



# Tracks & Trails

Glendalough State Park • Battle Lake, MN • Spring 2020

100<sup>th</sup>  
issue!

## The Trails Go On. Follow the Tracks.

by Dan and Sandra Thimgan, May 2020

The 100th issue of Tracks & Trails? Wow! Who would have predicted that 25 years ago as we wrote the first issue of our fledgling newsletter? (Issue #1 is included in this mailing)

We had even forgotten how many issues we edited. We had to ask Park manager, Jeff Wiersma, to look it up for us. It turns out that of the 100, we did the first 66.

We distinctly remember attending the 1995 GSP Board meeting in which we proposed a monthly publication for the park's membership. We ultimately decided on a quarterly publication, the GSP board gave us their blessing, and the very first issue came out later that year.

We conceived the name, Tracks & Trails, to emphasize some on-going themes featured throughout our tenure as editors. Namely, to encourage park stakeholders and visitors to appreciate both the park's natural beauty (the "trails"), and the creatures of all types that inhabit the place (the "tracks").

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## Doing Time at Glendalough

*The Impact of the Sentencing to Service (STS) Program*

by Jeff Wiersma and Cindy Lueth, May 2020

In 1991, Glendalough became Minnesota's newest state park, but it wasn't what you would call a "shiny and new" acquisition. After more than sixty years as a hunting camp, private retreat, and game farm, Glendalough was accepted in an "as is" condition. Along with the pristine natural resources that made it attractive for a park, there were also many blights on the landscape from prior land use. Glendalough had grown in size over the years through acquisition of neighboring farmsteads. This resulted in an accumulation of dilapidated buildings, deteriorating fence lines, abandoned dump sites, and rusted equipment that littered the landscape. Not only was a major cleanup needed, but if the new park was to thrive, amenities would need to be developed to accommodate the visiting public who came to recreate in the natural surroundings. At the least, a typical state park would provide improved trails, campsites, picnic areas, parking, and restrooms. Even though Glendalough's acreage had been a donation, the financial implications of the new state park were considerable.

The State Parks budget was exceptionally lean when Glendalough became a state park, so much so that the Parks Director prior to Bill Morrissey had actually turned down the opportunity to acquire Glendalough. The feeling was that MN State Parks needed to concentrate on maintaining what they had rather than add new obligations. Fortunately, Morrissey thought otherwise, but even he saw little choice but to "mothball" Glendalough until funding improved, no matter how unpopular it might be with enthusiastic local park supporters. New Park Manager Les Estes had other ideas. Estes was an invaluable asset who had overseen



1993 - Installing new bridge to Old Camp

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the transition of Glendalough from private ownership, to Nature Conservancy land, and finally to a state park. He was unwilling to waste all the goodwill, optimism, and momentum generated by the park's creation. One solution he proposed was the use of the Otter Tail County Sentencing to Service crew.

### Getting with the Program

In 1986, the MN Dept. of Corrections established the Sentencing to Service program, providing the courts with an option to sentence carefully selected nonviolent offenders to a period of supervised work on public projects in the community. The program was initially funded 50% by the state and 50% by local cities and counties. The offenders were able to reduce jail time and pay off fines, and the community benefitted by completing projects that otherwise might not be completed. Although the program seemed like a win-win for all concerned, there was a great deal of controversy within the state park system over the use of prisoners in a public setting. Glendalough's managers had to write numerous memos and letters in the early years justifying the use of STS, addressing misunderstandings about the program, and just easing the minds of administrators in St. Paul. Without the full support of State Parks Director Bill Morrissey, the program would have never gotten off the ground at Glendalough. In just a few short years, however, Glendalough became the state's showcase for the program's success.

### Early Struggles

The first few years of the STS program at Glendalough were spent doing simple but labor intensive tasks like building demolition, brushing trails, removing fences, mowing lawns, and other general maintenance. Minnesota State Parks would piece together various budgets to pay Estes's salary and buy a few tools and equipment. Fleet vehicles (pickup, dump truck, tractor, and mower) at the end of their lifecycle might find their way to Glendalough for a brief stay. Mostly, Les provided his own tools to the crew and scavenged materials from the buildings the crew was tearing down. Old boards were stockpiled, and even nails, bolts, and other hardware were reused. If heavy equipment was needed, Les would call on contractor and neighbor John Christensen to lend a free hand. The first significant development came in 1993 with the installation of a new concrete bridge to the Old Camp area.

