22 at the MacKenzie Center was a huge success. We were fortunate to have wonderful weather which made the whole day even better. Approximately 1300 people showed up to try the many activities offered and to get to know more about what the MacKenzie Center has to offer. The Rio Band and Prairie Thunder Cloggers provided some great 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. All proceeds will stay at the MacKenzie Center and will help fund programs for school groups and improvements to the facility. We're already thinking about holding the event next year and have started talking about ways to make it even better!



Fall Festival 2016 Donors

Pease Produce, Wyocena
The O'Brien Agency, Portage
Pizza Hut of Portage
Culvers of Portage
Portage Lumber/Do-it Best
Lapaceks Orchard, Poynette
Apple Berry Farms, Cross Plains
Spectrum Brands, Middleton
Silver Springs Campsites, Rio
Charlie Biddle, Rio
Jim Kampen, Rio
Rio HS Band
Prairie Thunder Cloggers
The Rio Shopper
Jim and Phyllis Nelson, Rio
American Legion Post 208, Rio
St. Vincent de Paul Society, Portage
Art Woodward, Rio
Meyer Family Farms, Salem
Harvest Time Orchards, Twin Lakes
Schuett Farms, Mukwonago
Schroeder Farms, Rio
Dennis and Sue Mengeling, Poynette



Fall Festival

The Friends Wildlife Project:

It goes without saying the wildlife exhibit at the MacKenzie Center is probably the Center's main visitor attraction. It is certainly very dear in the hearts of the Friends of MacKenzie and it receives constant attention from the Staff.

Helping to keep the wildlife program exciting and current has been foremost in our planning and so it is not too surprising that this has led to a broader project consideration. We currently have a conceptual design proposal from Ayers Associates, Madison that will address maintenance and expansion ideas for the wildlife program and could potentially include phased in enhancements to the MacKenzie Center itself. One possibility could be a new entrance parking area with a reception pavilion to welcome visitors. It could contain educational exhibits and possibly a gift shop. This initial proposal, if we proceed, will provide concept graphics with plans and construction cost estimates for evaluation and further decision making. Very exciting! Stay tuned.



MacKenzie Center Director Highlights -

By Ryder Will, Interim Director

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you reading this newsletter for your support and dedication to the MacKenzie Center. I would also like to provide some information on the transition from JD Smith as Director and bringing the Center into the Parks Program.

As many of you may already know, the Department of Natural Resources has moved the management functions of the MacKenzie Center to the Parks and Recreation program. That being said, the daily operations have and will remain essentially unchanged. The staff has a new reporting structure, and there will be a variety of support functions more readily available. The mission and goals of the Center remain the same, and we hope to build on all the great work that has been accomplished over the last few years. There is a desire to continue and enhance the Center as a destination for outdoor education and recreation. Programming, special events, facilities, and all the other features of the Center will continue – maybe with some improvements.

Unrelated to the Parks and Recreation transition, JD Smith has promoted to another role within the Department – the South Central Region Field Integration Leader. In this new role JD will work with all the Department programs in this region of the state on a wide variety of projects that involve multiple programs. It is fortunate that his work keeps him in this part of the state, so the Center will continue to have JD as a resource and supporter. With JD's departure, I have been asked to fill in until a permanent replacement is hired.

I recently talked with JD and he wanted to pass along his indescribable appreciation for the staff, Friends of MacKenzie, and other volunteers over the past 2 ½ years! He reflected on accomplishing so many improvements in the property and programming and how the only way it was possible was working so closely together with the Friends. He clearly appreciates all of you and will continue his support of the center in his new role.

I can see why JD has such a strong appreciation for the Center and those involved here. The dedication and enthusiasm was very clearly demonstrated with the combined efforts to host the first annual Fall Festival. The event was one of the best examples I have seen of Friends members, property staff, other DNR staff, and a huge corps of volunteers working together. Around 1300 people were able to enjoy the Center and all the activities thanks to everyone's efforts. I sincerely hope that we helped create some more life-long visitors to and supporters of the Center. It was a great start to what should turn out to be a long run of great events.

