2018 Display Features Namekagon

In 2018 canoeing and outdoor enthusiasts will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on Oct. 2, 1968. The intent of the act was to “preserve selected rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.” Of the approximately 3.6 million miles of streams in the U.S., less than one quarter of one percent – 12,734 miles – are protected by the act, but these miles include some of the most primitive and breathtaking landscapes in North America.

The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum will mark this semicentennial with its new annual display. Entitled “Wisconsin’s Moving National Park,” the display will focus on the Namekagon River in Wisconsin, which together with the St. Croix River, forms the “St Croix National Scenic Riverway.”

While many people recognize the name, Namekagon River, few realize it is part of the national park system. Of the original eight rivers designated by the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, the St Croix National Scenic Riverway, which includes the Namekagon, is the only river system managed by the National Park Service, making it America’s first Wild & Scenic River National Park, and the Namekagon Wisconsin’s moving national park.

Opening Day Soon - May 26, 2016

Preparations are shaping up as we rapidly approach the seasonal opening of the museum on Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Day, May 26, 2018. Activities will be taking place inside as well as outside the museum from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm that day. Exhibitors are being registered for the ninth annual Canoe & Wooden Boat Show. Musical acts have been scheduled for the “back porch stage.” Permits and licenses have been obtained from the city for the food and beer garden. Items are being gathered for the silent auction and raffle. Prayers are being said for good weather.

Exhibitors are making their final preparations as well. John Fuller is coming from Duluth with a 15’ 1942 Old Town wood canvas square stern canoe. Fred Weber is coming from Sheboygan to demonstrate his Myka Canoe Loaders, an adaptive aid to loading and unloading a canoe to and from a vehicle. Steve Hegna is returning from Black River Falls with his newly restored 18’ 1915 Old Town Ideal and an original 15’ 1933 Old Town Fifty-Pounder. One of the last boats made by the Hayward Boat Company, a 14’ oak slat rowboat, is coming from Naperville, Illinois, along with John Hackemer. George Nelson of Minoqua is bringing a 1938 wood canvas Prospector Vee-Stern canoe with a 1933 Johnson A-65 4.1hp motor (for sale). We are also expecting a couple of birch bark canoes to be on display this year, one from Don Halloran from Marshfield and another from Mark Soulier of Shell Lake.

Booth space is still available and free. Email to info@wisconsincanoeheritagemuseum.org or call 715-635-2479.
Fundraising Successful - WCHM Establishes Endowment Fund

In December of 2017 the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM) began a fundraising campaign to raise the initial funds needed to establish an endowment fund for the museum. An initial fundraising goal of $30,000 was set, the minimum amount needed to place the management of the fund with an endowment foundation, which invests the capital along with that of other endowments, and releases a steady annual stream of funds for use by the endowment organization.

In April of 2018 David Wilder, the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Historical Foundation, reported receiving a WCHM check for $31,500 and opening the “Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum Investment Fund.” To raise that amount the campaign received 85 contributions with an average donation of $194, plus one matching contribution of $15,000. “We are grateful to all those who answered our call and sent in their donations,” says WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke, “Our longer term goal, however, over the next 10 or 15 years, would be on the order of $100 to $150,000.” The purpose of the fund is to ensure the WCHM’s financial stability and continued operations over the long term, and the WCHM Board has decided not to take any distributions from the fund until it reaches $100,000. “That amount would generate significant annual revenue that could make the difference in a lean year between keeping the doors open or having to shut down,” explains Malischke, “Adding the fund to your estate planning would be a great way to help us reach that long term goal.”

Donations to the fund can still be made and sent to WCHM Endowment, PO Box 356, Spooner WI 54801, or online at www.WisconsinCanoeHeritageMuseum.org. For more information about adding the fund to your estate plan, contact WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke at info@wisconsincanoeheritagemuseum.org or 715-635-2479.

Thank You To These Generous Contributors Who Helped Establish The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum Investment Fund

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Charlotte & Dick Shover
Craig Endsley
Stephen Richards
Sue Plankis
Jerry & Marilyn Dorff
News Briefs & Upcoming Events

Volunteers Needed

WCHM is looking for new volunteers to join the ranks of the “Keymasters,” the folks that dedicate three or four hours every couple of weeks during the summer to open the museum exhibit hall to visitors. WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke says “No special knowledge or skills are required, just a friendly attitude and a willingness to be prompt and responsible.” Inquiries for more information can be made to Jed Malischke at 715-635-2479 or by writing to info@wisconsincanoerheritagemuseum.org.