The old wooden bridge had been deemed unsafe, and any future vehicle access to the lodge area was uncertain. Utilizing an unused county span that had been sitting in the weeds, Les, John, and the STS crew restored access to what is now the most popular part of Glendalough. The project was also notable for the introduction of a new STS crew leader, Pam Anderson. Pam, who had a part in every STS project at Glendalough since then, recalls, "Les didn't even ask my name for four days. He didn't want to bother until

he was sure that I was there to stay."

Although STS was making major strides in cleaning up the new park, Park Manager Les Estes was not entirely satisfied. Many of the inmates had real skills in their private lives that could be put to use in park development. Now that a detailed management plan had been completed for Glendalough, it seemed a waste of talent to have a good carpenter clearing brush, a roofer hauling dirt, or an electrician mowing lawns. Unfortunately, projects that could utilize trade skills needed funding for materials, funding that the DNR was still unable to provide.

### The "Park Partners"

By 1996 the Glendalough State Park Citizens Advisory Board, having assisted with the completion of the park's management plan three years before, was anxious to see their vision of park development move forward. Frustration with a lack of state funding had continued, so they decided to take matters into their own hands. Seizing on a program sponsored by the National Parks and Conservation Association, Glendalough held its first "March for Parks" on Earth Day of that year, raising over \$7,000 for park projects. March coordinator Tanya Hensch stated, "This event was a raving success, and I hope this interest continues." What would become the annual "Walk for Glendalough" provided the much-needed funding for years to come and pushed STS projects at Glendalough to a new level. In addition, the "Park Partners" program sponsored by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR), doled out matching funds essentially doubling the amount that was raised. The stars had truly aligned for Glendalough. In fact, Glendalough was so invested in the Park Partners program that the Citizen's Advisory Board eventually adopted "Park Partners" as their unofficial title.

### The Golden Years (1996-2006)

Armed with project funds from the March for Parks (MFP), Les Estes and Glendalough's STS crew went to work on building a state park. Ironically, the first big MFP project was, again, a bridge; the hiking bridge across the creek on the south side of Annie Battle Lake. Pam remembers, "We had to put dock sections across the creek, and bring concrete across in wheelbarrows for the footings.



As we hauled load after load of concrete and dumped it in the hole, one member of the crew had to tamp the concrete down with a piece of rebar all day.”

STS achievements hadn’t gone unnoticed by the DNR. State Parks staff had quickly realized the asset they had at Glendalough and the savings that could be made in development costs with STS labor. Funds began to trickle in, and STS was put to work making campsites and even



**STS Builds Camper Cabin**

building camper cabins so the new park could begin to produce some revenue. Private donations also spurred the construction of wildlife blinds and observation platforms. One project that really flourished with STS labor was the restoration of Glendalough’s more than 700 acres of old fields into native prairie. Under the guidance and partnership with the state parks resource management program, STS crews harvested native seed and, most importantly, free STS labor was key to the intensive process of cleaning the seed.

It took two years to raise the money for the next MFP project – erecting the picnic shelter on Molly Stark Lake. In the meantime, STS cleared brush and cleaned up rusty metal, broken glass, and the remains of an old newsreel truck in the new picnic area. The shelter was purchased as a kit and put up in the summer of 1998. STS projects were moving DNR forward as well. After all, a picnic area and picnic shelter would need a road and parking lot, which were installed a year later.

In 2003, STS completed perhaps its most ambitious project – the restoration of the historic Glendalough lodge. It had taken three years of Walk money to raise the necessary funding for the lodge. The Glendalough Park Partners hired their own architect to plan the work, and DNR provided direction and inspection. During the planning period, STS remodeled the old kitchen building into a trail center that could be utilized by schools and other groups.

The lodge restoration couldn’t have been more timely as

water damage and other factors would have soon pushed the deterioration of the old structure past the point of no return. With no functional heat in the building, work had continued through a cold winter. A roaring fire was kept burning in the fireplace, and the lodge exterior was enclosed in a plastic envelope and heated with kerosene heaters so STS could apply the new cedar shake siding. It was a learning experience for many on the crew.

Crew leader Pam states, “Les knew how to do just about anything, and he had the patience to teach it to anyone.” Between the roofing on the camper cabins, the lodge and the dining hall, a lot of STS workers learned how to apply cedar shakes.



**Camp Kitchen to Become Trail Center**

Smaller projects completed by STS during those years included installing the fishing pier, construction of the interpretive kiosk by the lodge, installing the boardwalk on the Beaver Pond Trail, planting prairie transplants, installing bird feeders, and building a multitude of trail benches and picnic tables. In 2004, Glendalough was hit by straight line winds that dropped hundreds of trees in the park. The park was closed for a week while both the Otter Tail and Pope County STS crews worked alongside Parks employees to clear roads, trails, and use areas. The local crew kept busy splitting the salvaged wood for firewood for the next two years.

