



MINNEOPA

Newsletter of the Friends of Minneopa State Park

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MESSENGER



No. 27, October 2004

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Friends of Minneopa State Park • 20499 555 Lane • Mankato, Minnesota 56001

MANAGER'S CORNER

[The park has a new assistant manager, Craig Beckman, and the manager's column this issue was given to Craig to introduce himself – editor.]

My name is **Craig Beckman**, and I am very happy to be taking over as the assistant manager at Minneopa State Park.

I am originally from LaCrescent, MN in the extreme southeast corner of the state. I graduated from Winona State University in 2001 with a degree in Ecology, and while going to school I worked for three summers
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FALL MEETING – Oak Savanna

The Fall meeting of the Friends of Minneopa will be held on **Thursday, October 21, 2004, at 7 p.m.** in the Community Meeting Room of the North Mankato Police Annex Building, 1004 Belgrade Avenue, in North Mankato. The program, entitled "Restoration of the Oak Savanna," will be presented by **Ed Brekke-Kramer**, resource specialist for the DNR Southern Region. Ed is a very knowledgeable speaker who has given interesting presentations for the Friends in the past. There will be refreshments too. See you there!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At this time of year we look at our dying gardens and make our yearly assessment: good in some respects, bad in others. It was too wet, too dry, generally cool but interspersed with some extremely hot and some very, very humid days and nights. We notice which plants did well and which plants did not fare well or even died.

Minneopa Park lived through the same weather that you and your garden experienced. In the park, as in your garden, some did well, some not and in fact some plants probably died. Very few of us view the park with the same eagle eye as we do our own gardens. We notice that the park was green this summer and is now changing as winter approaches. We may see and identify individuals, even though we view the park as a whole. We know our gardens will not be the same next year without our constant care. The park, however, seems to remain more or less the same year after year without such attention. The reality is that the park does change, as individual organisms grow, reproduce and die.

Management of native areas in Minnesota is generally aimed at keeping vegetation more or less as it was at the time of European
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[President, continued from p. 1] settlement. At that time, the Minneopa area was a mixture of hardwoods, prairie and savanna prairie expanses interspersed with trees. All these areas have changed in the last 150 years, especially the savanna. On Oct. 21, Ed Brekke-Kramer will speak on restoring the oak savanna in the park. Such a restoration is needed simply because native areas do change and sometimes we need to give them the same intense scrutiny and care we give our own gardens.

Harriet Mason, president of the Friends

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Help Wanted: There are dozens of ways to help the Friends. For example, contribute material for the newsletter, so it can be four pages again. Or join the nature trail committee and get them moving. You can even just offer ideas and suggestions and maybe someone else will take them up.

The Minneopa Messenger, 20499 555 Lane, Mankato MN 56001, is edited by Brand Frentz, who is responsible for any unattributed material. If you have comments or questions or want to submit material, call Brand at 947-3268.

[Assistant Manager, from p. 1] at Beaver Creek Valley State Park. After graduation, I worked for two and a half years as a wildlife biologist for the United States Geological Survey until April of this year when I took over as the manager at Monson Lake State Park. I worked here until I began at Minneopa on September 22. I'm very excited to be at Minneopa as I love the area, and I am now a little closer to home.

My greatest joy in working in state parks is helping people to experience and learn about the outdoors. I love trying to answer questions about plants and animals and anything else people might wonder about. Anything that can be done to help children learn to respect and appreciate nature goes a long way in preserving habitat and natural areas for future generations. At Minneopa, I look forward to helping restore some of the native prairie and oak savanna as well as meeting the variety of park visitors.

Assistant Park Manager Craig Beckman

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Check our websites: Minneopa.org and Minneopa.com.