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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2018



37th Annual Ramble—40 Years: Your Local Nature Connection
Saturday October 6, 2018 at River Bend Nature Center



River Bend
NATURE CENTER

Summer 2018, Volume 39, Issue 2

Helping people discover, enjoy, understand, and preserve the incredible natural world that surrounds us.

Program Highlights

August

- 11 Science Saturday:
Slimy, Slippery Salamanders
Naturalist Walk
Restoration Club
- 15 OWLS Lunch & Learn -
Wildflowers of River Bend,
Holly Fischer, MN Master Naturalist
- 20 Homeschool Science Day
"Life Cycles"
- 23 Jivin' Ivan & The Kings of Swing

September

- 1 Bagels & Birds
- 8 Science Saturday:
Totally Turtles
Naturalist Walk
Restoration Club
- 15 OWLS Lunch & Learn -
Sixty Years of Ecological Change
in a Restored Woodland,
Carol Trosset, MN Master Naturalist
- 29 National Public Lands Volunteer Day

October

- 6 Bagels & Birds
- 6 Ramble: 40 Years: Your Local Nature Connection
- 13 Science Saturday:
Oh For Goodness Snakes!
Naturalist Walk
Restoration Club
- 17 OWLS Lunch & Learn -
Wonderful World of Purple Martins,
Dave Lee, RBNC Member/Volunteer
- 27 Bats, Bones & Bonfires

November

- 15 Give to the Max / Year-End Donation Drive begins

Director's Desk

By Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

You can help build a strong future for River Bend Nature Center!

River Bend Nature Center kicked off our yearlong 40th Anniversary Celebration in mid-June by walking in the Heritage Days parade and hosting *Igniting Love of Nature*, a breakfast at the Inn at Shattuck-St. Mary's that highlighted River Bend Nature Center's impact. About 80 guests attended, including some founding members. Thanks to everyone who made that event a success through telling their stories and making financial contributions.

This is an important time to strengthen River Bend Nature Center by broadening and deepening awareness and support of this valuable resource which we are so fortunate to have right in our backyards! It's nature nearby with incredible opportunities for education, conservation, and recreation. We all have a stake in River Bend's future and ***your help is needed*** to set the stage for generations to come.

River Bend is such a special place and I often reflect about the dedication of the people who had the vision, put the organization together, constructed the buildings and trails, carried out programs/events, and gave money to fund it all. I am extremely grateful for those who were involved at the beginning and over the course of the past four decades.

I am involved with River Bend Nature Center because its mission is very important to me. When I look around, I see the need for what we do—connecting people with nature—growing more urgent every day for the health of individuals, families, community, and the planet. Connecting with nature improves physical and mental health, reduces stress, fights depression and anxiety, improves focus and self-esteem, and restores energy.

Another important benefit is that people connect with each other in and around nature. When we surveyed members, we learned connections with others was one of the leading reasons why people value RBNC. These community connections are necessary as loneliness and isolation are a growing concern across the lifespan. Some studies have shown that being lonely and disconnected is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. There's no better place to connect with other people than outside and in nature. Come check out our programs and activities, learn about volunteer opportunities, and stop by and say hi!

It was so energizing to see the community at the parade and hear from people who told us how much they love the nature center. **If you use, enjoy and value River Bend Nature Center, we need you to become a member. Visit www.rbnc.org/membership (or fill out enclosed envelope). Starting at only \$40 a year for a family, you can help support this place you love so much!** If you already are a member, thank you! River Bend is not a city park and receives no regular funding through taxes. We rely upon the generosity of the community in order to operate. RBNC is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, and donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Thank you for supporting River Bend Nature Center as a resource in the community and region. We rely on your financial contributions and contributions of time to support the programs and activities of the Center. Please contact us to learn more about how to become a community partner, getting your company or organization involved, or about putting River Bend Nature Center in your will.

River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186
Faribault, MN 55021

Board of Directors

Dustin Simpson, *President*
Jane McWilliams, *Vice-President*
Matt Carlander, *Treasurer*
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Tim Madigan
Dirk Peterson
Paul Stegmeir
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Cody VanDerVeen
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Executive Director
Cindy Clayton
Operations Director
Molly Olson
Naturalist/Program Coordinator
Kelly Peterson
Naturalist/Program Coordinator
Allison Shaw
Naturalist/Program Coordinator
Brittany Smith
Naturalist/Program Coordinator

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Introducing the RBNC Naturalist

Molly Olson, Naturalist/Program Coordinator (Outreach)
Allison Shaw, Naturalist/Program Coordinator (School Programs)
Brittany Smith, Naturalist/Program Coordinator (Natural Resources)
Kelly Peterson, Naturalist/Program Coordinator (Public Programs)

Molly Olson is originally from the Twin Cities, but lived in Chicago while attending Loyola University where she graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Environmental Science. She has worked for multiple organizations such as Three Rivers Park District, City of Richfield Wood Lake Nature Center, and Minneapolis Parks and Recreation. Her favorite part of being a Naturalist is getting people excited about being outdoors and learning about nature. She is currently attending Hamline University for a Masters of Education in Natural Science and Environmental Education. In her spare time she likes to try new restaurants, go kayaking around the chain of lakes or hiking at state parks.

