



Tracks & Trails

Glendalough State Park • Battle Lake, MN • Winter 2022 • #107

Save April 23rd for Walk 2022

by Dan Malmstrom & Tracy Kortlever

Please mark April 23rd on your calendar for Walk 2022 in Glendalough. We hope to see many family members and friends as we celebrate Earth Day in Glendalough this year, although it remains to be seen if we will gather without Covid restrictions.

In 2020, we suspended the literal Walk event at the rapid onset of Covid-19 and unfortunately April 2021 was relegated to a virtual, independent event as well. However, many of you responded by enjoying the park on your own terms and your generous donations did not miss a beat!

At this writing, we are hopeful for a real gathering on April 23rd, but as usual we encourage you to stay tuned to updates on the Park Partners and Glendalough Trail Facebook pages. Regardless of the Covid situation, we encourage you to visit Glendalough on April 23rd and enjoy a Free-Pass-Day. For those of you beginning or renewing Park Partner memberships, a new Walk 2022 t-Shirt will await you in the park. If Covid-19 restrictions loosen prior to April 23rd, we may restore some of the program elements of the Walk.

Thanks again for your commitment to Glendalough. If you would like to take care of your Park Partner membership, you are welcome to do so by mail (address on back page) or email at Glendaloughparkpartners@gmail.com.

We appreciate you!



2021 Parks and Trails Impact Report

by Dan Malmstrom

The Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota, founded in 1954, is a statewide citizens advocacy organization. Its mission is to acquire, protect and enhance critical land for the public's use. As a non-profit organization, it serves the public interest and partners with more than 50 Friends Groups statewide. The Parks & Trails Council advocates land stewardship and conservation along with outdoor recreation for educational, health and community benefits. It is a highly regarded independent voice for state parks and trails regarding legislative, bonding, and DNR priorities as well.

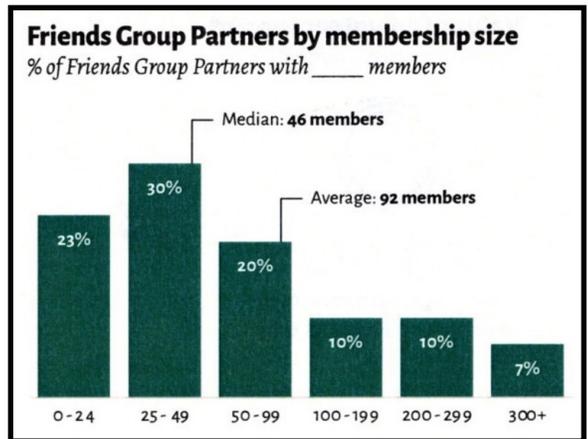
The Glendalough Park Partners relationship with the Parks & Trails Council has been very beneficial over the years, as they have assisted our efforts on several fronts, including our Glendalough Trail and Visitor Center bonding efforts in 2010 and 2018.

Last year, the Parks & Trails Council completed a comprehensive survey of its Friends Group partners statewide to gain insight into their demographics, memberships, functions, volunteerism and finances. Glendalough Park Partners participated in the survey.

The recently published report was insightful, and in several ways highlighted the importance and enduring success of Glendalough Park Partners locally.

At a high-level, the survey included data from 53 Friend Groups; some organized as purely volunteer organizations,

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President's Remarks

Happy New Year! Ok, a little late, but I'm feeling it today. The days are getting longer, we've got about a 24-hour break from the below zero weather, and all this snow is going to restore our lake levels again. You caught me on a good day!

2022 is going to be a great year at Glendalough, as our two major projects continue to move forward. Final design discussions are underway for the new Trail Center and bids will be sought sometime later this year. We still have some money to raise, but we are confident the support we have received for this effort so far will continue.

The Sunset Trail project is fully funded, and construction should get underway late summer or early fall. The new route will take bikers and walkers off the main entrance road, across the restored prairie to the west and along the shores of Sunset Lake. Your support and generosity for these and all the other smaller projects we undertake each year are what has made Glendalough the wonderful park that it is.

The frequent heavy snowfalls and winds this winter have made cross-country ski trail grooming extremely difficult. As the only staff person for much of the winter, Park Manager Jeff Wiersma works hard to keep up, but on top of his administrative duties he has to make sure the entrance road and parking lots are plowed first. We appreciate your patience as we work to deliver you the best Glendalough skiing experience possible.