Amazingly, from 1991 to 2009, the Sentencing to Service program had a hand in every development project at Glendalough except for the construction of the campground restroom/shower building. Even there, STS assisted with the concrete walkway and the parking area. Compared to the work that other STS crews were doing around the state, Glendalough’s STS crew was in uncharted waters. Les and Pam and crew had pushed all of the limits on expectations of the STS program, and it hadn’t gone unnoticed. Regional and state STS meetings were being held regularly at Glendalough to showcase the crew’s latest accomplishments. At its peak, STS was contributing 10,000

to 12,000 hours per year at Glendalough, and the work was of high quality. Les would brag that his crew did better work than a hired contractor because for his crew, “All they have is time.”

### Changing Times

By 2007, a number of events had affected the Sentencing to Service program at Glendalough. Perhaps the biggest impact was the retirement of Les Estes. The growth of the park, changes in state funding, the felony DUI law, and increasingly restrictive state policies had also taken their toll. As the park’s facilities increased and its popularity grew, more staff had to be hired to provide services and security. With more staff, the state employee’s union began to scrutinize Glendalough more closely to make sure that STS was not performing functions that park staff would or could do, i.e. effectively taking potential work away from state employees. At the same time, the state’s share of STS funding had dropped from 50% to 25%. With the county footing most of the bill, more of an emphasis was being placed on county projects rather than state ones. Additionally, the skills of the available crew had declined as a result of the passing of the felony DUI law in 2001. Prior to 2001, DUI was a gross misdemeanor involving jail time of no more than a year, regardless of how many DUIs you had. The vast majority of STS crew members found their way on the crew by way of a DUI. It was common for certain seasonal construction workers to “find trouble” after their work season was over, and many crew members were repeat offenders. Les often joked, “If I need a carpenter, I just get the project prepared for the end of the construction season when they become “available”.” The felony DUI law put offenders in state prison if they had more than three DUI offenses within ten years. Glendalough’s more experienced crew members were now either staying sober or being sent away to do hard time. Finally, more restrictive state policies were making it harder to get the work done. The use of state equipment by STS was extremely limited, and contractor warranties on projects were given more value than cheap labor.

### Putting Back Prairie

From the first prairie plantings in 1993, STS played an important role in restoring prairie to Glendalough. Aside from splitting firewood or lending some occasional “muscle” on a project, prairie restoration has become the critical niche for STS at the park today. Many state park restoration methods were developed at Glendalough, using Les Estes’s farming knowledge, STS labor and the biological training and innovative restoration skills of the park resource specialists. Current Resource Specialist Cindy Lueth writes, “Looking at the blooming prairie flowers along the park drive, the massive team effort that created this prairie beauty is a memory cherished by those of us who walked that path together. Pam’s energy and

willingness to mentor and engage her crews and Les’s wisdom and patience have matched the vision of the prairie biologists to create one of the finer restored prairies on Minnesota public land. Without the STS involvement, Glendalough’s prairies would be pale versions of this vibrant landscape.”

Today, STS continues to gather the flower seed needed to diversify the original Glendalough plantings and restore old fields in other parks like Maplewood State Park. Once collected and dried, STS cleans the seed and bags it until it can be planted. The regional seed operation at Glendalough, largely a function of STS labor, saves thousands of dollars in prairie restoration costs each year.

STS crew leader Pam Anderson was recently asked to reflect on the partnership between Glendalough and the Sentencing to Service program. She stated, “Over the years, the highlight of my job was helping the crews become part of something bigger than themselves. Being part of creating Glendalough State Park brought personal satisfaction and fulfillment to lives often lacking in both.”

Pam’s philosophy was simple: treat her program participants with respect and they would mostly do their best in return. Last days and birthdays were often celebrated with a hot dog lunch for those who worked hard and followed the rules. Discipline was also simple: if you didn’t follow the rules, you were gone, never to return. Park Manager Jeff Wiersma recalls, “One day, a young man on the crew asked my female intern for a date. I told Pam. We never saw him again.”

When asked what project was most rewarding, Pam replied, “They’re all rewarding. The most rewarding is the one you are currently working on.” The hard-working crew seems to share the same attitude. Not surprisingly, not a single crew member has ever tried to escape at Glendalough. In fact, past STS crew members proudly bring their families out to the park, tell them all about the prairie and the projects they completed, and share their appreciation of this special place, an appreciation gained by working on the land. Several STS crew members have chosen Glendalough as that extra-special place to host their weddings.

