



FRIENDS OF
RIB MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
149801 State Park Rd.
Wausau WI 54401



Annual Report to Membership

Fall 2024

FRIENDS OF RIB MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

Annual Meeting and Dinner

Monday, November 11, 2024

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

**In the Friends Gathering Space
at Rib Mountain State Park**



FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has again been a fun and exciting year at Rib Mountain State Park. As we continue to learn more about how the newly adopted 2022 Park Master Plan will expand recreational opportunities at Rib Mountain State Park, the Friends trust that the DNR and key stakeholders will protect the park's landscape, the Talus Forest State Natural Area, along with the current hiking and snowshoe trails at the Park.

This year the Friends applied and were awarded several important grants including the Friends of Wisconsin State Park 2024 Incentive Grant, the 2024 DNR Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grant, and a Community Foundation grant. Along with this new funding, we were able to put previous grant funds and donations to work to complete several notable projects and offer some wonderful park education programs.

We started 2024 off with a First Day Hike on Jan 1, and a January Candlelight Snowshoe hike followed. Thank you to **Karen Graff** and **Nancy Stencil** for organizing an army of volunteers for this popular event. A special thank you to **Wes Ebert** and **Karen** for coordinating our many themed guided events including hikes dedicated to spring wildflowers, birding, Rib history, and park ecology. The Friends again monitored and managed a 1.6 mile groomed snowshoe trail last winter. This summer and fall featured a robust series of nature programs in the Park including our first ever Bumble Bee Brigade, and Monarch Tagging event through the guidance of special guest and **UW entomology expert Celeste Huff**. This is a perfect time to thank the **Master Gardeners** for their tireless work to maintain the several stunning pollinator gardens here in the Park! Nearly 200 visitors attended our **REGI** (Raptors education Group Inc.) program, and we also welcomed **Lucia Johnson** from the North Lakeland Discovery Center to share a wonderful program on the ecology and importance of bats.

The Friends welcomed back musical storyteller **Bill Jamerson** to share his fun stories of the CCC Boys on a beautiful Sunday evening in September. Friends Concert Committee members **Rick & Deb Schoeneck**, **Kevin Keeffe**, and **Sheryl Hemp** wowed us with three remarkable Concert in the Cloud events held in June, July, and August. In partnership with our friends in the **Kiwanis Club**, we held the first ever "Pancakes in the Clouds" event in October where hundreds enjoyed a delicious breakfast while enjoying the fall colors.

PARK REPORT 2024

Once again, it was a year full of new projects, upgrades, and additions to the park. Spring started a complete overhaul of the amphitheater railing, replacing the old split rail barrier with a new stone pilaster and cable railing that matches the look of the other newest park buildings. This was a huge upgrade to both safety and aesthetics of this popular space where so many come to get married, enjoy a concert, or experience a nature program. In addition to the Friends, we thank the **Kiwanis Club of Wausau**, the **Village of Rib Mountain**, and the state **Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant** for generous contributions to make this project happen.

This year, we were again a recipient of the same Stewardship grant which will help us extend the paved walking lane near the observation tower. This is a bottleneck point where pedestrians and vehicles share a narrow, curved road – getting especially crowded in the fall. I'm thrilled that we'll be able to widen up this congestion point next year and reduce safety concerns.

A handful of interpretive panels are also getting a much-needed upgrade through the design work of former park Naturalist, **Ally Noll**. This was made possible by the 2024 Friends Incentive Grant. The newly designed panels will be arriving any day now and should be installed before winter. The Incentive Grant and Friends of RM also funded the replacement of railing on the observation deck and a number of educational programs at the park.