You will once again read some very interesting articles in this issue, including a look into how Glendalough Park Partners compares with over 50 other Friends groups around the state. You will also see some great pictures taken in the park by a couple of our board members. We've had some very positive feedback about our use of pictures in recent issues, so I think you can expect to see even more of them going forward.

Thank you to those who included us in your year-end generosity once again. Your support in all ways large and small, financial and otherwise, is so important to our stewardship of Glendalough. This is your park, and we are honored to represent you as advisory board members.

Steve Nelson, President
Glendalough Citizens Advisory Board
stevenbrucenelson@gmail.com

Lights Out Migration

by Sarah Govig and Dan Malmstrom

Most Park Partner members are somewhat familiar with the International Dark Sky Association. Citizens Advisory Board member Jay Anderson is championing the application process for Glendalough to be officially designated as an International Dark Sky Park similar to the Voyagers National Park designation and the BWCA Dark Sky Sanctuary designations in northern Minnesota. There are many interesting benefits related to preservation of natural darkness in our night skies which Jay cited in previous Tracks & Trails articles.

Recently, Sarah Govig also a board member director, passed along a research study done by the University of Colorado related to dark skies and bird migration. It seems that stargazing is very influential as birds migrate through our area each year.



Photo by Jay Anderson

Research has shown that birds use the stars to navigate their northern routes and light pollution dims their cues.

Scientists at Colorado State University's Aeroeco Lab estimate that approximately 50% of migratory birds will pass over our airspace between April 15 and May 18. If you are so inclined, you may lend them a hand by turning off unnecessary overnight lighting during the migration!

For more information and to see red alert notices for high-volume migration nights, visit aeroecolab.com/uslights.

Tracks and Trails

by Joan Vorderbruggen

I was not around when Glendalough's quarterly newsletter was named Tracks & Trails, however, I can only imagine the name was inspired by the evidence so frequently found in the park that reflects the abundant forms of wildlife.

Winter is a great time to discover the tracks and trails that the birds and animals paint across a white canvas of fresh snow. Snowshoeing and hiking allow for a slower pace where you can stop easily and frequently to study the impressions left in the snow: dots and dashes, hearts and arrows. Go with no specific goal in mind other than to engage with a sense of curiosity, exploring the signs left behind by those creatures whose lives depend upon daily outings into the winter environment, no matter the weather. Look for context as well as the details of the trails themselves if you want to hone your naturalist skills.

Below are some of the photos I've taken of tracks and trails in the snow. See if you can identify them. The answers are listed at the end of the article.



It's as if someone is trying to tell us to "walk this way."



There is a long line, with intermittent footprints.



Can the line between the dots be a hint?



The dashes are usually an indication that the snow is deep, otherwise the tracks are usually single heart-shaped forms.

Answers: 1. Pheasant 2. Otter 3. Mouse
4. White-tail Deer

Impact Report continued from page 1

while others have complete membership programs. Groups that have paid membership generally collect annual dues ranging from \$5 per individual to \$500 for lifetime memberships.

Membership size among the Friends Groups varies significantly with most having less than 50 members. The median is 46 members. For reference, Glendalough Park Partners has 550 members placing us among the largest groups in the state.

Volunteerism plays a crucial role. Survey data showed they engaged more than 750 volunteers in a variety of local projects and accounted for nearly 12,000 hours of service. Glendalough Park Partners has experienced the same over the past three decades with volunteers serving on the local Citizens Advisory Board, conducting the Walk for Glendalough, producing newsletters, managing social media, sponsoring events, handling finances, fundraising, planning with the DNR, and assisting the park management with hands-on projects. Covid-19 hampered our volunteer activity during the past two years, which unfortunately occurred as attraction and visit counts in the park skyrocketed. We hope to engage more local people in the fun and meaningful work at Glendalough in the future.

The report also highlighted the important role Friends Groups play in spreading the word about their parks or trails. They often advertise events, projects, and share interpretive information. Social media is gaining momentum as the preferred communication medium among the 53 groups, as 74% of them have a Facebook presence. The median number of Facebook followers across the groups is 526. Again for reference, the Glendalough Park Partners Facebook page has more than 700 followers, along with more than 2,000 followers on the Glendalough Trail Facebook page. The Glendalough Tracks & Trails newsletter was specifically highlighted in the survey report as a long-standing communication success as we recently published 100th issue dating back more than 25 years.

