

Friends of Lake Louise State Park

Newsletter

January 2020 By Sally Vietor

News from Forestville/Mystery Cave and Lake Louise State Park

By Dawn Ryan: Mystery Cave Manager

Join us and the state park staff at Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park on February 8th from 6 p.m. -9 p.m. for a fun and free winter event! Snowshoe, or hike on trails lit by luminaries across the historic bridge. See Historic Forestville by full moon and hike a candlelit one mile trail. Warm up by the fire afterwards with some hot cocoa, cookies, and roasted marshmallows in the picnic shelter. Stop in anytime during this ongoing event. Snowshoes available to borrow at the picnic shelter. The hike begins at 6:00 at the park's picnic shelter.

*Volunteers are needed for this event. If interested please call the park at 507-937-3251 to help with set-up, take-down, or during event assistance.

Look for some different faces at Forestville/Mystery Cave and Lake Louise State Parks this year. After 45 years with the Minnesota DNR, Park Manager, Mark White has retired. Mark spent 37 of those years at Forestville/Mystery Cave and Lake Louise State Parks. Assistant Park Manager, Warren Netherton also retired after nearly three decades of service. In their place, Nick Schwaegerl, has stepped in as the new park manager. Nick worked in various positions at Crow Wing, Father Hennepin, Whitewater, and Frontenac State Parks before coming to Forestville. Bob Storlie, transferred from the Mystery Cave manager into the assistant manager position; you will see him at the Forestville office now. New to the area is Dawn Ryan, new manager of Mystery Cave, she spent 3 years as the manager of McCarthy Beach State Park in northern Minnesota but the majority of her park ranger career was spent with the National Park Service. On behalf of Nick, Bob, and Dawn, they look forward to meeting you and hope you enjoy your beautiful parks as much as they do.

Winter in the Park
by Deb Iverson

Many times I hear people say “The park closes after Labor Day weekend”. While we do close for camping the park itself remains open for use – the horse trails turn into snowmobile trails for the winter. The hiking trails turn into cross country skiing and snow shoe trails. The wonderful wildlife is much easier to spot in the winter.

On a typical visit you might see white-tail deer sleeping on a bed of oak leaves or grazing on some acorns they dug out. If you look closely you may spot a Great Horned Owl or a Barred Owl, both of which nest in the park. Red-tail hawks are always flying around looking for a snack and sometimes they will be joined by beautiful Bald eagles. I have seen as many as seven eagles all enjoying the park.

Nothing compares to the peace and quiet of the park in winter, especially after a fresh snow. Everything is covered in a fresh, white blanket and the peace and quiet is refreshing.



Reminder there are snowshoes available at LeRoy city hall or Adams city hall.

We had our Annual Open House on June 8th 2019, which was also the State Parks “National Day Out”. We had a great turn out. Awesome music by Sister Luv and Cowboy Church musicians. Thank you to Paul & Cindy Hamlin for taking charge and grilling. We used 75 brats and 40 hot dogs. We took in \$213.00 in donations, plus \$25 from First National Bank and \$75 from First State Bank. A big thank you to the Friends of Lake Louise for the treats and for helping make the day a success. Picture by Cindy Hamlin.



On June 13th we set-up a fundraiser booth at the LeRoy Farmers Market to sell brats and hot dogs that we had left from our open house. A big Thank-you to Gareld and Verna for helping sell food and Sally for grilling. We used 50 brats, 24 hot dogs, 6 doz. Buns, 59 chips, 43 cookies and 2cases of water. We took in \$290.00. Thank you to Sharon for purchasing the cookies.*



On October 19th we had our annual candlelight walk. We had the local Boy Scouts help set-up and take down the candles. They also kept them lit throughout the night. Sally purchased individual pizzas for them for their help. Forgot to put out the donation buckets, but we did get \$35.00 in donations. Thank you to all the Friends group for the treats and help. We also had hot apple cider and punch. We had a pretty good turnout for it being a cold night. Pictures by Carissa Rubin.*

On November 7th, Sally went to the “Friends Group Regional Workshop” that was held at Whitwater State Park. Speakers were Ashley Pethan-Friends Group Coordinator with Parks and Trails Council, Lisa Filter- External Relations Director with Parks and Trails Council, and Arielle Courtney- Partnership Development Consultant with DNR.

The 1st session was on “Members & Supporters”. 2nd session was on “Communication”. 3rd session was on “Goal & Project Planning”.

If you want to learn more about it you can ask Sally or you can find it on the Parks & Trails Council web site.

In November I sent an email out with a question for the friends group, asking for input on when to have our open house this year. We can go with the 2nd Saturday in June to go along with the State Parks National Day out or we can go with the 1st Sunday in June the way we started out doing. (Noting that the 1st Sunday everyone who comes into the park by vehicle has to have a park permit. The 2nd Saturday coincides with Adams Dairy days also). Dates for open house are either June 7th or 13th.

And for the candlelight walk, looking at the full moon schedule we have either September 5th or October 3rd. (September 5th is Labor Day weekend, so not expecting much for helpers).

Need to plan on having a meeting late March or early April.

President Sharon Jacobson; Vice President Charlie Anderson; Secretary Kathy Farlinger; Treasurer Sally Vietor.

If any questions or concerns contact Sally at sjvietor@yahoo.com or cell 507-438-0430