



FRIENDS OF  
RIB MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

149801 State Park Rd.  
Wausau WI 54401



## Annual Report to Membership

Fall 2023

### FRIENDS OF RIB MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

## Annual Meeting and Dinner

Monday, November 13, 2023

5:30 – Social Hour and Dinner  
6:00 – Meeting

In the Friends Gathering Space  
at Rib Mountain State Park

## PARK REPORT

Another summer & fall season gone! I'll never understand how weeks and months go by so fast but the next year somehow always seems to go by a bit quicker than the last. I hear that's a normal feeling... 2023 was a year of change. New roles, a Naturalist, and of course, a new master plan.

In late 2022 I took a new position after former Superintendent **Dawn Bishop** retired. This doubled my duties, as the Rib Mountain-Council Grounds work unit fell from three to two full-time positions. Hopefully that's just short-term. Luckily, we once again had a great seasonal crew to help keep the park in shape. Everyone from 2022 returned for another year (I may have done a happy dance when everyone said they were coming back) so I was able to let this veteran crew handle day-to-day work at the park when I was occupied elsewhere.

One of the returning employees was **Ally Noll**. In spring, we successfully applied for an Incentive Grant, and for the first time in well over a decade, we had a Naturalist at the park! Ally hit the ground running after working part-time as a Natural Resource Educator at the Mead Wildlife Area, and with her experience in the Natural Resource Education field. Ally conducted a number of educational programs, led hikes, and created self-guided programs, so it's been fantastic having her back as our Park Naturalist.

Over the past year, the DNR master plan for the park finally got approved after years of planning, research, and public input. There haven't yet been any physical changes to the park yet since the final plan was released earlier this fall. Initial discussions have begun on mountain biking trails, and in 2024

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

What a busy and exciting year for the Friends of Rib Mountain State Park! The Friends have been extremely fortunate to receive a number of grants and donations from supporters including The Friends of Wisconsin State Parks Incentive Grant, a Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant, an Impact 100 Merit Award, a Cellcom Green Gifts Award, Community Foundation/Greenheck/Wisconsin Arts Grant, Tourism Commission Grant from the Village of Rib Mountain, and other donations from Kiwanis, Chase Outdoors, and Rib Mountain Cycles.

This added support and funding helped facilitate outdoor education, entertainment, and the enjoyment of Rib Mountain State Park throughout this year. Two magnificent candlelight snowshoe hikes supplied a fantastic start to the year, thanks to **Karen Graff's** army of Friends volunteers. Many themed guided hikes throughout the year including wildflower hikes, a birding hike, history hike, and an ecology hike happened thanks to **Wes Ebert** and **Karen Graff**. Park Naturalist **Ally Noll** has been a wonderful addition to the Park this year developing programs, providing hands-on education to groups and visitors, and coordinating a series of guided hikes and drop-in events. Two enjoyable summer Concerts in the Clouds happened thanks to the Concert Committee. Many nature programs this year included Snake Discovery - Reptiles from Around the World, Park favorite Raptor Program by REGI, and an intriguing All About Bats program presented by Lucia Johnson (and special guest Edgar) from North Lakeland Discovery Center.

The park hosted several VIP visitors this year including Governor **Tony Evers**, DNR Secretary **Adam Payne**, DNR Parks Director **Steven Schmelzer**, Natural Resource Board Members **Bill Smith & Nancy West** to see first hand the wonders of the Park and discuss the possible impacts of the newly adopted Park Master Plan.

With the funding raised in 2023 we are assessing enhancements to the upper loop road to provide a safer path for park visitor pedestrian use. We are hoping to

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*(continued from page 1)*

start construction of a new Amphitheater barrier/railing early next spring

I want to offer a special thanks **Marty Reinhart** for his service as Treasurer and Board Member the past two years, and welcome new Treasurer **Susan Woods**. The remarkable efforts of the dedicated Park Staff lead by **Bayli Christorf**, all of our Friends members, the dedicated Board of Directors, and so many amazing volunteers make Rib Mountain State Park a wonderful place to enjoy. I look forward to working with you in 2024 to continue to support this amazing Park.

