



**River Bend**  
NATURE CENTER

PO Box 186  
1000 Rustad Rd  
Faribault, MN  
55021

507.332.7151  
www.rbnc.org

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# River Bend

## NATURE CENTER

Spring 2017, Volume 38, Issue 1

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

Scholarships  
Available

Registration Opens February 1st!

# SUMMER CAMP

2017

Members  
receive  
discounts  
on camp  
registrations,  
join today!

Half-Day & Whole-Day Camps For Children Ages 3 to 16

JOIN US FOR ADVENTURE AND DISCOVERY!

507.332.7151

camp@rbnc.org



www.rbnc.org

Faribault, Minnesota

### Mark Your Calendar

See calendar insert for complete listings.

#### April

- 12 -- Restoration Work Day
- 15 -- Fabulous Frogs
- 19 -- O.W.L.S Luncheon
- 23 -- Restoration Work Day
- 24 -- Homeschool Science Day:  
*That's Gross*
- 29 -- Taxidermy Workshop

#### May

- 6 -- Maple Syrup Fun Run & Pancake Brunch
- 10 -- Restoration Work Day
- 15 -- Homeschool Science Day:  
*Edible, Medicinal, & Poisonous Plants*
- 14 -- Wildflower Walk
- 17 -- O.W.L.S Luncheon
- 20 -- What's for Dinner? - Spring Foraging Workshop
- 21 -- Restoration Work Day
- 21 -- Walk on the Water Side

#### June

- 3 -- Finding Fossils
- 14 -- Restoration Work Day
- 17 -- Basics of Archery
- 18 -- Walk on the Water Side
- 21 -- OWLS Luncheon
- 25 -- Restoration Work Day
- 25 -- Survive Alive

## Board Member Perspective

By Paul B. Stegmeir, Board Member

The natural world is a unique and alluring place. There are secrets hidden there that have intrigued mankind since evolution brought him out of the quagmire that separated him from life's lower forms. The primary phenomenon that helped him step forward was his power of thought – the ability to discern and interpret what he was looking at around him. Thoreau understood this feature of man's ability to succeed when he spoke directly to it in his insightful thought "It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see." It is what I saw that instilled in me the wish to join the RBNC Board of Directors.

From my earliest years, I can recall being intrigued by "what I was seeing". I was lucky to have been raised in environments that were "nature rich". Whether it was in my backyard of rolling hills of field and forest, or on the wonderful land of woods, lakes and streams that surrounded my grandfather's farm in rural Wisconsin. Nature was all around me.

The wonder of that good fortune of place for a curious boy was enhanced by elders who helped me to actually see the world I lived in. To plant a seed and watch it grow. To sample the fruits of that labor, both in the nurture, harvest, process and eating. To see the birds come to our yard, build nests, feed and raise their young right outside our living room window in the dense branches of a red cedar tree. Always, my Mom, Grandma, an Uncle or Aunt was showing me and helping to interpret these "acts of nature" around me.

As my world grew, the natural phenomena grew. My mind had been shaped and polished as a conduit for seeing and understanding the world around me. It was elemental in helping me choose an area of study—Forestry. My undergraduate degree helped me to see greater refinements in understanding nature. The teachers and mentors I gained as a student, and later as a practitioner of the things I had learned stood me well in being able to "see" the world around me. Things beautiful, Things interesting, Things that needed attention.

One of the things I discovered was that the kind world I grew up in was less available to young folks following in my wake. The world was becoming more urban. There was less opportunity to see nature as I had. There were fewer mentors and interpreters available to help young people to better "see" what they might look at.

This time for me was in the middle sixties, coincidentally the times that spawned the concept of Earth Day. I got aboard the conservation and environmental education bandwagon. I got involved in a group that advocated for Conservation Education in the public schools curricula. That pushed for the establishment of Environmental Education centers and sought to integrate EE in as a critical part of young learners' educational processes.