Survey data demonstrated the important role local groups play in raising money to support their parks and trails. Funds are used to support public events, stewardship, promotion and administration. The operating budgets vary across the groups, most notably influenced by the size of the membership program and active donor base. The median 2020 revenue of Friend Group partners was \$1,530. Glendalough Park Partners raised \$51,000 last year, which led all groups for which data is available, despite being a small State Park in a rural community. Glendalough Park Partners also has a significant long-term fund set aside for large park developments.

Our local organization is successful due in large part from

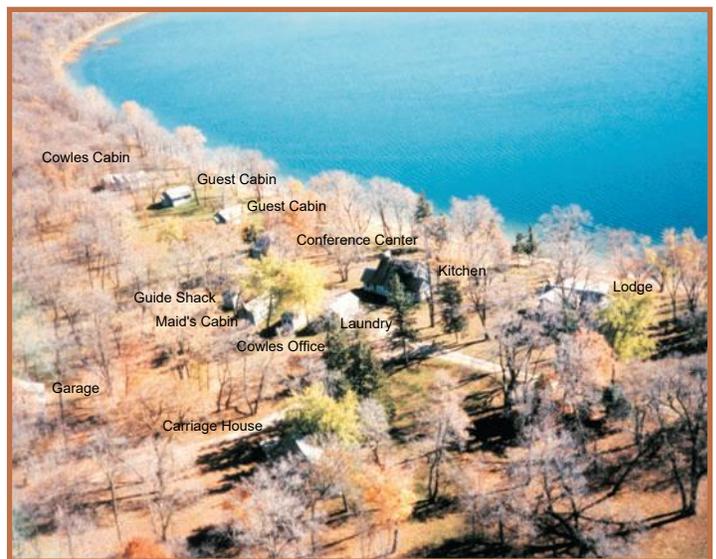
the experience, commitment, and membership programs that span three decades, and we continue to learn from other organizations in the state. Some organizations have a broad enlistment of volunteers. Others are very active in planning winter activities for their parks and trails. These are things we will be discussing as a board to serve our members and Glendalough enthusiasts well into the future.

Year One at Glendalough

Historical Article by Jeff Wiersma

When I arrived at Glendalough in 1998, Glendalough was still a work in progress. Previous Park Manager Les Estes, with the help of a Sentence-to-Service crew, had done a tremendous job of removing miles of fencing, creating and improving trails, installing both a road bridge and a pedestrian bridge, and building campsites. A new paved entrance road had been constructed in 1996, and a shiny new restroom/shower building was ready to open in the coming spring. In the dead of winter, Les and STS were putting the finishing touches on Glendalough's camper cabins. Still, it would have been a stretch to say that the park was ready for primetime.

At the heart of the park, there were twelve buildings in various states of neglect, disrepair, and deterioration – the Old Glendalough Camp.



Aerial view of Glendalough Camp 1998.

“Employees Only” and “Keep Out” signs adorned all the buildings, and break-ins at the lodge seemed to occur on a weekly basis. In fact, after the doors were kicked in multiple times, we made a habit of leaving a window unlocked so our nighttime visitor(s) could “break in” without causing damage. The future of these buildings, including the lodge, was uncertain. The park’s management plan called for removal of all of them, except perhaps the

lodge, but an influential state legislator had other ideas. Her insistence that the Old Camp be restored in its entirety led to an ill-fated LCMR funding proposal and a year's delay in making this area safe for public use. In the meantime, eleven other buildings elsewhere on the property were put up for sale and removed, including the game farm hatchery, freezer house, and an enormous pheasant barn.

Another anomaly at Glendalough my first year was the presence of two large potato fields (leased to Offut Co.), complete with irrigators. I recall visitors paying for a daily pass my first fall to enter the park and glean potatoes! The following year, the weed-free soil would provide the perfect substrate for an ambitious attempt at prairie restoration. At literally the last minute, one of the pheasant barns was pulled from a sale to be used as a seed drying and storage building. While a few small plots of prairie grass had been previously planted, this acreage was really the beginning of Glendalough's impressive restoration program. Even the irrigators were kept for a few more years...just in case. In addition to the potato fields, the park also had two remaining food plots, one of alfalfa and one of corn. The alfalfa field was east of Molly Stark Lake and north of the highway. The corn field, which persisted for many years, was south of Sunset Lake. Bales of alfalfa would be placed for the deer each fall south of the old farmhouse, which served as the park office, and deer watching was even a bigger attraction to the park's visitors than it is now. That first winter, you could stop and see more than 150 deer feeding in the area where the bike rentals are now. As food plots were frowned upon in state parks, Glendalough was the only state park with a food plot for many years.