The Fall Festival, wood cutting days, educational volunteers, and all the other volunteer activities that occur at the Center are a major factor in what makes this such an enjoyable and meaningful place for thousands of visitors each year. As I continue in the interim director role, and my eventual successor arrives, I can assure you that the volunteer efforts and partnerships will be appreciated and continue to grow.

It has been an exciting and interesting couple of months serving as the interim director of the Center, and I am very proud to say I am part of this tremendous facility. I am glad to be working with the excellent and dedicated staff, and certainly those of you involved in the Friends as well as the variety of other supporters. I look forward to meeting and working with more of you during the time I am here.

DNRMackenzieCenter@wisconsin.gov

Maintenance Report: Don Lucke

Maintenance work day events slowed considerably following all the preparation for the Pope & Young event in early June. In July and September we gathered to locate and buck wood for a subsequent wood splitting day on October 8th. A special thanks to Vernon Herr and Ray Conkle for providing their wood splitters. In all we provided a total of 120 hours and reestablished a large share of the wood supply for the Lodge and Maple program.

By now you've probably heard about the great success of our first ever MacKenzie Fall Festival October 22nd. All hands made it happen and in addition to the scheduled Festival set up day, the Friends conducted two work days to build side rails on our hay wagon and install temporary snow fencing to keep car parking in-check on the State Game Farm property. A huge thanks to all the volunteers and staff for making the event so successful.

A BIG THANK YOU to our volunteers ... Thus far for 2016 we have completed 16 work day events providing over 520 volunteer hours. That's a lot of hard work and fun (and turkey sandwiches). Be sure to join us for the next one!



Wood splitting work crew

2017 Friends of MacKenzie Calendar

<u>January 10</u>	Board Meeting
<u>January 19</u>	Annual Meeting in the <u>Lodge</u>
<u>February 14</u>	Board Meeting Seating new Board members Election of officers
<u>February 21/22</u>	<u>Maple program</u> <u>Training</u>
<u>March</u>	<u>Maple program</u>
<u>April 1</u>	<u>Maple Festival</u>
<u>August 20</u>	Annual Picnic for Friends & Volunteers

Friends of MacKenzie

Annual Membership Meeting

Where: MacKenzie Center Lodge

When: January 19, 2017

4:45 - 5:30 PM - Registration, Payment & Social Time

5:30 - 6:15 PM Welcome, Invocation

Dinner (\$10)

- Pulled Bison Sandwich, Slaw, Potato Salad, Dessert, etc.

6:15 – 7:00 PM Business Meeting / election of board
members

7:00 – 7:45 Guest Speaker – Mark LaBarbera

Outdoor Heritage Education Center

Contact Don Lucke for reservations

920-992-3999 or heartshare@centurytel.net



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 or find one in our brochure or online. 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). It also is used directly for materials for projects like replacing the roof on the log cabin museum, safety improvements for our hay wagon, purchasing bird feeding supplies, improvements to the wildlife area, and so much more. Please consider renewing or becoming a new member today!

Check Us Out on Facebook and on the Web

Please check out our Facebook page (Friends of the MacKenzie Environmental Education Center) and our web page (friendsofmackenzie.org). These are great places to keep up-to-date with what's going on at MacKenzie and see photos of recent events, etc. You can also make donations via Pay Pal from our website. Look for the Donate button on the home page. A printable copy of our membership form is there as well. From the "About" tab you can see our gift shop brochure and soon we hope to make it possible to buy from the gift shop online. If you shop our gift shop in person (usually open for school group visits and during MacKenzie events) you can now use a credit card. We're really moving into the 21st century!



2017 Friends of Mackenzie Membership Dues

<u>Individual</u>	\$30.00 Annually	\$ _____	<u>Donation</u>	\$ _____
<u>Family</u>	\$40.00 Annually	\$ _____		
<u>Life Member</u>	\$300.00	\$ _____	<u>Amount Enclosed</u>	<u>\$ _____</u>

Name: _____

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

Thank You

Poynette, WI 53955