



Trail Mix

A Monthly Newsletter of Afton State Park

September 2009



A Wilderness Close to Home

Million Acorn Volunteer Opportunity

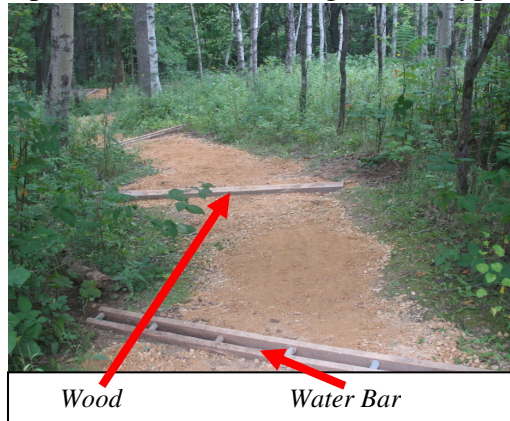
Great River Greening is sponsoring this event to invite school, community and neighborhood groups to collect acorns for planting at Afton State Park. It will culminate in the Great Weigh-In Party and Planting on September 19th. Cash prizes and eco-adventures will be awarded to the winning groups. Free food will be provided to all. The Million Acorn Challenge is a unique opportunity to get youth involved by challenging them to make a difference in their community and the environment. For registration information contact Justin Kutzer at 651-665-9500x18 or jkutzer@greatrivergreening.org.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE:

Erosion Control Structures

After the recent heavy rains, we have received some questions about how the park deals with erosion on the park trails. We typically try to use one of four techniques to control erosion. The first technique would be called an earthen berm and can be found on the main horse trail in the lower area of the park. Water typically uses the easiest way to get from one area to another and sadly, that way is usually our trails. An earthen berm is typically placed on an area with not a large difference in elevation and it's goal is to slow down the water and direct it off the trail.

The next two types of techniques are quite similar and involve the use of wood to divert the flow of water off the trail. The first type is by installing a piece of wood into the ground. Typically the wood is buried at about



half of its depth. The wood can be treated or untreated, round or square, or even a log. The wood does not need to be longer than the width of the trail to prevent the water from just going around it and is put in at an angle usually following the landscape features. The other type of structure is called a water bar and looks just like a trough. The advantage of these over the plain piece of

wood is that it typically can handle more water but the con is the fact that they can fill up with debris. Both of these structures can be used on steep areas. At the park we really like to use the water bars but use the wood as well since it involves much less prep work.

The last control is the new technology called the geomesh. The goal of this product is to keep the actual gravel in place. We've only used this in a few places in the park and are still determining if it is an effective control.

If you've been at the park in the last couple of weeks, you will see that there are still some erosion problems from the recent heavy rains. If you or a group would like to volunteer, we have plenty of locations where work on the trails needs to take place. Also if you have any other ideas for structures you've seen or thought about, let us know.

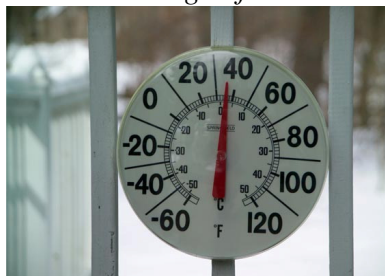


2008 Million Acorn Planting

Did you know?

In August, the average temperature in the Twin Cities is 81°.

In September, it will cool to an average of 74°



On August 28th, the sun sets at 7:57pm.

By September 28th, the sun will set almost an hour earlier at 6:59pm.

Fall is coming!



Eagle Scouts

Eagle Scouts have really been making a difference at Afton in the last couple of years. We have averaged about 4-7 projects a season. These projects are typically things that park staff would not normally get time to complete. We usually meet with the scouts 1-2 times before their actual work day. We review the project and determine any needed supplies and materials. Typically scouts are required to try and look for donations of materials. If they are unsuccessful, then the park usually pays for supplies from our park gift account. On the day of the project, a park staff member is usually around to ask questions of or to deliver supplies, but the Eagle Scout is the one in charge.



Oliver Charlie Project

So far this summer we have had three Eagle Scout projects completed with two more potentially in the works. Daniel Wright worked on restoring the Oliver Charlie property by building

pads to display some farm equipment and removing buckthorn from the farmstead. David Saunders built and installed water bars on one of the trails in the campground. Nick Peterson rehabbed backpack campsite number 3 by installing water bars and a lantern post, installing timbers on the edge of the campsite and hauling lots of dirt and gravel



Campsite 3 Rehab

to build the site back up. Past projects have included everything from prairie and forest restoration to building kiosks and garbage bins to creating our orienteering course.

Thank you to all the Eagle Scouts, parents, friends, and troop members who have helped out. Just about all the projects would never have been completed without the Boy Scouts involvement. If you know of a scout looking for a project, have him/her contact the park. We still have plenty of work to be done.

Upcoming Events

Sept 7 – Labor Day

Sept 11 – Universe in the Park @ 8:30pm

Sept 19 – Million Acorn Challenge

October 17 – Geocaching Day

Feb 6, 2010 – Candlelight Snowshoe/Hike @ 6-9pm

Volunteer Opportunities

Build and install water bars on some eroded park trails.

Pick prairie seeds.

Take pictures of the park and share them with us.

Trim some overgrown areas along park trails.

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.