



## **FRIENDS OF PERCH LAKE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER**

There have been several projects accomplished in the park this past year. Thanks to DNR grants shoreline protection has continued with the planting of vegetation in the area for boat rental, which has the additional purpose of filtering runoff before it enters the lake. Additionally, a grant was received to begin oak savanna restoration on the hill opposite the playground.

Oak savanna is a transitional habitat between tall grass prairie and deciduous forest that once was common in this area and now is considered one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world. Since Seim family photos document a thriving oak savanna prior to the planting of the majority of the pines in the 1970's-1980's, it is hoped that simply removing the pines and burning the poisonous needles will be sufficient to permit the habitat to regenerate. The DNR will monitor the site to determine if additional burning/overseeding will be required. Already, in the 1<sup>st</sup> season oak saplings and prairie flowers were popping up at the perimeter. Also, to the Seim's amusement; asparagus from the garden at the site prior to pine planting has popped up.

The county was able to enlist the aid of the St. Croix Scuba club for eurasian milfoil removal. Since preservation of the lake's high water quality precludes chemical treatment, hand pulling is the only viable option. Despite severe weather canceling or curtailing all but one of the pulling sessions, 7 truckloads of milfoil were removed. Thank the divers for improved conditions at the beach. The swimmers who participated in the Hudson YMCA's annual Perch Lake swim meet also remarked on the improvement. The scuba club has once again agreed to volunteer their time. The first pulling session is scheduled for the Saturday morning of Memorial Day weekend. Come cheer them on.

With the fishing opener coming up, anglers will be happy to hear the DNR once again has stocked the lake with 4000 legal-size trout. You will be able to tell this year's plants from previous years by their white flesh. Trout in the lake turn pink after dining on the fresh water shrimp that thrive in the fine water quality.

Many youth groups participated in the ongoing buckthorn eradication project. The focus has been along the Ski Club Trail. FOPL purchased the seeds and supplies for a monarch butterfly way station. The way station project provides plants for both the larval and adult stage of the butterfly along the migratory route to the wintering grounds of the monarch in the mountains of Mexico. It is hoped they will be the boon to monarchs that the bluebird trails have been to them. The seedlings were grown and planted near the prairie kiosk by the young naturalists group at the Hudson Middle School.

Speaking of youth, the number of schools utilizing the park for field trips continues to grow. This year, with 3 schools from the Hudson school district alone, we are on pace to have nearly 500 students partaking in environmental field trips (weather permitting). Last year, all but one field trip was rained out.

The learning center fund continues to grow. Fundraisers, member fees, and miscellaneous donations totaled just under \$5,000 bringing the learning center fund to almost \$45,000. The Metro Super Saver challenge to FOPL members' this past year was maximized. Our special thanks go to owner and FOPL member, Jim Traeger, for the matching funds as well as continuing to donate the printing for the park brochures. Some others have notified FOPL that they have directed their United Way donations at work to us. Since these funds usually come in later in the year, we can't at this time give a definitive total.

Many ideas have been advanced for future income generation for the building fund. Some, such as beverage/snack sales and donation boxes, require county approval. We hope to be able to report further at the annual meeting. Other ideas include manning a charity brat stand(would need many volunteers to make short shifts), aluminum can drive- FOPL president Donna Seim(529 County Road E- 1 mile from park) has agreed to be a drop-off site pending permission to place a collection bin in the park(please be kind- crush and bag), and the ongoing fund at Good Search.com. This is a yahoo driven search engine. The site donates a penny per search to whichever group the searcher selects to benefit. Remember a lot of people doing a few searches are just as effective as a few people doing a lot of searches and pass the enclosed card to a friend. Also, the St. County Courthouse planning department continues to make available inkjet cartridge recycling mailers. These generate income to the County's education department.

FOPL's board would like to focus on creating park specific education programs this summer. These would be offered for free will donations to the learning center. FOPL member Ed Colosky has offered to do bird talks at a yet to be determined date. He would like to be part of multi-presentation endeavor. Perhaps the County's free admission day or Father's day would be good times for FOPL to put something together. Please indicate your willingness to help with any of these goals on your renewal form.

The board has chosen **Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. for the annual meeting** in order to take advantage of the park being open. The meeting will be held at the **covered picnic pavilion near the playground**. Rain location is the maintenance garage in the park. A Team Butkis Monster Massager (\$300 value) has been donated as a door prize. Beverages will be for sale. Make a day of it- bring a picnic, the kids, drown a worm, hike some trails, or catch some rays.

**SEE YOU AT THE PARK!!!!**