I have also been working closely with area foresters on planning a timber harvest in the southeast corner of the park to salvage Ash trees that have been infected by Emerald Ash Borer, as well as mature Aspen. Objectives of this 60 acre harvest are to

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**Friends of Rib Mountain State Park
Summary of Operating Activity
Year Ended December 31, 2023**

	Actual	Budget
Revenue:		
Grants & Donations:		
FWSP Incentive Grant	3,150.00	-
DNR Stewardship Grant	8,207.50	16,414.75
Impact 100 Donation	16,500.00	-
Program attendees	50.50	100.00
Concert sponsors	1,899.00	3,600.00
Concert attendees	373.33	400.00
Snowshoe hike attendees	971.00	400.00
Other	5,577.15	1,500.00
Project specific	10,000.00	11,414.75
Total grants & donations	46,728.48	33,829.50
Memberships	3,130.00	1,100.00
Interest	1,121.95	25.00
Net Endowment fund earnings	3,559.94	2,500.00
Top of the Rib Sales/Commission	3,124.06	4,500.00
Total revenue	57,664.43	41,954.50
Expenditures:		
Programs at the Park	856.53	2,000.00
FWSP Incentive Grant	6,850.00	-
Playground	-	3,101.08
Amphitheater Safety Project	-	32,829.50
Activities:		
Concerts	2,491.21	3,600.00
Snowshoe Hikes	535.17	400.00
Board & membership meetings	150.38	200.00
Other	-	100.00
Membership contact/incentives	291.50	250.00
Marketing (website, logo, newsletter)	770.03	500.00
Insurance	872.00	900.00
Licenses/fees/dues	135.61	150.00
Miscellaneous	86.45	150.00
Total expenditures	13,038.88	44,180.58
Net Revenues (Expenditures)	44,625.55	(2,226.08)

**Summary of Available Funds
As of 10/31/2024**

Savings	51,264.88
Checking	6,806.46
CD	0.00
Community Foundation - Endowment	52,796.26
ToR Checking	7,997.11
ToR Savings	582.68
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	119,447.39

PARK REPORT

(continued from page 1)

salvage usable timber and remove trees that will become hazardous, diversify the forest for the benefit of insects and wildlife, and create open pockets allowing sunlight through to regenerate understory. The sale is tentatively planned for this upcoming winter, which will require the eastern loops of the yellow trail be closed.

Lastly, intensive planning commenced within the last year for implementation of new hiking, multi-use and mountain bike trails. The Department has continued our partnership with the Friends and other local groups to establish the conceptual design of the trail system, which will include hiking, multi-use and bike trails, and additional ski runs - all consistent with the 2022 approved master plan. More to come here!

A lot of exciting things are happening at the park which will improve safety, add recreational opportunities, and enhance what we have. (Did I mention the vault toilet building near the tower is getting replaced next year? Never has a new toilet building created such excitement among park staff!) As always, we could not do many of these things without the Park's partnership with the Friends and other area non-profit groups.

So, thank you! You all make a positive impact to the park that so many have come to love.

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT

(continued from page 1)

Through new and previous grants and donation funding, and with help from **Rick Schoeneck** and **Park staffers Kelly, Greg, Emerson** and **Bayli**, we were able to replace all of the failing wood railing on the North Observation Deck. It would be hard to miss the stunning new aluminum railing and stone pilasters installed at the park's amphitheater this summer as part of our barrier replacement project. Additionally, four new interpretive panels will be installed next spring to share a history of how Rib Mountain was formed with the more than 575,000 annual park visitors. We plan to begin a walking path expansion to the very top loop of State Park Road early next spring to make this area safer for pedestrians and help with traffic congestion.

It is undeniably the remarkable **Park Staff** led by **Bayli Christorf**, and the many **Friends Volunteers** that help make Rib Mountain State Park such a wonderful place. I look forward another great year in 2025 and hope to encounter you one day enjoying the Park!

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

Support the Friends with an Endowment Donation

Support the work of the Friends with a donation 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.

Your donation, in any amount you feel comfortable giving, will benefit the park and park visitors for years to come.

*Make endowment fund checks payable to:
Community Foundation of Northcentral WI
200 Washington Street Suite 120
Wausau, WI 54403*

Our goal was reach \$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.

*and please specify:
"Friends of Rib Mountain State Park Fund"*

WILDFLOWER, BIRDING AND HISTORY HIKES

This past year the Friends' 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 4 & May 25, 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 stream. Spring came pretty early this year, so the wildflowers were best early in the month. On June 1, **Myles Hurlburt** and amazing 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 next spring. We also led a history hike on August 17, and an ecology hike on September 14. Hope you can join in all of the guided hikes in 2025!