Allison Shaw grew up in Blaine, MN a northern suburb of the Twin Cities. She graduated from the University of Northwestern—St. Paul with a B.S. in Biology. She enjoyed working at River Bend as a seasonal Environmental Educator for the 2017-2018 school year, and is excited to take on this new role of Naturalist/Program Coordinator. Allison has been a valuable asset to River Bend delivering high quality programs to schools and the public. Her favorite part of working at River Bend is the impact she has on the visiting students and the opportunity to work with many dedicated volunteers! Allison lives in Owatonna with her husband and their cat, and enjoys cycling, hiking, camping, and watching The Office in her spare time.

Brittany Smith is originally from Elgin, MN. She attended Winona State University, earning a Bachelors of Science in Ecology. Brittany served two years with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa and worked five years with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division. Her favorite part of being a Naturalist is being able to share her experiences and teaching others about natural resources. Brittany and her husband reside in Northfield with their dog and cat. In her spare time she likes to spend time with family, hike, and go camping.

Please stop by River Bend and say hi. Coming soon...**Kelly Peterson!**



RBNC Staff (Left—Right) Breanna Wheeler, Molly Olson, Brittany Smith, Allison Shaw, and Cindy Clayton

Thank you Volunteers!

We really appreciate all of the volunteers that help and support us in various ways. Together, we are able to grow and improve River Bend Nature Center.

Check out the upcoming volunteer opportunities at www.rbnc.org/volunteer
Contact Molly Olson at programs@rbnc.org for more information.

Building Host – We are seeking volunteers to greet visitors in the Interpretive Center, answer questions and phone calls during the week between 8-4:30 PM and on Saturdays from 9-4. If you have availability to help, please contact us!



Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 2018



Gerrod Smith
Summer 2018 Natural Resources Intern

Gerrod Smith has interned with us this summer as part of his natural resources degree requirements at MN State University, Mankato. Thank you, Gerrod!

37th Annual Ramble—40 Years: Your Local Nature Connection

Join us on Saturday, October 6th at River Bend Nature Center for a special 40th Anniversary Ramble which will feature dinner, music, raffles, a live auction, a local goods marketplace, and optional golf cart tours. More information will be available soon, so mark your calendars!

In the meantime, we are putting out a **Call for Ramble Sponsors**. Local business and individual / family sponsorships are essential to sustaining our activities. The levels are: **Platinum = \$3,000 Gold = \$2,000 Silver = \$1,000**

All sponsorships include: logo on event banner, invitations and programs, listing in all press releases, advertising and the RBNC website and social media. You can also choose to receive complimentary tickets and family memberships.

Please call us at 507-332-7151 or email rbncinfo@rbnc.org with any questions or to discuss further. The funds raised at Ramble are critical to funding our environmental education, public programs and events, and restoration and upkeep of 743 acres of land/water/trails. It also allows the trails and interpretive center to be open to the public year round with no entrance fees.



Honor Point Memorials & Honorariums

Give tribute to people who have made an impact on your life, both living and deceased, by honoring them with an engraved paver at Honor Point. Framed by boulders and stone walls, the ground is inlaid with stone pavers and is a peaceful place with a beautiful overlook of the Straight River.

To learn more, call 507-332-7151 or email rbncinfo@rbnc.org



Thank you, Mowers!

Our mowing volunteers know when the grass around the 743 acres of River Bend needs some attention and they are on it.

Thank you to:

Curtis Glor
Ralph Meehan
Larry Mensing
Larry Olson
Lyle Olson
Roger Riesing

We appreciate your dedication and time spent to make the nature center beautiful.

As amazing as these individuals are...***they could use some help.*** We would like to start training more people how, when, and where to use the lawn mower.

If you would like to help, please call
Molly Olson at River Bend Nature Center
507-332-7151 or stop in and see us.

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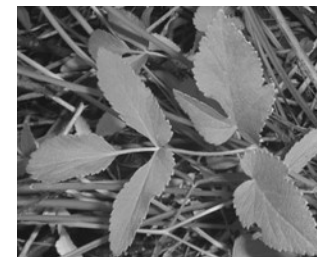
Thank you Dave Lee!