In a nutshell, the Glendalough we know today would be vastly different without the almost thirty-year partnership with the Sentencing to Service program. The crew members gained not only work skills and self-worth but an appreciation for the natural world in which we all live and work together. The public gained a “polished” new state park rich in history and abounding in natural beauty. Glendalough owes a great debt to Les Estes, Pam Anderson, their fellow crew leaders, and countless STS crew members. Thank you!

## The Trails Go On Story continued from page 1

We found a unique font, "AnimalTracks," which fit our needs perfectly and it was used extensively in many Glendalough publications. Font designer Andrew Taylor later told us he was thrilled to see how his font perfectly suited our park's newsletter and other publications.

Gayle Beecher, then GSP board chairman (and excellent birder), wrote our first "Creature Feature," and he was followed by multiple DNR, USF&WS staff, and local naturalists who generously shared their extensive knowledge regarding Glendalough's....well....tracks and trails!

Board member, Tanya Hensch, spearheaded the creation of the GSP Educator's Manual. Additionally, Tanya was a driving force behind the original "March for Parks," which ultimately morphed into the "Walk for Glendalough." The Walk became a major Park Partner event that would help fund many worthy park projects, from bridge and trail building to lodge restoration.

We were always amazed what latitude the Glendalough board and the local community were granted in deciding the future direction of "their" Park. We locals were allowed to espouse such ideas as highlighting "silent sports" (skiing, hiking, birdwatching, etc.), non-motorized lake traffic, no RV parking, cart-in/canoe-in campgrounds, heritage fishing, and the list goes on. Plus, we received consistent positive feedback from regional DNR personnel regarding the newsletter and other publications.

We were first introduced to this unique property when it was still Glendalough Camp, and peacocks strolled the grounds. We experienced the Nature Conservancy deeding the property to the DNR and giving birth to Glendalough State Park. Throughout the years that followed, one or the other or both of us edited the newsletter, created brochures, served on the board, led the history project, wrote-produced/narrated the park's videos. We consider all those a blessing. The quarterly Tracks and Trails was, and continues to be, an amazing vehicle to connect with the friends of Glendalough State Park.

We know that ultimately volunteer groups wear out their volunteers. However, it seems to be Glendalough's good fortune that new and willing community people continue to find this Park worthy of their time and energy and affection.

The Trails go on. Follow the Tracks.

## Exploring Glendalough's "Sense of Place" (Part 2 of 4) by Joan Vorderbruggen, May 2020

### PART 2: The Prehistoric People of Prairie and Forest

In Part 1, we looked briefly at how glaciers, landforms, and water created a distinctly rich and diverse environment for plant, animal and human life in the area we now call Glendalough State Park. Based on various archaeological investigations in the park over the years, we'll now look further into the traces left behind by the prehistoric people who are believed to have inhabited the land and waters.

The Paleoindian Era (9500 BC - 6000 BC) was marked by melting glaciers that produced wide, torrential, icy rivers, potholes, and lakes of various depths. Land on the edge of the melting ice sheets consisted of tundra prairies or coniferous forests, but lacked the diversity we see today. Now extinct varieties of megafauna (mastodons, mammoths, bison and caribou) roamed the area in search of any food available, as did small groups of human hunters and gatherers. Through carbon dating, there is evidence of the Paleoindian people living in almost all parts of Minnesota - including Glendalough State Park, where a lanceolate (leaf-shaped) point base was found.

The Archaic period (about 6000 BC - 1000 BC) was marked by a larger variety and refinement of weapon tips and stone tools. Artifacts found in the Glendalough State Park area include both stone and copper tools, as well as the "Pelican Lake" style spear point (more refined, and smaller than previous points. See Figure 1). Around 3000 BC, the climate was becoming more temperate, allowing for greater variety of both plant and animal life in the park's prairie and lake forest ecologies, and a wider selection of food for the Indigenous people living here.

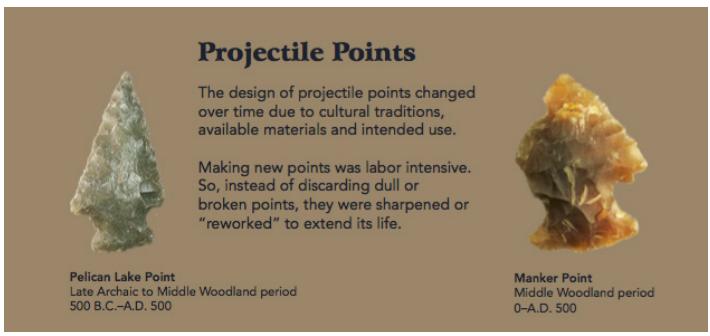


Figure 1

The period between about 1000 BC and AD 1650 marks a time where different Indigenous traditions were inhabiting the area of Glendalough State Park. Artifacts of pottery (ceramics) and stone (lithos) from Woodland, Oneota and Plains Village Indians have distinct characteristics that show all most likely lived in the area at one point or another within a 2600 year period. These people were most

likely the predecessors of the Dakota People, who occupied much of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Michigan.