 **Christopher Ecke, President**  
president@ribmountain.org

## PARK REPORT

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and beyond we will see planning for some of the changes and additional recreational opportunities.

The year was also a busy one for grant activity. We applied for the Impact100 and Stewardship Grants, and were awarded about \$34,000. Project planning has begun to use these funds to expand the paved walking path at the congested and narrow western edge of Park Road, and replace the amphitheater barrier with a safer stone pilaster and cable railing (now scheduled for May 2024). Both will greatly improve safety and aesthetics in these areas popular with park visitors.

Outside of grants and master plans, we again had a large number of volunteers who helped park staff accomplish many projects this year. Preliminary numbers show almost 700 volunteer hours! Lots of staining, board replacing, and bridge rebuilding added to our usual seasonal tasks. I'm grateful to manage a property with such robust interest from community members helping maintain the park.

 **Bayli Christorf, Park Superintendent**  
parkoffice@ribmountain.org

### Friends of Rib Mountain State Park, Inc. Summary of Unrestricted Operating Activity January 1 - December 31, 2022

	ACTUAL	ANNUAL BUDGET
<b>Revenues:</b>		
<b>Donations:</b>		
Grants received	2,300.00	0.00
Memorials	400.00	0.00
Program attendees	0.00	100.00
Concert sponsors	3,800.00	3,250.00
Concert attendees	0.00	400.00
Snowshoe attendees	0.00	400.00
Other	2,632.04	300.00
<b>Total donations</b>	<b>8,932.04</b>	<b>4,450.00</b>
Memberships	1,060.00	1,000.00
Interest	17.04	25.00
Community Fund - Endowment	(5,958.64)	2,500.00
Top of the Rib - Community Fund	381.99	500.00
Net Top of the Rib	2,375.93	4,900.00
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>6,168.36</b>	<b>13,375.00</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
<b>Donations:</b>		
Programs at the Park	622.16	2,000.00
Project specific - Playground	600.00	3,701.08
Grant Expenditures	4,447.85	0.00
Other	(1,544.22)	200.00
<b>Total donations</b>	<b>4,125.85</b>	<b>5,901.08</b>
<b>Activities:</b>		
Concerts	3,744.88	3,500.00
Snowshoe hikes	0.00	400.00
Board & membership meetings	130.20	200.00
Administrative assistant	0.00	0.00
Membership contact/incentives	199.65	300.00
Marketing (website, logo, newsletter)	342.00	500.00
Insurance	973.00	750.00
Licenses/fees/dues	188.54	100.00
Miscellaneous	62.24	175.00
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>6,744.58</b>	<b>11,828.08</b>
<b>Net revenues vs expenditures</b>	<b>(3,576.00)</b>	<b>1,548.92</b>

### Summary of Available Funds As of 10/31/2023

Savings	20,717.00
Checking	1,447.68
CD	47,098.97
Community Foundation - Endowment	43,374.21
Undeposited funds	0.00
ToR Checking	0,109.91
ToR Savings	582.63
<b>Total of above accounts</b>	<b>1,29,380.43</b>



## WILDFLOWER, BIRDING AND HISTORY HIKES

The Friends' monthly hikes have covered some of the most unique aspects of the park, including the incredible ephemeral wildflowers gracing the Homestead Trails, and

the birds that call the Turkey Vulture and Homestead Trails home. May is the best spring wildflower time, and we led walks for the public on May 6 and May 20, and had a great time identifying the many gorgeous wildflowers that call this part of the Park home due to its deciduous trees and small streams. On June 3, **Myles Hurlburt** and members of the **Wausau Birding Club** led the "early birds" on a hike, educating us on the local birds and helping us identify their calls. These hikes are amazing, and we hope you will let your friends know about them.