(continued, p. 3)

# River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd - PO Box 186  
Faribault, MN 55021  
507.332.7151  
rbncinfo@rbnc.org  
www.rbnc.org

## Board of Directors

Steve Underdahl, *President/City Council Rep.*  
Dustin Simpson, *Vice President*  
Matt Carlander, *Treasurer*  
Cody VanDerVeen, *Secretary*  
Penny Hillemann  
Tim Madigan  
Nalani McCutcheon  
Dirk Peterson  
Paul Stegmeir  
Elizabeth Wright  
Wendy Wustenber

## Staff

Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director  
Amber Brossard, Education Coordinator  
Emily Greger, Naturalist/Resource Manager  
Jason Pecore, Facility Assistant  
Karen David, Receptionist

## Temporary Environmental Educators

Katie Elam  
Kara Johnson  
Elsa Litecky  
Stephanie Rath sack

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# Register Now for Summer Camp

You still have time to sign-up for our 2017 summer camps; don't let this chance pass you by! Our summer camps offer a range of activities from animal exploration to rock climbing. Each camp is directed by experienced educators and naturalists with hands-on activities designed to help your child learn about and appreciate nature while having fun! Camps are grouped by age, activity, and generally take place Monday - Thursday.

Summer camp highlights:

### Half day camps for ages 3-4, 5-6, and 7-9

These action-packed camps focus on a specific topic and head outside each day for an awesome adventure. Every camp works to include all learning styles through art projects, reading, active learning and more.

### Adventure is Out There! sessions for ages 8-10, 11-13, and 14-16

Be ready for action-packed days of canoeing, rock climbing, mountain biking, fishing, geocaching, zip lining, low ropes courses, archery, and more! Each day will bring a new adventure, some at River Bend and others offsite at a different park or facility.

### Wet & Wild for ages 10-14

Do you enjoy being in the water on hot summer days? Well, this camp is for you! This camp will teach you how to become skilled at three different types of water sports. We will be spending each day learning a new watersport such as canoeing, kayaking, and stand up paddleboarding.

For a complete listing of our camps or for more information please check out the website at <http://www.rbnc.org/summercamp/>, email us at [camp@rbnc.org](mailto:camp@rbnc.org), or call 507-332-7151.

# Spring Ephemerals

By Stephanie Rath sack, Environmental Educator

They live fast and die young. These little tidings of spring are often small, but they bloom in a big way. As temperatures begin to rise, and snow cover vanishes from the forest floor, the smallest of the woodland plants take advantage of the still leafless trees. They begin growing before any other plant. With more sun reaching the ground than in the summer, the tiny blooms don't have to compete with other larger plants—so in the early weeks of spring, look for a sudden flush of color. The greens, whites, purples, and pinks that you're seeing are more than likely from spring ephemerals. The Trout Lily trail is a great place to begin your search. You may even be lucky enough to spot the extremely rare and federally endangered spring ephemeral for which the trail is named. Please protect the growth of our wildflowers by viewing them from the designated trails.



# Volunteer Page

Thank you to the volunteers listed below for their hard work and dedication to River Bend! Our mission is at work in our community because of you. *January through March volunteers listed. \*Indicates MSAD, \*\*Indicates MSAB.*

### WinterFest

Delores Barta  
Evan Brossard  
Jane Egerdal  
Kameron Gustafson  
Sandra Hagel  
Dave Hering  
Diana Hering  
Glenn Holman  
Kathleen Holman  
Tim Madigan  
Dave Simons  
Josh Torkelson  
Anna Tovar  
Eric Tovar  
Leah Weston

Char Wetzel  
Wally Wetzel

### Habitat Restoration

David Angell  
David Lee

### General Cleaning

Christian Heitkamp\*  
Aaron Waheed\*

### Weekend Volunteers

Lianna Koberoski  
Eddie Lozon  
Janet Lozon  
David Simons

Char Wetzel  
Wally Wetzel

### Board Executive Committee

Matt Carlander  
Dustin Simpson  
Steve Underdahl  
Cody VanDerVeen

### Office Mailings

Delores Barta  
Cecilia DeGrood  
Kathleen Holman  
Judy Lee  
Randine Meehl

### Ramble Committee

Sara Beebe  
Lynette Dickson  
Anne Dienst  
Mike Sandberg  
Dustin Simpson

### School Programs

Diana Hering  
Glenn Holman  
Jan Mitchell  
Monica Wallace  
Jean Westberg  
Leah Weston  
Larry Vorwerk