Evidence of large, mostly permanent villages have been found within the area, which meant the people had a more sedentary connection to place, able to engage in agricultural practices as well as hunting and gathering. The three sisters - corn, beans and squash - were grown by the people here, and the seasons determined what foods were grown or gathered, when they were harvested, and how each was eaten. Spring meant tapping maple trees and spearing fish; summer was for gathering berries and plant medicines; fall meant harvesting wild rice and planted food; and winter was for hunting deer, bison (on the grasslands), or other small game. Other, non-food related traditions and ceremonies were practiced based on the seasons as well. Earth mounds, created for burials or ceremonies, have been found in the area of Glendalough as well as over much of the region.

One of the most spectacular finds within the park was discovered just prior to the building of the bike trail in 2015: an earth oven (Figure 2). It is one of the largest intact examples found, not only in the state of Minnesota, but in the Upper Midwest. Measuring approximately 2 meters wide and 10-20 cm deep, the earth oven contained a tight



Figure 2

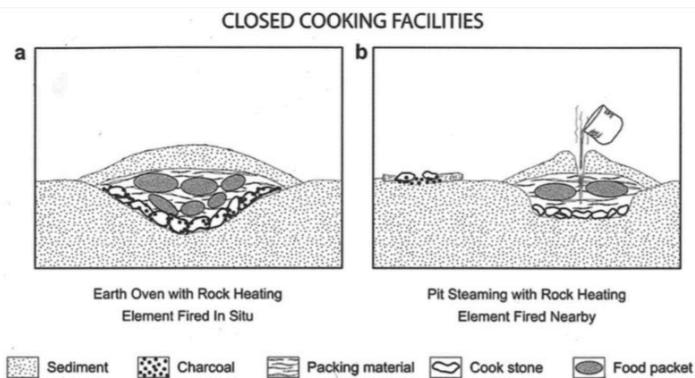


Figure 3

grouping of fire cracked rock, indicating it was possibly used for roasting or steaming foods (Figures 2 & 3).

Charred hazelnut wood was found in the pit, presumably used for fuel. Based on other evidence uncovered, it is speculated that wild rice, corn, hazelnuts and acorns might have been prepared in this oven. The earth oven was most likely used by the Indigenous people in the area between 400 and 900 years ago.

In Part 3, we will explore the lives and cultures of the Dakota and the Ojibwe people who lived in what we now call Glendalough State Park. We will learn a little more about how their sense of place and deep connection with the land is relevant and experienced by most of us even today.

## Park Partners Debuts Facebook Page

by Dan Malmstrom, May 2020

The Glendalough Citizens Advisory Board has developed a new Park Partners Facebook page to serve the growing community of visitors and members. The Facebook site outlines the purpose and history of the Park Partners organization, events in the park, and a photo gallery of the many amenities made possible by donations, STS and local volunteer efforts over the past 25 years. The page can be found on Facebook by searching “Glendalough Park Partners”.

The Facebook resource was driven by the growing popularity of Glendalough State Park (more than 90,000 visitors annually), generational preferences, and connecting with regional and seasonal residents.

The Park Partners Facebook page will be a complement to the popular Glendalough Trail Facebook page. The Park

Partners page will have an emphasis on Glendalough State Park events, park projects, and membership information.

By contrast, the Glendalough Trail page provides a general awareness to events and attractions in the entire Battle Lake area. The trail page has amassed more than 1,500 followers with a unique concentration of females, biking families, and visitors from Fergus Falls, Fargo and across the state. The Trail page can be viewed by searching “Glendalough Trail”.

# Remembering Pam

by Jeff Wiersma, Park Manager, May 2020

Not more than a week after writing the article on the achievements of the Sentencing-to-Service program at Glendalough, STS crew leader Pam Anderson died unexpectedly at her home. While the article says a lot about Pam's accomplishments, it says little about Pam herself. As a female crew leader of a mostly male crew of inmates, Pam was a true pioneer for her time. She kept up a tough façade and strong discipline with her crew, but there was compassion underneath. If someone on the crew had a birthday or it was their last day in jail, she would often barbecue some hot dogs or share some treats with the crew. She squirreled away extra clothing to keep her charges warm in the winter and saved up jobs in or near the water for hot days. Knowing that I rarely had time for lunch, Pam would often leave me a cup of some leftover soup or chili she had made for the crew. Pam would also use her creativity and ingenuity to make special items for local charities. In Pam's hands, salvaged materials would be transformed into decorative and useful items that might be prizes at the Walk for Glendalough, a veteran's event, a fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House, the Habitat for Humanity silent auction, or innumerable other local causes.



