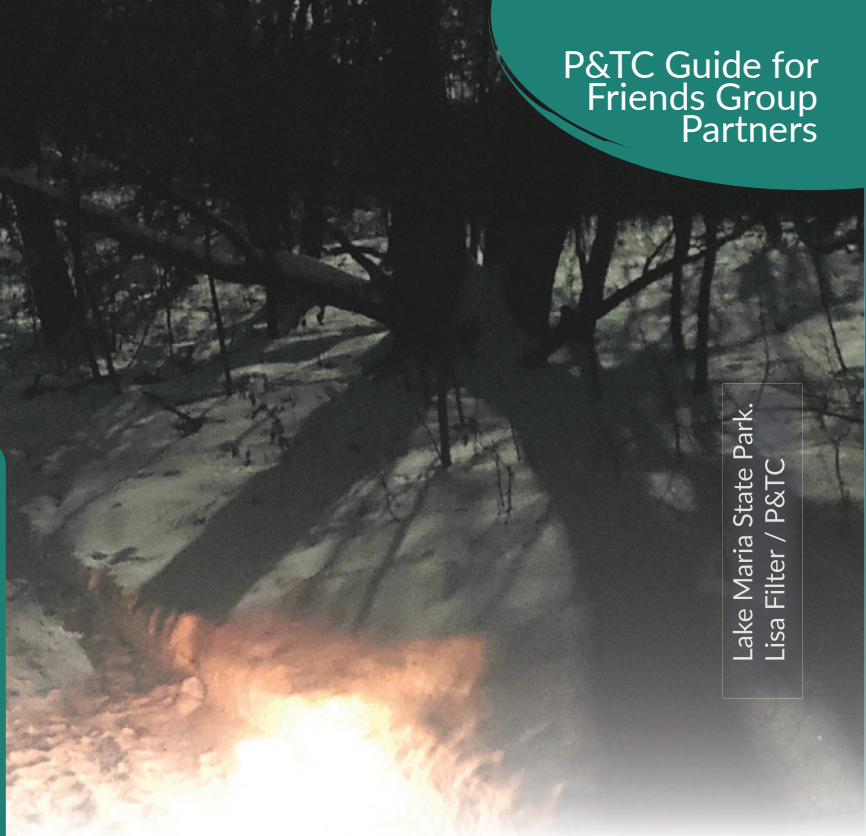


# Planning a CANDLELIGHT event

Winter in Minnesota brings beautiful, snow-blanketed landscapes in parks and trails. It also brings the opportunity to host candlelight events—those magical evenings that bring people together to celebrate and embrace winter outdoors.

Many Friends Groups already organize at least one candlelight event per year. They are often some of the most popular events of the year. Here's a guide to help those groups who have not yet organized one.



Lake Maria State Park.  
Lisa Filter / P&TC

## SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

- **White wax paper bags**  
*4-lb bags about 9" tall  
1 per every 25 feet of trail. 1-mile trail ≈ 250 bags.*
- **Plumbers candles**  
*Paraffin candles about 5" tall that burn 8-10 hours.  
1 per bag. 1-mile trail ≈ 250 candles.*
- **Snow or sand**  
*To fill the bags and stabilize the candle.*
- **25-foot string or twine**  
*To measure distance between lanterns.*
- **Lighters (clickable handheld)**
- **Reflective vests for volunteers**
- **Firewood**
- **Drinks & Snacks**  
*Urns with hot water, cocoa mix, apple cider, marshmallows, chocolate squares, graham crackers, etc.*

We thank these groups for helping inform this primer

Lake Louise State Park Association  
Friends of Minneopa State Park  
Friends of Maplewood State Park  
Friends of Lake Maria State Park.