### Animal Ambassadors

Adam Harwood  
Christian Heitkamp\*  
Aaron Waheed\*  
Nancy Evenstad\*\*  
Shannon Wiebler\*\*  
Annie Bautista\*\*  
Brianna Uphoff\*\*

### Maple Syrup

Christine Angell  
David Angell  
Glenn Holman  
David Lee

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

### Maple Syrup Fun Run

We are looking for volunteers to help serve at our pancake brunch, manage registration, and assist runners throughout the race. Time commitments range from 3 - 4 hours.

👉 Contact Emily at [greger@rbnc.org](mailto:greger@rbnc.org) to volunteer.

### Groundskeeping

River Bend relies on our hardworking volunteers to keep our trails mowed and maintained. We're looking for volunteers to take part in mowing, picking up litter, or repairing trails.

👉 Contact Emily at [greger@rbnc.org](mailto:greger@rbnc.org) to volunteer.

### Weekend Volunteers

Volunteers greet, assist, and provide an interpretive and educational experience to weekend visitors. Shifts are from 9am-12:30pm and 12:30pm-4pm. Training will be provided.

👉 Contact Amber at [brossard@rbnc.org](mailto:brossard@rbnc.org) to volunteer.

### Habitat Restoration

Take part in restoring native plant communities and protecting critical habitats for wildlife! We have many opportunities for you to get involved such as invasive plant removal, native seed collection, soil erosion control, and more.

👉 Contact Emily at [greger@rbnc.org](mailto:greger@rbnc.org) to volunteer.

## Volunteer Spotlight



(From left to right) Aaron Waheed, Christian Heitkamp

We're very fortunate to have Christian Heitkamp and Aaron Waheed volunteering at River Bend. These two come to us five days per week from the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf. to help. Not only are these guys great advocates for nature, they also help us with inclusion. Each week they teach new ASL signs to our staff, helping us communicate more effectively with our hearing impaired visitors.

Christian and Aaron make for an unstoppable team. They tackle every task, from feeding our animals to stamping 1,000 goodie bags for an event. Say the word, and they're ready Christian's advice to new River Bend volunteers - "Give your smile to people daily." A rule he definitely lives by!

# Generosity Spotlight

River Bend is supported by the generous donations of local businesses and individual supporters.

## Thanks to the Carlander Family



The Board and Staff of River Bend Nature Center are happy to announce the receipt of \$10,000 in November 2016 from the Carlander Family. This was a 2016 Give to the Max / Year End matching challenge to friends of River Bend. We are so thankful for their philanthropy at River Bend and the larger community over the years. And we are grateful for the generosity it brought out in all who donated to make this match possible. Thank you!

## Business Members

*Please support our business members!*

### Platinum

1st United Bank – Faribault  
Shattuck-St. Mary's School

### Gold

ABC Bus Companies, Inc.  
Faribault Transportation Company  
The State Bank of Faribault

### Plus

Cannon River STEM School  
Cenneidigh, Inc./Inisfail, Inc.  
Faribault Flyers Bike & Ski Club  
Faribault Rotary Youth Services, Inc.  
Faribo Farm & Home Supply, Inc.  
Mercury Minnesota  
Milltown Cycles

Schroder Concessions, Inc.  
Sertoma Club of Faribault

### Basic

A & W Restaurant  
Anderka Construction  
Arnold Law and Mediation  
Boldt Funeral Home  
Brite Way Window Service  
Cannon River Watershed Partnership  
Donahue's Greenhouse  
Faribault Animal Center  
Faribault Area Retired Educators  
Faribo Air Conditioning and Heating  
Faribo Insurance  
Faribo Sno-Go Club, Inc.  
Fette's Electronics  
Historic Hutchinson House B&B

HomeTown Federal Credit Union  
Humphrey Manlift Company, Inc.  
Hy-Vee  
Landscape Restoration, Inc.  
Mortenson Fire & Safety, Inc.  
Parker Kohl Funeral Home  
Pawn Minnesota LLC  
Quality Appliance  
R.C. Mutual Insurance Co.  
Reese, Winter & Associates, Ltd.  
Reliance Bank  
Reynolds Services, Inc. Seal Coating  
Tom's Lock and Key LLC  
TRB Electric LLC  
Treadway Graphics