## SMOKEY BEAR ON RIB MOUNTAIN

Thanks go out to volunteers **Woody Tischer, Nolan Mudler, Claire Hillmeyer, and Karen Graff** for helping Smokey bring smiles and fire safety lessons to kids of all ages.

Members interested in occasionally helping with Smokey can contact Bayli in the park office or leave your contact info at the Top of the Rib concession stand.

### Support the Friends with an Endowment Donation

Support the work of the Friends of Rib Mountain State Park by making a donation today to the Friends of Rib Mountain State Park Fund at the Community Foundation. Your gift today helps grow our endowment fund as an investment for the future.

We have a goal of reaching \$50,000 before we begin to use a portion of the annual earnings from the fund to help fund various activities at the park including a broad range of nature programs and outdoor activities, or perhaps even a part-time naturalist.

Your donation of \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, or whatever amount you feel comfortable giving, will benefit the park and park visitors for years to come.


*Checks for the endowment fund should be made payable to:  
Community Foundation of Northcentral Wisconsin,  
500 1st St, Suite 2600, Wausau, WI 54403  
and please specify "Friends of Rib Mountain State Park Fund"*

## PARK NATURALIST REPORT

Apparently one season up at Rib Mountain wasn't enough. During my first season, I noticed the few educational opportunities the park offered and thought we could do better. So, over the winter I came to the park with an idea. What if we could bring back a park Naturalist? To my surprise, this idea was met with both excitement, and a job offer. Although I could only be at the park part time this season, I am incredibly proud of the work that has been done to provide Rib Mountain's many visitors with educational opportunities. Through the programs, hikes, and field trips this season, I met so many amazing people from all walks of life. It is a wonderful feeling to be able to share the natural world with others and foster an interest and care for the world around you.

I am so grateful for the support park staff and the Friends have shown from the very beginning, back when this was just an idea. Thank you to the many members that have volunteered to help during a program or offered other support. It wouldn't have been a successful season without support from these people, so thank you. There were so many people supporting this vision, and I am proud to have put in the work to see it through.

Thank you for a great season!

 **Ally Noll** 2023 Park Naturalist


## TOP OF THE RIB CONCESSION STAND

Thanks to **Russ & Theresa Graveen, Mary Friederichs, Enid Krueger, Claire Hillmeyer, Randy & Jill Falstad, Karen Graf, Phil Berg, Nicole Lipowski, Tim & Karen Peterson, Chris & Lucy Ecke, and Sheryl Hemp** for helping in the park concession stand for 2023. Rib Mountain stickers designed by park naturalist **Ally Noll** were a popular merchandise addition, and you'll also find Rib Mountain shirts and hats, fun and educational kids toys, and parky gifts and books, You'll also find the snacks, beverages, ice cream and popcorn you've come to know and love.

Thanks also go out to main man **Nolan Mudler** for his dedication throughout summer and fall, as well as **Nathan Dreher** and **Ella Keeffe** for occasionally filling in to welcome park visitors.

Gift items are available in the park office when the stand is closed in another of the many cooperative arrangements the Friends have with park staff. We look forward to next season...



 **Kevin Keeffe** *ribtop@ribmountain.org*

## FRIENDS OF RIB MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

### Board of Directors

Christopher Ecke ..... President  
Kevin Keeffe ..... President-Elect  
Steve Kaiser & Randy Falstad...Past President  
Marty Reinhart.....Treasurer  
Nancy Stencil..... Secretary

Sandi Cihlar, Wes Ebert,  
Karen Graff, Sheryl Hemp,  
Greg Huber, Deb Schoeneck,  
Rick Schoeneck, Joe Wachtel

### WEB SITE

The latest information on the Friends of Rib Mountain can be found on our web site:

[www.ribmountain.org](http://www.ribmountain.org)

on Facebook... [@ribfriends](https://www.facebook.com/ribfriends)