Picnic Area on Molly Stark Lake.

In some respects, development of the new state park was done in reverse order of what had been typical at other parks. Anxious for the park to start generating revenue, overnight facilities had been given priority over day use facilities. This resulted in Glendalough's campground opening before the park even had a truly functional picnic area or toilets for day visitors. A small area on the east side of the Old Camp bridge along the creek had been set aside as a temporary picnic area, but that was hardly sufficient.

The big project of the summer was the creation of a new picnic area and beach on Molly Stark Lake. With funds from the Walk for Glendalough (known then as March for Parks) and the labor force of two Otter Tail County STS crews and an STS crew from Pope County, a new picnic shelter was constructed. However, it would be another year before the tables, parking lot, and a vault toilet would be installed. The shelter wasn't the only project that year though. Two new wildlife blinds were installed, one on a floating dock on Lake Emma and another at the end of a boardwalk on the Beaver Pond Trail, overlooking the creek and slough. The Park Partners were busy as well. Along with another successful Walk, they produced a promotional video for the park, conducted an "Educator's Breakfast" to introduce local teachers to Glendalough, and began a History Project to capture stories, artifacts, photos, and articles about Glendalough's past.



Wildlife blind on the Beaver Pond Trail.

Many "firsts" occurred at Glendalough in 1998. These included: First campers, including the new park manager and his family, on April 24, 1998, with the Grand Opening of the cart-in campground. First full campground on July 4th weekend. First fishermen on the new Heritage Fishery on Annie Battle Lake. The lake had been closed to fishing from 1993-1997. First canoe rentals on Annie Battle Lake after acquiring four new canoes from Minnesota State Park Nature Store funds. First artist workshops at Glendalough. First wedding at Glendalough. First seasonal staff, including one Buildings and Grounds Worker, one Parks Worker and two local college students.

At the end of 1998, Glendalough's iconic new entrance sign was in production, thanks to a donation by the Ottertail Lions Club. Due to a late fall, the foundation of the sign was already laid. After a summer of almost constant promotion with local civic groups, educators, news media, and curious visitors, I'd like to think the foundation of Glendalough's success had been laid as well.

Jeff's Jottings

by Park Manager Jeff Wiersma



Both furnaces in the dining hall have failed this winter along with the heat pump for the office. Repairs were made, and it was discovered that the furnace in the dining hall basement was oversized, leading to its failure. That furnace will replace a badly deteriorating furnace in the lodge, and a new, smaller, more efficient furnace will be installed in the dining hall. All's well that ends well!

Snow removal and trail grooming have been difficult this winter with the deep snow, excessive winds, and severe windchills. Please be patient. Park roads have received a big boost with help from the Trails folks at the Area DNR office and their large tractor and snowblower. Portions of the ski trails had to be abandoned due to heavy drifting, but there has only been a small impact to overall trail miles.

DNR staff are working on a winter trail map that will more accurately show winter ski and snowshoe trails and winter amenities like the sledding hill. It should be ready for next year. Camper cabins and yurts have been full every weekend since Christmas.



Photo by Jay Anderson

Park Projects

Bike Trail Loop Completion - Wetland impacts have been minimized, and the engineering is moving forward again. Drainage concerns for the trail and road west of the Old Camp bridge are being addressed as well. Timeline now calls for construction in late summer or fall of 2022.

New Trail Center - Some preliminary sketches were completed, based on the final concept design. Architects continue working on the details.

Park Security - Alarm systems in the office and lodge were upgraded to prevent failure when 3G service is no longer supported.

From St. Paul

New State Parks and Trails Director Ann Pierce began her new role on February 1. Ann has worked for the DNR for over 25 years, most recently as the Deputy Director of Ecological and Water Resources. She has had a number of positions throughout the years, but what has remained consistent in these positions is her cross-disciplinary work, her work with external stakeholders, and her desire to serve Minnesotans. Interim Director Ben Bergey has returned to his position as the Regional Manager of Parks and Trails in the NW Region.

Starting next fall, all special hunts in state parks and state recreation areas will require the use of non-toxic ammunition. This will help protect eagles, ravens and other species of wildlife that feed on deer gut piles and are poisoned by lead ammunition fragments. It will also protect hunters and their families from accidentally ingesting fragments of lead while eating venison.