## Jennie-O Turkey Store Sponsors 2017 Creciendo Juntos at River Bend

Thank you to Jennie-O Turkey Store for sponsoring the Creciendo Juntos program at River Bend for 2017. Creciendo Juntos is a program of the McKinley Early Childhood Center for Latino preschoolers and their families with English/Spanish interpreters present. The classes provide opportunities for children and families to explore and learn with outdoor activities like hiking, pond-dipping, insect netting and maple syruping. It's a great way for participants to connect with each other, with nature and with River Bend. Thank you Jennie-O Turkey Store and McKinley Early Childhood!

## Windows on the Wild Bird Seed Sponsor

Did you know that Paddington's Seed & Feed donates almost all the birdseed to fill the feeders outside Windows on the Wild? We thank them for this generous donation that allows people another way to interact with and appreciate nature by seeing and hearing birds up close. Come check out the Windows on the Wild during Interpretive Center hours, during Bagels & Birds the first Saturday of the month October-April, or bring your own binoculars and watch from the benches that are located by the feeders.

## Board Member Perspective

*(cont. from p. 1)* So here I am, many years later, counting all the achievements I had scored in my quest to make environmental education a viable part of a young person's development. And I was also discovering that even the older folks had needs in these areas. I found myself lacking in accomplishments. The Natural world is still there to "see". Judged by the controversy in which we see everyday examples in the media, and by overhearing discussions among people over coffee or at a gathering of family or friends, there is a greater need than ever to look at what the Natural World is trying to teach us, what it wants us to "see".

That is where RBNC comes in for me. As I find my time here in Faribault finally requiring less travel and attention to economic survival, I start looking at a missed opportunity that was waiting for me to discover.

## Maple Syrup Update

By Emily Greger, Naturalist, Resource Manager

February's record breaking temperatures catapulted us into maple syruping season. It should have come as no surprise that our season would begin early, given that January was our 17th consecutive month of above average temperatures. Still, we found ourselves scrambling to get in on one of the year's most anticipated activities.

*To produce syrup from sap a few key elements need to be fulfilled:*

1. You need a tree that creates a desirable sugary sap. Sugar maple trees are most commonly used, but all trees in the maple family (*Acer* spp.) can be tapped, as well as birch, black walnut, and butternut trees. Each species has a different percent sugar in its sap, so gallons of sap required to produce a gallon of syrup varies. Typically, it's a 40:1 ratio (40 gallons of sap = 1 gallon of syrup).
2. The days need to be above freezing, and must be followed by below freezing nights. This temperature fluctuation helps create the pressure needed inside of the tree to allow the sap to flow out.
3. The buds on the tree need to be closed. Once the buds pop open, your syruping season is done.

This wonderful resource, this haven for helping young and old alike to truly see and appreciate what

wondrous world around us in right in our back yard. It can be a place for learning and discovery. For enjoyment and relaxation. For quiet and reflecting. For sharing and receiving.

Have you discovered the RBNC? Have you thought about all it can provide for folks of all ages? Have you thought about ways in which you can ensure that this fantastic resource can be enhanced and made more available to the citizens of our community?

In life there are many lessons to be learned. And we are never too old to learn. Think of all we know and all we need to know. Think of what we can learn at RBNC. As John Muir observed, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." Come to RBNC and discover and "see" to what we are hitched.

By February 10th all of the boxes were checked and we were ready to start tapping. Over the course of one week we tapped 50 black maples—a tree most similar to the sugar maple. In a month's time this yielded us around 600 gallons of sap!

We are still working on the cooking process, but if all goes well we should end the season with between 15 - 18 gallons of syrup. With such a great harvest, we're excited to announce that you can now purchase a bottle of maple syrup from our gift shop in the interpretive center while supplies last.

Maple syruping can be a labor intensive process, and we couldn't do all of this work alone. A very special thank you to our volunteers that have been putting in many long hours at our evaporator, and collecting gallons of sap from the sugarbush!