For membership information:  
[info@ribmountain.org](mailto:info@ribmountain.org)

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Member	1 Year \$10.00
	2 Years \$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Member	1 Year \$20.00
Please list family members:	2 Years \$30.00
_____	
_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer (limited funds but time to spare)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Member	1 Year \$100.00
Includes certificate and annual park admission sticker: <input type="checkbox"/> check if 65 or over	
<input type="checkbox"/> Forever Friend	\$1000.00

Additional donation to the Friends \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
For a specific project (optional):

Additional donation to the Friends  
Endowment Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Administered by the Community Foundation of North-Central WI)

**TOTAL** – Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
payable to "Friends of Rib Mountain State Park"

Please complete interest & contact sections ➡

I am interested in the long-term future of the park and would like to be contacted in regard to making a memorial gift to the Friends of Rib Mountain Endowment Fund.

Donations to Friends of Rib Mountain State Park, Inc., or Friends of Rib Mountain Endowment Fund may be tax deductible. Please consult your tax advisor.

*My interests in Friends activities include the following areas:*

<input type="checkbox"/> Hiking Trails	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Events Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Nature programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer concerts
<input type="checkbox"/> Invasive species	<input type="checkbox"/> Snowshoe hikes
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a trail segment	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall color season
<input type="checkbox"/> Park Concessions	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Event Assistance
<input type="checkbox"/> Counter & food prep	<input type="checkbox"/> Setup or cleanup
<input type="checkbox"/> Gift merchandising	<input type="checkbox"/> Food prep
<input type="checkbox"/> Summer season	<input type="checkbox"/> Parking & traffic
<input type="checkbox"/> Fall Color weekends	<input type="checkbox"/> Assist park staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership
<input type="checkbox"/> Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer contact
<input type="checkbox"/> Social media	<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising
<input type="checkbox"/> Graphics skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors

Comments, interests, or areas of expertise:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
**Friends of Rib Mountain SP**  
149801 State Park Road  
Wausau WI 54401  
[info@ribmountain.org](mailto:info@ribmountain.org)



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[www.ribmountain.org](http://www.ribmountain.org)



The Friends of Rib Mountain State Park hope you enjoy this complimentary newsletter. Please consider joining us to help maintain Rib Mountain State Park as the special place it is for area families to enjoy spending time in the outdoors.

## Concerts in the Clouds

*Due to limited funding two 2023 Concerts in the Clouds events took place (June 24 and July 15).*

*We look forward to seeing you in 2024 for these tentative dates:*

**Sat, June 22 or 29**  
**Sat, July 20**  
**Sun, August 11**

Thanks to 2023 sponsors:

*Greenheck Foundation  
Wisconsin Arts Board  
Community Foundation  
of North Central Wisconsin  
Rib Mountain Cycles  
Marathon County  
Farm Bureau*

For 2024 The Friends will again sponsor the popular Rib Mt State Park...

## Snowshoe Hikes

The Friends invite you to explore Rib Mountain State Park on snowshoes at our 2024 Candlelight Hikes planned, weather permitting, for two Saturdays - January 13 and February 17, from 6:00-8:00pm. (flashlights and headlamps suggested)

We will have hot chocolate, hot cider, and special goodies, as well as marshmallows to roast around the campfire. Start your hike at the new Friends Gathering Space, just past the Park office. Some snowshoes are available to borrow but we suggest you bring your own snowshoes if you have them.

There is no cost to participate, though donations to cover costs are welcome. A park annual or daily admission sticker is required. Parking is limited, so please consider carpooling if possible.

Thanks to trail grooming crew **Randy Falstad, Russ Graveen, Christopher Ecke** and **Bill Kolb**, and Snowshoe Professional **Joel Braatz**.

For more info or if weather threatens, check the Friends Facebook page (@ribfriends), or call the Friends at 715-680-9480.

 **Karen Graff & Nancy Stencil, Co-Chairs**