**Contact us**  
651.370.7907  
friends@parksandtrails.org  
parksandtrails.org



# Step-by-Step Guidance

## PRE-EVENT TASKS

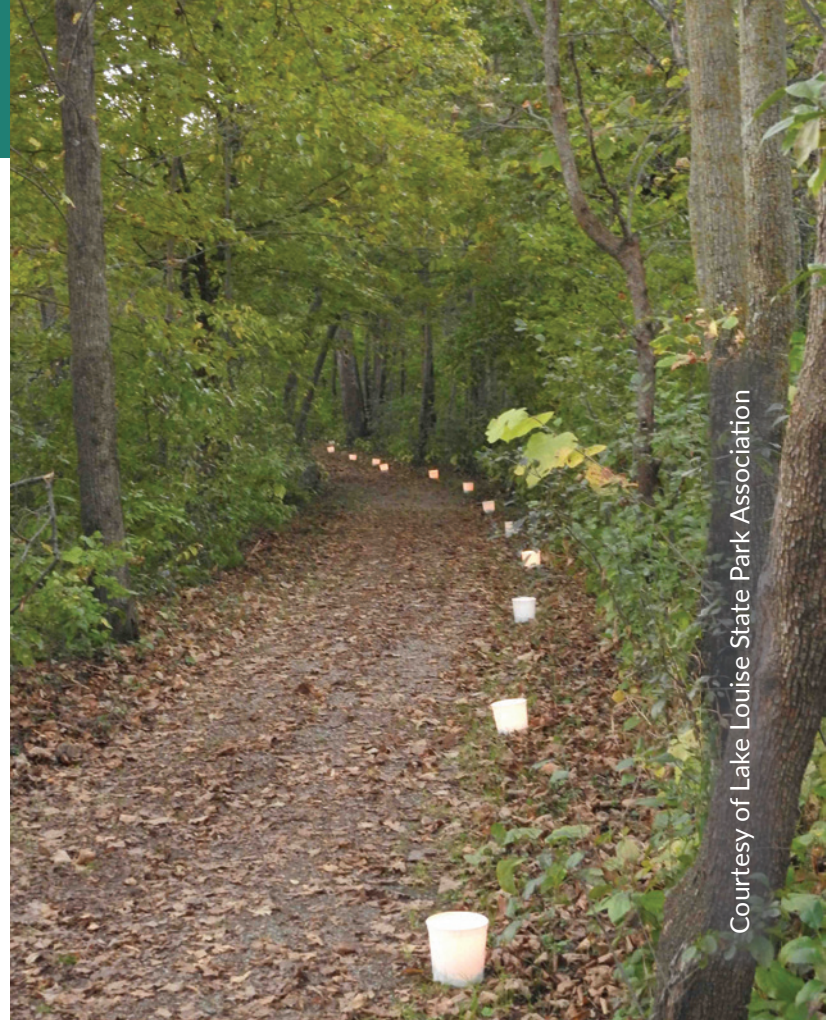
- Obtain permissions**  
Work with the park or trail manager to follow any specific preliminary procedures at that site.
- Choose a date**  
Winter is the most popular season, but some choose late fall. A full moon can add visibility and ambiance.
- Select and prep a trail route**  
Consider using a loop trail, 1 mile or less with relatively easy terrain and near parking and bathroom facilities. Pack down snowy trails before the event—this is a good job for youth groups with snowshoes.
- Recruit volunteers**  
Create volunteer job descriptions and shifts. The Signup Genius website offers free online forms.
- Gather supplies**  
See the list on the flip side.
- Advertise**  
Website, social media, flyers, local media outlets and any other outreach you have.

## DAY-OF-EVENT TASKS

- Assemble lanterns**  
Consider filling the bags 1/3 full with sand or snow and securing the candle inside.
- Place the lanterns on the trail**  
Place lanterns 30 feet, or less, apart. A pre-measured string can help. Transport lanterns using a tractor trailer or sleds. Two groups may start at either end of the loop.
- Light the candles**  
Use clickable lighters to light the candles approximately 30 minutes before the event.

## DURING-THE-EVENT TASKS

- Monitor & Relight lanterns**  
Some candles inevitably go out, so be prepared.
- Traffic/Parking Assistant**  
Help visitors park, buy permits, and find the trailhead.
- Greet & Assist Visitors**  
Have volunteers at various stations to welcome visitors



Courtesy of Lake Louise State Park Association

## Other Considerations

### Fire & Ice

Setting up a firepit mid-way along the trail to warm up, chat, or even roast s'mores (bamboo skewers can be thrown in the fire when done) is a nice touch. Ice lanterns are beautiful, but take a lot of work. Consider making a few large ones just for the start of the trail.

### Hiking or Skiing?

Hiking events are easier because the trails can be shorter and grooming is less tricky. Of course, offering options for both hiking and skiing will broaden the appeal.

### Promote your Friends Group

Let folks know how they can get involved. Set up a table with informational materials and a friendly person to answer their questions.

### Costs

A basic event run by volunteers with no add-ons can be accomplished with \$300. Adding amenities like shuttles and porta-potties or offering more trail options will increase the cost.