# Naturalist Notebook

Illustrated by Moe Brand  
Text by Elsa Litecky, Temporary Environmental Educator

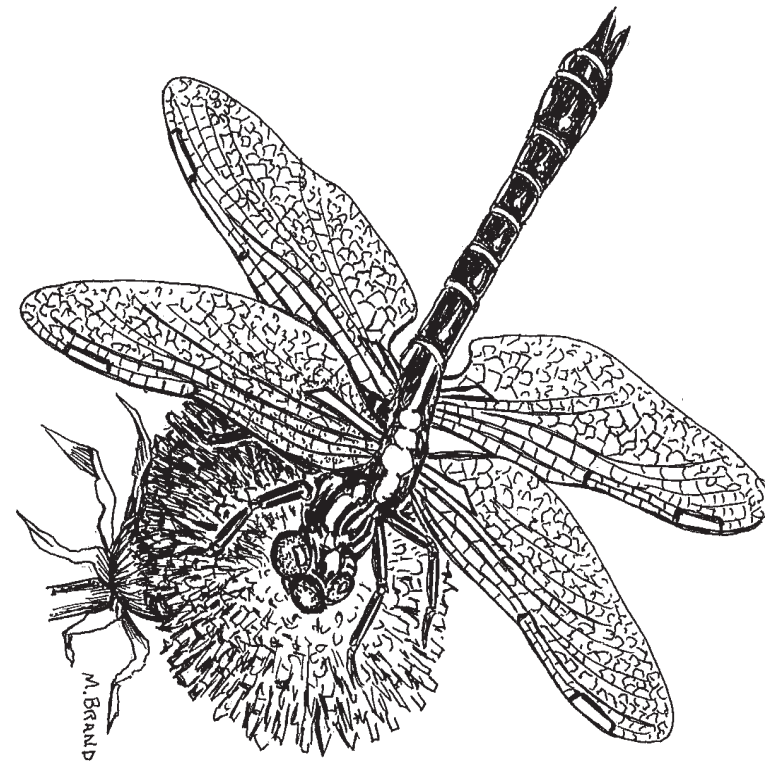
## Dragonhunter *Hagenius brevistylus*

You may have once been walking along a trail or stream in Northern Minnesota watching the dragonflies maneuvering around when suddenly a larger dragonfly swooped in, grabbing one of the smaller dragonflies and disappearing without a trace. Most likely what you saw was the Dragonhunter (*Hagenius brevistylus*). The dragonhunter not only has a cool name but an accurate one since its main prey is other dragonflies. This dragonfly also hunts and eats Monarch Butterflies, which are poisonous to most other predators including birds (although they usually only eat the thorax and abdomen). They are even believed to be immune to the stings of bees and wasp which are also a common food item. They are a fearless insect, chasing off much larger songbirds. When hunting they have been known to reach speeds of 25 mph.

The Dragonhunter ranges from 3 to 3.5 inches in body size and is the largest of the North American Clubtail dragonflies or the Gomphidae family. It usually has green eyes with a black body and yellow diagonal stripes on the side and yellow markings down its back, as well as a yellow underside and face. This dragonfly also has wider end to its tail or a “club” like other members of the Clubtail family. However it is easier to recognize them by their heavy, straight, deliberate flights with lots of stops. They are a percher sitting on favorite vantage points along a usual foraging route looking for insects.

It is easy to distinguish the males by the way they curl their tail underneath themselves in a J-shape. Males do tend to have a larger club than the females, but other than that males and females have no other easily recognizable distinguishing features. The nymphs are unusually shaped for dragonflies and are very flat and wide. Dragonhunter nymphs are also extremely long-lived, spending four or more years in the water where they hatched before metamorphosing into adults.

The dragonhunter is more common to northern Minnesota and usually found in forests and sunny clearings along a variety of streams, small rivers, and lakes. The nymphs prefer streams with muddy bottoms and a lot of leaf litter to hide in. During the summer Dragonhunters are frequently seen foraging along open roads, clearings, and along river banks.