Pam Anderson processes prairie seed.

This is not to say that Pam was perfect, especially if you rubbed her the wrong way, and it took a while for her to warm up to some people. I always told my staff, "Just keep smiling and treat her respectfully, and she'll come around." Even so, Pam was always ready to lend a helping hand or give some well-intentioned advice. She also had a knack for finding ways to get things done, which led to her incomparable expertise in cleaning all the various types of prairie flower seed. If she didn't know how to do something, she would find someone who did, and learn enough from them to do it herself the next time.

My professional relationship with Pam had a couple of rocky moments over our 21 years at the park, but we always shared one thing in common, our love for Glendalough. When it came to anything to do with Glendalough, you could always count on Pam to do the right thing and do it well. Though she was never actually a "Glendalough employee", Pam's absence leaves a big hole in the park's operation and an empty space in Glendalough's heart.

The Otter Tail County jail set up a memorial fund for Pam that will restore "Pam's Prairie" at Glendalough, about five acres of prairie on the southwest side of the park. Proceeds will be used to plant prairie, level the trail there, construct a bench, and purchase additional prairie violet seed to increase the numbers of regal fritillary butterflies that dwell there. Donations for Pam's Prairie can be sent to Glendalough Park Partners to be consolidated with funds from the jail.

## President's Remarks

Wow has the world changed since our last newsletter in February! I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well and coping with the new normal that has been thrust upon all of us. I'm writing from my office looking across Blanche Lake towards Glendalough on the opposite shore. Jan and I realize how fortunate we are to be "hunkering down" here, but that doesn't make up for not being able to share hugs with our kids and grandkids. Wherever you are, know that we are thinking of you and urging you to remain vigilant during the challenging days ahead.

You may have heard that state parks and trails are busier than normal for this time of year, as people want to get out of the house and enjoy the outdoors where they can still practice social distancing. That is certainly true at Glendalough, where April numbers are up 141%. We had 8,662 visitors in April, while last year's April total was 3,598.

You know by now that we were not able to hold our annual Walk for Glendalough fundraiser in April. This was disappointing of course, because the proceeds from the Walk are used to fund so many projects large and small that enhance your Glendalough experience. Despite the cancellation we have received nearly \$10,000 in contributions from our members so far, and that total is increasing every day. Thanks to all of you for your generosity!

Welcome to Shawn Donais, our new District Parks and Trails Supervisor. Shawn comes with lots of experience and enthusiasm, and we are fortunate to have him on our team. He will be located at the Glendalough office. We also want to welcome Ben Bergey, who is the DNR's new Northwest Regional Manager. We look forward to working

with both of these gentlemen in the years ahead.

Thanks to those of you who contributed to this special 100th edition of Tracks and Trails. We have expanded our mailing list for this issue to introduce more people to Glendalough Park Partners and invite them to join us in support of our wonderful state park. To this end, we have a new Facebook page and we will soon be giving you the option of receiving Tracks and Trails electronically. Watch for more information in this newsletter.

Remain vigilant and stay safe!

Steve Nelson, President  
Glendalough Citizens Advisory

## Jeff's Jottings

by Park Manager Jeff Wiersma



Park attendance in April was two and a half times greater than normal, and we have seen many new visitors utilizing the park. Given the loss of camping revenue, the increase in permit sales and new customers provides a silver lining to the pandemic cloud. Overall attendance is well ahead of all previous years.

This has been a fantastic spring for birding at Glendalough! Don't forget the binoculars when you come to hike or bike. The bald eagles along the bike trail are also raising chicks again.

The park office remains closed until further notice. Please purchase permits online or through the self-pay. If you need assistance, you can call the park for instructions, but the office will not be open.

Please respect the safety of our park staff by observing social distancing and being patient while waiting for restrooms to be cleaned. Maintaining distance on trails is also important. As trail use increases, some or all trails may be temporarily converted to one-way trails.

The concessionaire has chosen not to open rental services at this time. You will need to bring your own bikes, canoes, kayaks, etc. to the park. Remember, however, that Annie and Molly are infested with zebra mussels. To prevent the spread of invasive species, make sure you Clean, Drain, and Dry your equipment after visiting Glendalough before using it elsewhere.