Saturday, February 19 will be a Free Park Day at Minnesota State Parks and State Recreation Areas. No vehicle passes will be required for entry into the parks on that day. Camping and rental fees will still apply.

November 2021 Board Meeting Summary

(Minutes Available Upon Request)

This is a summary of the Citizens Advisory Board quarterly meeting held on November 18, 2022. August Meeting Minutes and Treasurers Report were presented and approved. The general fund balance was \$93,837.98 and the long-term balance \$170,423.71.

Park Manager Jeff Wiersma highlighted security upgrades in the park, 5G Verizon upgrade, repairs in the Trail Center, and completion of a 2021 internship. Tracy Kortlever provided membership updates, a process for renewal reminders, and discussed Walk 2022.

The board discussed volunteerism and available grants. Steve Nelson provided a Visitor Center update. Jeff Wiersma indicated bid solicitation for the new Sunset Lake trail would begin in 2022. Joan Vorderbruggen provided an update on Blessings of the Land and potential articles involving Indigenous People.

Jay Anderson reviewed a letter of support from the Parks & Trails Council to pursue a Dark Sky designation for Glendalough. Jeff Wiersma will write a conditional letter of support as well.

The meeting concluded with discussions on CAB succession planning, trail signage in the park, E-bikes on state trails, natural playground project, and renewing membership with the Parks & Trails Council.



Glendalough State Park Advisory Board:

- Steve Nelson – President (2022)
- Dan Malmstrom – Vice President (2023)
- Sarah Govig – Secretary (2024)
- Peter Christianson – Treasurer (2024)
- Tracy Kortlever (2024)
- John Christensen (2022)
- Chris Estes (2022)
- Jay Anderson (2023)
- Joan Vorderbruggen (2023)

DNR:

- Ben Bergey, Parks and Trails Regional Manager
- Melody Webb, PAT Assistant Regional Manager
- Shawn Donais, PAT District 1 Supervisor
- Cindy Lueth, Region Resource Specialist
- Kathy Beaulieu, Regional Naturalist
- Ben Eckhoff, Area Naturalist

Glendalough State Park:

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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

- Catherine Barner, Richville, MN
- Steve & Wendy Simenson, Ramsey, MN
- Kathleen Nelson, Dilworth, MN
- David & Bonnie Stabnow, Nashville, TN
- Richard & Deborah Johnson, Henning, MN
- Battle Lake Lions, Battle Lake, MN
- Ruth Pallansch, Clitherall, MN
- Ron & Meredith Godfrey, Battle Lake, MN
- David & Arlene Berg, Battle Lake, MN
- Gail & Arlyn Hustad, Battle Lake, MN
- JoAnne & Les Collins, White Bear Lake, MN
- Judy Youngren, Mesa, AZ
- Grace Ehlers, Wahpeton, ND
- Paulson Land Co, Battle Lake, MN
- Dave McRoberts, Battle Lake, MN
- Stacy Turley, Grinnell, IA
- Matthew & Melinda Haskins, Potomac, MD
- Ralph & Jorgette Bistodeau, Champlin, MN
- Curtis & Lisabeth Nyhus, West Fargo, ND
- Sandra Johnson, Fergus Falls, MN
- Ed Anderson, Minneapolis, MN
- Nancy Archbold, Marshall, MN
- Gail & Bill Ewald, Eden Prairie, MN
- Tom & Stephanie O'Brien, Richville, MN
- Stacy & Jim Korkowski, Conroe, TX
- Keely & Clay McNeerney, Great Falls, VA
- Nancy & John Tofte, Ottertail, MN
- Robert Morgan, Fort Ridley, MN
- Jack Wasson, Fergus Falls, MN
- Chad Christensen, Fergus Falls, MN

MEMORIAL/HONOR

Memorial given by Don & Judy Loe, Stillwater, MN
in honor of Paul Raadt

Memorial given by Janice Kinn, Ottertail, MN
in honor of Benda Davis

Memorial given by Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Drage, Potomac, MD
in honor of Douglas Young

Memorial given by Karen Lundeen, Brooklyn, NY
in honor of Steven & Diane Christianson

Memorial given in honor of Danny Teske

Glendalough Park Partners
PO Box 901
Battle Lake, MN 56515

Next board meeting: **Thursday, April 21, 7:00 p.m.** in the Lodge
Meeting minutes will be available upon request.

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)

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