TOP OF THE RIB CONCESSION STAND

At the Top of Rib you'll find Rib Mountain shirts and hats, fun kids toys, and parky gifts and books, as well as the snacks, beverages, ice cream and popcorn you've come to know and love.

Tim & Karen Peterson, Russ & Theresa Graveen, and Mary Friederichs, helped in the park concession stand this year, and thanks to workers **Juilian Brown, Nolan Mudler, and Jackson Brown** for their 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.

 **Wes Ebert & Karen Graff, Co-Chairs**
hikes@ribmountain.org

 **Kevin Keeffe, Concessions Mgr**
ribtop@ribmountain.org

FRIENDS OF RIB MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

2024 Board of Directors

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

Sandi Cihlar, Wes Ebert,
Karen Graff, Sheryl Hemp,
Claire Hillmeyer, Greg Huber,
Deb Schoeneck, Rick Schoeneck

WEB SITE

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

www.ribmountain.org

on Facebook... @ribfriends

For membership information:
info@ribmountain.org

715-680-9480

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:

Hiking Trails	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
Park Concessions	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
Communication	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



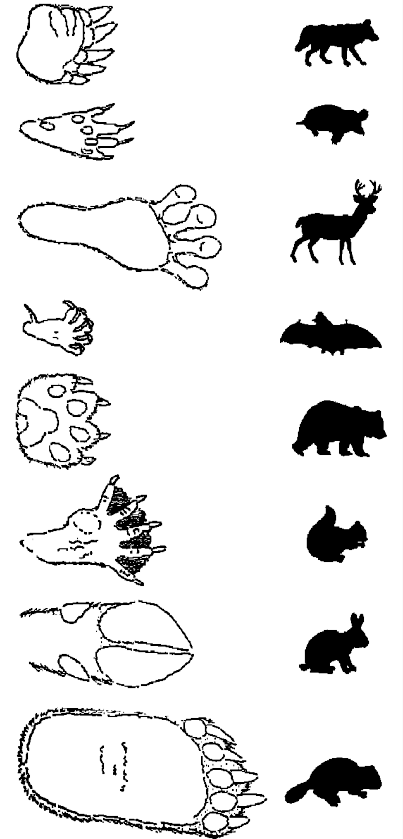
FRIENDS OF
RIB MOUNTAIN
STATE PARK
149801 State Park Road
Wausau, WI 54401



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.

Fun for the
Kids (of all
ages)

Can you match
the footprint
with its owner?



Concerts in the Clouds

*We look forward to seeing you
in 2025 for these tentative dates:*

Sat, June 28
Sat, July 19
Sat, August 9

*Three 2024 Concerts in the Clouds
events took place
June 29, July 20 & Aug 11.*

Thanks to 2024 sponsors:

Greenheck Foundation

Wisconsin Arts Board

*Community Foundation
of North Central Wisconsin*

Rib Mountain Cycles

*Marathon County
Farm Bureau*

Snowshoe Hikes

This winter's 2025 hikes will be held on Saturday nights, on **January 18** and **February 15** from 5-7 pm. MARK YOUR CALENDARS and SPREAD THE WORD! Last January's event was very successful. Snowshoers and hikers, and lots of families, joined in the fun on our trail lit by little romantic electric candles. Marshmallows around the outside campfire and a warm fire inside the Friends Gathering Space with lots of goodies for the hikers make this into an evening to remember. (Last February's event unfortunately had to be cancelled due to dangerous icy conditions.) These hikes are a lot of fun, both for the many Park visitors and for volunteers. Expect an email in December, with a sign-up to volunteer to help out at the hikes - we hope you will join us!

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 if you have them. Flashlights and headlamps suggested. Afterward we'll have hot chocolate, hot cider, and special treats.

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, Bill Kolb,** and Snowshoe Pro **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**
hikes@ribmountain.org