Wild Parsnip is native to Europe and Asia and was brought to the United States as a food source, grown as a root vegetable, but it escaped cultivation and has made its mark. Wild parsnip is an invasive plant that may look pretty with bright yellow flowers, but beware, it could burn you. The sap of wild parsnip contains chemicals that when present on one's skin that is then exposed to sunlight can cause blisters and skin discoloration; also known as phytophotodermatitis. Please be aware that Wild Parsnip is present at River Bend; staying on designated trails will limit the chances of coming into contact with Wild Parsnip.

Golden Alexander, a native Minnesota prairie plant, is commonly mistaken as Wild Parsnip. The plant species do look extremely similar, especially when they are small, so it is important to know how to identify the differences.

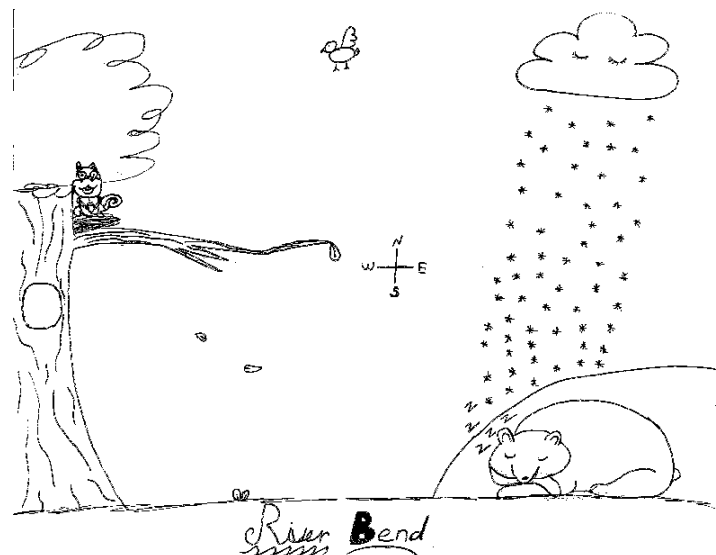
- ◆ Grows 4- 6 feet tall.
- ◆ Leaves alternate along the stem, are pinnately compound, and consist of egg-shaped leaflets having saw-toothed edges that are arranged in pairs along the stalk; becoming progressively smaller near the top of the stem.
- ◆ Typically blooms June through late August.

- ◆ Grows 1 – 2 feet tall
- ◆ Leaves have small teeth along the edge and an overall palm- shaped or maple-leaf outline.
- ◆ Typically blooms May to July.



River Bend Nature Center plans to host an archery only special hunt this fall as a tool for whitetail deer management. The hunt will be a lottery with limited permits and will be open to River Bend Nature Center **members only**. Whitetail deer are browsers and love to eat the fresh green morsels of spring ephemerals. When deer numbers exceed the recommended deer per square acre, overbrowsing takes place and can harm the native plants.

High populations in a small area can also have consequences to other land owners. Deer can become pests in neighborhood yards and gardens, become a hazard on roadways, and cause significant damage to young crops. Health issues for a herd can also arise when deer herds are too large for the area; the more deer in an area, the higher likelihood of disease transmission exists among the herd.



The next time Destiny comes into River Bend, she will be awarded with cool River Bend swag!



► JOIN US FOR ADVENTURE AND DISCOVERY! ►

07.332.7151 camp@rbnc.org www.rbnc.org Faribault, Minnesota

Last Chance for Summer Camp!

August 6-10, 9 AM - 12 noon -
Creepy Crawlies - for preschoolers

August 13-16, 9 AM - 4 PM -
Wildlife Adventures - for grades 6-8

August 13-16, 9 AM - 4 PM -
Hike it or Bike it - for grades 4-6

August 20-24, 9 AM - 12 noon -
Time Rovers - for grades 2-3

Sign up today at

www.rbnc.org/summer-camp.



News & Notes

40th Anniversary Happenings

RBNC kicked off our 40th anniversary celebration by walking in the **Faribault Heritage Days parade**. It was fun to see so many people who enjoy RBNC! We hope to see you out on the trails and encourage you to become a member to help support this place you love by visiting www.rbnc.org/membership.



River Bend Staff walks in the 2018 Heritage Days parade

On June 19, 2018, we held **Igniting Love of Nature**, a 40th Anniversary Fundraising Breakfast at the Inn at Shattuck and raised needed funds for the nature center. Guest speakers shared the impact River Bend Nature Center has had on them and the community and included Amber VanNingen, a 2005-2006 naturalist intern; Kathleen Wendt, a summer camper/summer camp assistant; Larry Vorweck, a volunteer naturalist, and John Blackmer, former longtime naturalist. Thank you to all who attended and who have responded with donations to the letter we sent this spring.