## From St. Paul

### COVID-19

Camping and lodging in state parks remain closed until at least May 31. Visitors should not expect that all facilities will reopen immediately when allowed to do so. Staffing shortages and continued social distancing concerns may limit availability of some amenities and further delay the opening of some facilities. Reservations are currently not being taken for the month of June due to this uncertainty.

### Park Staffing

Due to budget concerns related to the pandemic, the State of Minnesota has initiated a hiring freeze and suspended many recalls to seasonal positions. It is likely that some positions will remain vacant throughout the summer, and these staffing shortages will affect park operations. The full impact of the budget deficit on the next fiscal year beginning July 1 has yet to be determined.

## Park Projects

Bike Trail Loop Completion – Engineering and design continues, but there is no definite funding or timeline yet for actual construction. There has been a dramatic increase in trail traffic (hikers, bikers, skateboarders, rollerbladers) on the park road this spring, increasing safety concerns on the shared roadway.

Trailhead Building – Archaeologists have not been allowed to complete the cultural survey for this project this spring due to the pandemic. They will return when allowed to do so.

Lodge Parking – Boulders were placed in the lodge parking area to prevent vehicles from driving on the grass or on the septic drain field. Visitors need to park near the equipment rental building when the lodge lot is full.

Canoe site /yurt docks – New dock panels were purchased to fit docks received from Glacial Lakes State Park. The new docks are much lighter and safer to install than the previous wooden docks.

Battery-powered Equipment – Glendalough received a battery powered mower and trimmer, continuing a move towards lighter and less polluting equipment.

# Advisory Board Minutes

March 5, 2020

## Call to order/Member Attendance/Welcome Volunteers & Guests:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Steve Nelson at the Lodge in Glendalough State Park.

Member attendance: Steve Nelson, Chris Estes, Peter Christianson, Jay Anderson, Dan Malmstrom, Park Manager, Jeff Wiersma, Tracy Kortlever, District Parks and Trails Supervisor, Shawn Donais and Sarah Govig.

Guests: Mary and Scott Dahl, Erik Osberg, Rural Resource Initiative Coordinator for Otter Tail Co.

## Review/Approval of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved. (Malmstrom/Kortlever)

## Review/Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and approved as written. (Christianson/Malmstrom)

## Treasurer's Report

Peter Christianson presented the Treasurer's report for time period January 1, 2020 through March 5, 2020. Highlights include: General Fund balance of \$59,838.85 and Long-term Project Fund balance of \$149,602.91. The report was reviewed and approved. (Malmstrom/Kortlever)

## Park Manager's Report

See Jeff's Jottings in the Winter 2020 Tracks & Trails.

Ben Bergey has been hired as the new NW Regional Manager.

Shawn Donais has been hired as the new District Parks and Trails Supervisor.

A memorial for Pam Anderson is being established in the prairie that she worked to restore. Jeff Wiersma is coordinating the effort.

Summer intern interviews are in the planning stages.

The state legislature allows for four free pass days per year in MN state parks. Please see the DNR website for the designated days.

## Committee Reports

Membership: Renewals and memorials were reviewed.

Tracks & Trails 100th Edition: The Board discussed plans for the 100th edition of the Tracks & Trails newsletter. Discussion included contents of the newsletter, the mailing list, a media packet and using digital media to increase Park Partners membership.

Tracks & Trails newsletter: The Board continued to discuss the frequency of the Tracks & Trails newsletter publication, determining membership preferences for on-line vs hard copy newsletter distribution and creating an email file for membership preferences.

Digital and Social Media: Dan Malmstrom presented information about digital and social media considerations for Glendalough Park Partners. The presentation included website development details, goals for a social media presence and the pros and cons of using Facebook vs Instagram. A motion was made (Christianson/Kortlever) to create a Facebook page for GPP. Lisa Malmstrom, North Point Professionals, will manage the social media account/Facebook page.

OTC Fair Booth: No new update.

## Projects

Outdoor Stage update: Plan to go forward with established plan.

The Parks and Trails Council of MN Youth Engagement Grants: Jay Anderson is working with Jonathon Hartman, an art teacher at the Underwood Public Schools to provide an outdoor experience at GSP for elementary aged children. The program will take advantage of state grant monies available to increase local youth activities in the Park. Jay is completing the grant application and he and Jonathon will plan the activities once the grant is in place.

MN Parks and Trails grant monies: New grant monies are available from MN Parks and Trails. The Board discussed how to expedite the process to access the grant monies and how to use grant monies in the GSP strategic plan.

Volunteer activities: Sarah Govig met with Park Manager, Jeff Wiersma, to discuss liability concerns and future volunteer opportunities. The discussion is ongoing.

