

FRIENDS OF
ANDERSON PARK

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Fall flowers are in bloom along the boardwalks and prairie trails.
- 2017 Anderson Park Calendars available with donation at the Fall Festival.
- Isanti County acquires 80 additional acres for Anderson Park.

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

Fall Flowers: 2
Goldenrods
And
Asters

Confusing 3
Fall Warblers

2017 3
Park
Calendars

About the 3
Friends of
Anderson
Park

Anderson Park eNews

FRIENDS OF ANDERSON PARK

AUGUST 2016

7th Annual Fall Festival September 17

The 7th Annual Fall Festival will be held at Anderson County Park September 17th from 9 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Activities will include:

- Horse-drawn wagon rides on the park trails;
- Kids games, face painting and a nature scavenger hunt;



- A Minnesota Zoomobile program: “Cool Animals of the North” with a variety of live animals;



- A naturalist-guided interpretive hike;
- Live music, and
- **Free** apple pie and ice cream!

Irving & John Anderson County Park Just Got Bigger!

by Barry Wendorf, Isanti County Parks Director

The Isanti County Parks Department recently acquired an additional 80 acres increasing the overall size of Anderson Park to 254 acres.

This increased investment brings the total shoreline to one mile on Horseleg Lake and one half mile on Horseshoe Lake further protecting these high quality

shallow lake systems within the Anoka Sand Plain.

Plans for improvements include removing existing structures, creating a small parking area, as well as developing one mile of trail with benches at key viewing areas along the way.

This acquisition was made possible through a grant from the

Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, along with a local match funded by Isanti County and donations from Oxford Township, the Friends of Anderson Park and anonymous donors. Furthermore, the expansion would not have happened without The Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota's involvement and support.

Fall Flowers of Anderson Park by Tom Anderson



Goldenrods are often mistakenly accused of causing hay fever issues, but ragweed, which is wind-pollinated is the primary agent for hay fever sufferers.

Asters are small daisy-like flowers.



While April showers bring May flowers, the blooms of late summer and early fall are delivered by the shortening of days. This is the time of the year that the crickets are singing their last notes. A hard freeze can put both the flower show and cricket chorus to an abrupt end.

The two most dominant groups of wild flowers in the fall are representatives of the Compositae or "daisy" family. These are the goldenrods and asters. While goldenrods live up to their namesake and are all golden yellow, the asters

add a collage of various shades of blue, violet and even white to the autumnal landscape.

By mid-August, the landscape becomes buttered with the distinctive yellow color of goldenrods. All goldenrods belong to the genus, *Solidago*. The Latin translation of *solidago* is "to make whole" or "to heal."

The plant was traditionally an important medicinal herb. Goldenrods are often mistakenly accused of causing hay fever. Insects, not the wind, pollinate goldenrods. Conse-

quently the pollen is not blown around and breathed in. The primary agent for hay fever sufferers is the nondescript, but bountiful ragweed. It is wind pollinated and therefore inhaled. And it just so happens that ragweed releases millions of pollen grains into the air at the same time of the year that the goldenrod starts to bloom.

In the park are colonies of goldenrod with many plants in a small area. These are likely Missouri, Canada or tall goldenrods. They all have a similar, pyramid-shaped cluster of yellow flowers.

Goldenrods Important Sources of Nectar for Bees and Butterflies

Nearly 120 species of goldenrod live in North America. Roughly 45 species are native to Minnesota. With luck there could be 6-8 species in Anderson County Park. Many of the species are difficult to identify. A good plant identification key or wildflower book is required along with patience and keen observation skills.

Goldenrods can be very important late summer nectar

sources for insects. Monarch butterflies are especially fond of showy goldenrods and I have witnessed up to half a dozen monarchs feeding on one clump of this lovely species. The yellow clusters of flowers on the showy goldenrod resemble a plume.

There are several easily identified species of goldenrod in the park. My favorite, the stiff goldenrod, thrives in the prai-

rie. It is a tall plant whose flower cluster is flat-topped. The leaves are coarse and thicker than other goldenrods.



Asters Display Vibrant Fall Colors

The other dominant fall flower group is the asters. The genus name is the same as the common name: aster. The word comes from the Latin and Greek word for "star." Indeed, the small daisy-like flower does resemble a star.

The New England aster is a robust and often tall aster that has deep purple flowers. Each blossom is made up of

up to 100 rays. The center of each flower is made up of yellow disc flowers. This flower is an important late-season food source for pollinators, blooming through the fall.

Sky-blue aster can be found in the open prairies or woods. The clusters of pale blue to blue-violet flowers are up to ¾ inches across. While there are other similar colored asters, this one has heart-shaped

leaves. The leaves feel like fine sandpaper.

White asters in the park include the heath aster with its tightly packed small flowers, the calico aster that is often three feet tall and prefers wetland and brushy edges or perhaps the flat-top white aster that stands tall, 4-6 feet, and also prefers the margins of swamps and marshes.

Confusing Fall Warblers Start Migration by Lee Kingsbury



Yellow Warbler

Passing flocks, called “waves” of warblers, are now feeding, flying and flitting in the treetops as they start to head for warm wintering grounds in southern climes.

If you see small greenish yellow birds that look like warblers, but won't stay still long enough for you to get a good look at them, you're probably seeing *confusing* fall warblers.

During the spring bird hike at the park, we often spy 10 — 15 different species of returning resident and migrant warblers. In spring these birds have brightly colored feathers and distinct markings that help with identification. In the fall it is more challenging, as some warblers colors change, becoming pale and plain, even drab. It gets confusing!

Peterson's *A Field Guide to Birds East of the Rockies* lists 26 species of “confusing fall warblers.” A number of them are commonly seen in Anderson Park.

Identifying these birds can be done with a little effort. Look for specific marks: wing-bars, tail spots, eye lines, eye-rings and streaking or spots on the crowns, backs or breasts.

Fall offers wonderful, if somewhat confusing, warbler watching opportunities.

Warblers make a long, dangerous, and exhausting migration flight from Minnesota to Central or South America or the Caribbean.

The Anderson Park 2017 Calendar

The 2017 Park Calendar project, coordinated by Steve Kingsbury, captures the park's scenic beauty and highlights the wildlife living there. Steve and local nature photographers, Joe Sausen and Tom Anderson share their best recent photos in the 2017 calendar.

This year Tom Anderson has again provided information on monthly changes in nature's calendar — when goldfinches build nests, where monarchs must lay their

eggs, and when raccoons are likely to venture out after winter dormancy.

People donating \$20 or more to the *Friends of Anderson Park* will receive the calendar as our thank you gift.

Donations are used to support educational programs and special projects; promote the park, and maintain the prairie display gardens.

To make a donation and receive a gift calendar, please call Lee at 651/462-2015 or see us at the Fall Festival on September 17th.



Friends Board Members

- Maurie Anderson
- Tom Anderson
- Diane Bennett
- Kathy Bowlin
- Tami Buetow
- Diana Horrigan
- Lee Kingsbury
- Steve Kingsbury
- Joe Sausen

eNews Photographers:

Tom Anderson, Steve Kingsbury, Joe Sausen

As stewards of Anderson Park

we work to:

- PRESERVE** The ecological integrity of the park.
- RESTORE** Its native habitats.
- CONNECT** People with the natural world through innovative outdoor experiences.

The Mission of the Friends of Anderson Park is to preserve the natural beauty and primitive nature of Anderson Park and to assist Isanti County with its planning, development and maintenance of facilities.