



Trail Mix

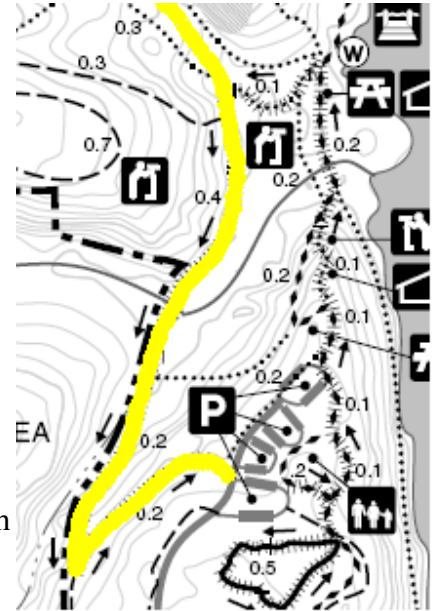
A Monthly Newsletter of Afton State Park
July 2009



A Wilderness Close to Home

Horse Trails at Afton

Minnesota State Parks and Forests offer the opportunity to ride over 1,000 miles of horse trails. Here at Afton State Park, we have about 5 miles of horseback riding trails, varying from steep slopes to flat terrain. The main horse trail begins at the horse trailer parking lot in front of the Visitor Center or riders can enter through the north gate. A popular spot for riders includes crossing Trout Brook while following the forested trail as it curves up to the prairie.



July is looking to be a very busy month here at the park.



We'll be starting off with a bang with the Afton Trail Run on the Fourth of July. Registration is filled up but you can still come and cheer on the racers.

50K – 6:30AM
25K – 7:30AM

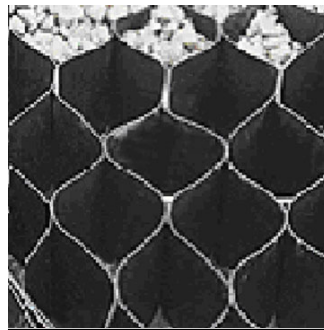


Happy 4th!

The fourth is also a great day to come visit the park. Go for a swim, have a picnic, enjoy a fun hike.

Note: Horse Trails will be closed on July 4.

To ride on State Park or State Forest trails, every rider needs to carry a trail pass. Day passes are available for \$5.00 and year passes for \$21.00. Both can be purchased at the park office or from DNR authorized Electronic Licensing Service vendors across the state.

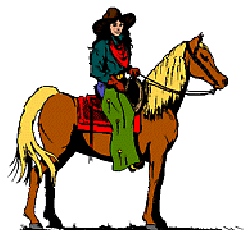


Geocell – Prevents erosion on trail surfaces

Since the horse trail pass has been introduced in 2007, it has raised \$239,000. This funding goes toward the development, maintenance, and enforcement of horse trails at State Parks and Forests throughout the state. In 2008, Afton received some money for trail rehabilitation including gravel and a new technology called geocell. A few projects that will be funded in the future include the development of trail signs at St. Croix State Forest and trail rehabilitation at Lake Maria State Park, Wild River State Park, and Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest.

An Equestrian Advisory Group advises the MN DNR on project priorities. For more information on the horse trail pass and projects funded by the program, visit the horseback riding page found within the recreation section of the DNR's website: www.dnr.state.mn.us.

–Kathryn Adams



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE: Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

We'll also be finishing the rain garden located behind the Visitor Center. Come take a look at this work in progress.



The second week in July we will be having the Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) out at the park for a week pulling out the exotic Digitalis.

We also hope to be getting some trail work completed.

We'll be updating you on all these projects in the upcoming newsletters.

Do not let this little bug into Afton State Park!

Here's what it looks like:

Smaller than a penny

Bright shiny turquoise green

Here's why we don't want it here:

The Emerald Ash Borer lays its eggs on the bark of ash trees. The larva bores into live wood and then emerges as an adult leaving behind a D-shaped exit wound killing the tree.

This tiny bug has killed millions of ash trees in Michigan and is working its way south.

For decades ash trees have been mainstays of the upper Midwest landscape. They were planted in abundance after the Dutch Elm epidemic of the 1970s since they are fast-growing, adaptable and hardy.

What you can do:

Don't move firewood. Burn it where you buy it.

Let the park office know if you see any bug that fits EAB description.



-Shirley McVey

Upcoming Events

July 4 – Afton Trail Run

July 17 – Universe in the Park @ 8:30pm

August 9 – Geocaching 101 Class @ 10:00am

August 21 – Universe in the Park @ 8:30pm

Volunteer Opportunities

Pull the blooming exotic – Digitalis (Foxglove). Stop by the office and we'll show you how. Don't forget to wear gloves.

Help water some newly planted trees on the north end of the park.

Take pictures of the park and share them with us.

For comments, questions, more information, to volunteer, or to remove yourself from the mailing list, send an email to Rachel.Hintzman@dnr.state.mn.us.