Trail Center Furniture: Peter Christianson will investigate options to repair the Trail Center furniture.

Trail Center Countertops: Peter Christianson will investigate options to repair the Trail Center countertops.

## Long -Term Planning

Trail Center: See Jeff's Jottings in Tracks & Trails. The state archaeologists will complete their cultural survey in the spring.

Blessing of the Land: Jeff Wiersma, will contact a tribal liaison at the state level to determine next steps.

Walk for Glendalough: The 2020 Walk for Glendalough

is scheduled for April 18, 2020. Tracy Kortlever is coordinating Walk Day assignments, flyer distribution and media releases with committee members. T-shirts are printed and have been delivered. Registration forms will be included in the next Tracks & Trails. The Parks and Trails Council of MN is a 2020 Walk co-sponsor. Invitations will be sent to politicians at the state/local level and city/county officials. Jeff Wiersma will coordinate funds required by the DNR.

### **Old Business**

Galloping Goose Rental: No new updates.

Board Retreat: Pending.

New ideas for funding projects: No new project suggestions.

Glendalough DVD: No new updates.

### **New Business**

A Park Partners Desk Logo will be presented to Bud Nornes, District 8A MN House Representative, at the Walk for Glendalough. He is retiring and has been a long time supporter of GSP.

Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener: Erik Osberg reviewed the plans for the MN Governor's Fishing Opener in Otter Tail County. The County hopes to highlight the area and would like to include GSP as one of the destinations for visitors during the Fishing Opener event. A motion was made (Nelson/Anderson) to support the proposal to include GSP as one of the self-guided locations for public exploration.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m. (Christianson/Anderson). The next quarterly meeting will be held May 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lodge in Glendalough State Park.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Govig  
Secretary



### **Glendalough State Park Advisory Board:**

Steve Nelson – President (2022)  
Dan Malmstrom – Vice President (2020)  
Sarah Govig – Secretary (2021)  
Peter Christianson – Treasurer (2021)  
Tracy Kortlever (2021)  
John Christensen (2022)  
Chris Estes (2022)  
Jay Anderson (2020)  
Joan Vorderbruggen (2020)

### **DNR:**

Melody Webb, NW Region Parks and Trails Manager  
Ben Bergey, District Recreation Supervisor  
Shawn Donais, Region Naturalist  
Ben Eckhoff, Area Naturalist  
Cindy Lueth, Region Resource Specialist

### **Glendalough State Park:**

24869 Whitetail Lane  
Battle Lake, MN 56515-9654  
**(218) 261-6900**

### **Jeff Wiersma, Park Manager**

Glendalough Tracks & Trails  
is the newsletter of Glendalough State Park  
published quarterly by  
the Glendalough Park Partners

**Tracy Kortlever • membership**

### **NEW/RENEWING PARK PARTNERS**

We received 104 new/renewals this quarter.  
Everyone's generosity is greatly appreciated especially  
during these unprecedented times.

### **MEMORIAL/HONOR**

Mary Weiss from Don & Judy Loe

MaryLou Stickel from Don & Judy Loe  
and Leland & Judy Rosenquist

Marianne Davis from Leland & Judy Rosenquist

Ron Swenson from Leland & Judy Rosenquist

Earl McCaustland from Leland & Judy Rosenquist

Birthday Celebration: Claire Venberg from Molly  
Stoddard

Thank you for keeping your memberships current.  
Please check the date on the address label of your  
Tracks and Trails to check your membership status.

Send your membership correspondence to:

Glendalough Park Partners  
PO Box 901  
Battle Lake, MN 56515

**Next Advisory Board Meeting: Thursday, May 21, 7:00 p.m.  
Glendalough Lodge**

Board Meeting Minutes can be found at [www.morethanatrail.com](http://www.morethanatrail.com)

# **Thank you, Park Partners!**

## **To Renew or to Become a Glendalough Park Partner:**

Choose one of the following levels:

Park Pal ( \$10 )

1 year subscription to Tracks & Trails

Supporter ( \$25 )

1 year of Tracks & Trails + magnet

Donor ( \$50 )

1 year of T & T + Commemorative Walk T-shirt

circle size: S M L XL 2XL

Patron ( \$100 )

1 year of T & T + Glendalough History DVD

Benefactor ( \$500 )

1 year of T & T + Glendalough print

No Gift Desired (check box)

Send your tax-deductible contribution to:

**Glendalough Park Partners**

**PO Box 901**

**Battle Lake, MN 56515**



Glendalough Park Partners

PO Box 901

Battle Lake, MN 56515

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