Board President Dustin Simpson emcees at Igniting Love of Nature



Pat Rice, one of the founding members of River Bend Nature Center

Annual Meeting

We will hold our Annual Meeting on Thursday, **July 26 at 6 PM at River Bend Nature Center**. The 2017 Annual Report will be released and members will elect new board members.

Wall of Giving

Next time you stop by the Interpretive Center, take a look at the 200 skillfully decorated envelopes lining the walls of the entry way which have been designed by summer campers. This is your opportunity to give at any dollar level between \$1 and \$200 to help your favorite nature center. Pick a number that is special to you and let's try to complete the challenge by the time Ramble comes around in October! Thank you!

History Update

July 25, 1978—Faribault Area Nature Interpretive Center, Inc. (which would become River Bend Nature Center) was officially incorporated as a nonprofit organization.

August 11, 1978—The first trails were staked by Orwin Rustad, Steve Griesert, and Bob Yochum.

September 25, 1978—The bylaws of Faribault Area Nature Interpretive Center, Inc. (which would become River Bend Nature Center) were adopted on September 25, 1978.

Check this out! To learn more about the history of River Bend, check out this episode of 1855, produced by Samuel Temple and Logan Ledman. It features interviews with Ron Parker, John Blackmer, Pat Rice, and Keith Larson.

<https://vimeo.com/channels/985360/277799307>

Tales of the Trails

By Cindy Clayton, Operations Director

Now that I have been at River Bend Nature Center for a year, I am taking opportunities to get out of the office and walk some trails. I really enjoy the outdoors and learning about the different plants and animals that are right here at River Bend. As we are preparing for the 40th Anniversary I have been going through some old photographs. I came upon this photo...it was actually taken at River Bend in 2011. It is a bird that was photographed by the river.

Do you know what this bird is, and is it still around River Bend today? Let me know what you think...bonus for bringing new or renewing memberships, all will be **entered in a drawing for cool River Bend swag**.

There is a big world out there and a lot to explore and discover, come join the staff at River Bend to learn more about how to appreciate the natural world around us.



Naturalist Notebook

Text by Daniel Jones, Volunteer Naturalist—Drawing by Moe Brand

Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*)

Bottle gentian is a showy violet to purple wildflower that blooms August through October. Other common names include Closed Bottle Gentian, and Andrew's Gentian. The name bottle gentian comes from the plant's unusual inflorescence, which resembles a cluster of small oblong flasks sitting at the top of the 1 to 3-foot stem. Upon first seeing it, you might think that the flowers were still budding up, and had not yet opened. But those flowers are in full bloom, and the petals will not open and spread any further than their "bottle" form. The 1 to 1½ inch long flowers are tubular because the five petals on each flower are fused together, with a tiny fringe of fine teeth at the tip, which may be slightly open.

Why would a flower keep its pollen-bearing stamens and pollen-receiving pistils sealed up inside that tightly closed bottle? It would take some strength and leverage to pry open the blossom and get at the pollen and nectar inside the flower. What sort of pollinator can do that? Bumblebees! Bumblebees are the main pollinators of bottle gentian, because only they have the size and strength to force the closed petal tips open and access the inside of the flower. So bottle gentian is an important pollen source for native bumblebees at River Bend Nature Center.

Colors of bottle gentian can vary greatly but are typically blue to purplish, occasionally pink or white. The leaves are up to 4 inches long and 2 inches wide, tapering to a point at the tip. There are fine, rough hairs around the edges and 3 to 7 parallel veins running the length of the leaf. The upper side of the leaf is glossy. The leaves are attached opposite each other, and tend to become larger further up the stem. This is unusual, since most plant species have larger leaves at the bottom, getting smaller as they go up the stem. At the very top of the bottle gentian stem there is a whorl of leaves beneath the flower cluster.

The main stem is thick and smooth, light green or purplish. As the flower dies back, the fused petals form a papery wrapping for a 1-inch capsule with a seam down the sides. As the fruit ripens the seams split to release many seeds, each with papery wings to disperse in the wind.

This plant can be found in moist, rich soils at RBNC in either full sun or part shade. Look for it in RBNC's flood plain forests or swampy areas near water. You might also see the plant on moister parts of the prairie along with big bluestem, heath aster and Culver's root. Few animals eat bottle gentian, because it roots and leaves are bitter tasting. Deer may browse the tops of the plants before they bloom.

Gentian root has a long history of use as a herbal bitter in the treatment of digestive disorders. It contains some of the most bitter compounds known and is a key ingredient of angostura bitters. It's a great strengthener of the human system, stimulating the liver, gall bladder and digestive system.

Search for bottle gentian at RBNC and enjoy this beautiful, unusual flower!