Brave Cowboy Returns To WCHM Opener

While the canoe & wooden boat show transpires out in the street during the WCHM opening festivities, out in the beer garden there will be live music on the “back porch” stage. Brave Cowboy returns as favorites from last year. Jason Rabuck on harmonica and guitar and Eric Schubring on banjo and guitar make up the duo Brave Cowboy. And like the character in Edward Abbey’s book, Brave Cowboy refuses to be branded, labeled, or fenced in by musical stereotypes. They provide an inspired and vibrant blend of folk, rock, blues, and originals. They will be joined this year by the duo of Tom & Jed from Ashland and another group yet to be announced.

WCHM at Hunt Hill May 12, Convergence May 19

The WCHM traveling promotional booth will be going to the Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary for Prairie Fling on May 12th from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. It is a day-long celebration of spring with hayrides, music, food, artisan booths, community booths, educational programs, a kid’s area and more (more information at http://hunthill.org). We’ll also be attending the new Driftless Sports Convergence at the Onalaska Omni Center from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm on Saturday May 19. This show is expected to include 50,000 square feet of kayaks, canoes, bikes, camping, fishing, archery, bow hiking, hiking, and more (more information www.driftless.explorelacrosse.com).

Ely Will Host 2018 WCHA Regional Assembly

The Upper Great Lakes Regional Assembly of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association will be moving to Minnesota in 2018. Current plans are to hold the annual event in Ely at YMCA Camp Widjiwagan on Burntside Lake on August 24-26. This year’s event will be in special honor of canoes built by, and the legacy of, Joe Seliga. Further information on the event can be found at the Minnesota Canoe Museum site www.minnesotacanoemuseum.org. For vendor space call Alex Comb at Stewart River Boatworks, www.stewartriver.com or 218-834-2506.

One Opening In Paddle Class May 11 & 12

At press time there was still one opening available in the canoe paddle making class scheduled for May 11-12, 2018, at the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM) in Spooner, WI. The class accommodates eight participants, and quickly filled after it was announced several months ago. But due to a recent cancellation, one opening has become available. Anyone interested should call 715-635-2479 or email to info@WisconsinCanoeHeritageMuseum.org as soon as possible.
Annual Election and Membership Meeting May 25

The WCHM will hold its annual general membership meeting and election for the Board of Directors on Friday May 25th. The membership meeting and election will take place at the museum at 312 N Front St in Spooner starting at 4:00 pm. The new board will meet immediately after the election to elect its officers (president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary).

Three director’s positions are expiring: seats previously held by Jamie Dunn, Ed Peters, and Lynn Herman. Peters and Herman will be on the ballot to remain in their seats. A third candidate, Anna Demers, is also currently on the ballot. Anyone else interested in running for the board of directors should contact Debra Koehn, chair of the nomination committee, at 715-520-3961.

One Spot Left For Robert Morris Kayak Building Class

Robert Morris from the Brewery Creek Small Boat Shop in Vancouver BC, and author of the illustrated instructional book “Building Skin-on-Frame Boats”, will be teaching a Greenland Kayak building class at the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM). The class is scheduled to begin Monday July 30th and continue daily through Saturday August 4th, 2018. As of press time there was only one opening left for someone, along with a partner of their choosing, to build a traditional Greenland style skin-on-frame kayak.

Participants of this Greenland Kayak building workshop will be guided through the process of building kayaks in the West Greenland style. Kayaks will be completed and ready to paint by the end of the workshop. Throughout the session, building practices and techniques will be linked to the instructor’s research and experiences. Participants should leave with the skills and knowledge to build a second skin-on-frame boat.

This class will be limited to four students (and their partners) so that each will have the opportunity for a real hands-on experience. The early-bird tuition rate of $695 covers the cost of all materials and instruction for you (and a second person if you so choose) to build a kayak and take it home afterwards. Interested students can register by contacting WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke. Call 715-635-2479 or write info@wisconsincanoeheritagemuseum.org.