A good way of finding their favorite perches in these habitats is to look for a perch like a branch that is in the sunlight and has butterfly wings and dragonfly wings on the ground underneath it. The Dragonhunter used to be found throughout more of Minnesota, but like other dragonflies especially long-lived ones that live in streams, the biggest threat they face is pollution.

# News & Notes

## New Summer Hours

We're excited to announce that beginning in May and running through August, our Interpretive Center will be open on Sundays from 9 am - 2 pm. We look forward to bringing you many more interpretive nature programs for the whole family to enjoy. Check out the newsletter insert for a sampling of programs offered this summer.

## Scout Programs

River Bend is here to help you and your scouts complete requirements to earn your badges. Whether it's orienteering, animal tracking, or exploring the night sky, we've got you covered! Contact Emily at greger@rbnc.org or call 507-332-7151 to see what program fits your needs.

*Program fees start at:*

- \$100 for a one hour program (up to 15 participants)
- \$150 for a one hour program (up to 30 participants)

## Special Events Recap

Although January may not have felt much like winter, with highs near 40 and more slush to speak of than snow, River Bend was grateful to celebrate the season with all of you at our 33rd annual WinterFest event. Our event featured live reptile shows, crafts, water activities, astronomy programs and more! A very big thank you to the St. Olaf Choir, Hill Harmonies, for an incredible performance.

Congratulations to this year's Trivia Bee winners! The Biology Majors (David Angell, Jane Egerdal, Bob Nesvold, and Leah Inman) walked away with first place after a tough competition in which participants were given questions on geology, plants, animals, and had their survival skills tested through hands-on challenges.

*A very special thanks to our event sponsors:*

- WinterFest: Thrivent Financial
- Trivia Bee: The Cheese Cave, Bauers Southside Liquors

## Mountain Bike Rentals

Did you know that the nature center is home to 16 Trek mountain bikes available for rental? With both children's and adult sizes available, it's a great way to get the entire family active outdoors! For more details, go to rbnc.org or call 507-332-7151.

Rental fee\* - \$15 per day (\$10 members)

*\*Bicycle helmet included in rental fee*

## Register Now for the Maple Syrup Fun Run & Pancake Brunch

Our annual Fun Run will take place on Saturday, May 6th. The course includes a variety of big woods forest, prairie, and wetland habitats. Whether you choose to walk or run, you're sure to experience the beauty of spring.

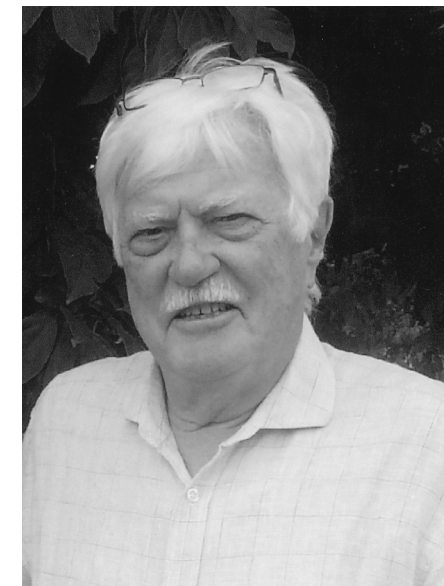
Register by April 21st to take advantage of early bird special discounts for our 50K, 25K, 10K, 5K, and 1-mile walk. Registration includes a race t-shirt and entrance to the pancake brunch. For more details, check out the website at rbnc.org or call 507-332-7151.

## In Memory of Greg Carlson

We are saddened by the loss of Greg Carlson, one of River Bend's founders.

Greg, a many-term Board member (including our current board), passed away February 13, 2017 following a brief illness.

In 1978 Greg was nominated to be president of River Bend's first board of directors, helping to shape the nature center's mission and goals. Kay Janky, another founder, wrote of Greg that he was one of Faribault's "ecological pioneers." Over the years Greg not only served on the board, but also supported River Bend as a volunteer at many events such as Bats and Bones, the Fun Run, and



WinterFest. Greg's passion for nature was apparent to all he came in contact with. His leadership and dedication to the mission of River Bend Nature Center will be missed.

More than 400 people gathered on March 25th at a memorial service to remember Greg, and reflect on what he meant to his family, friends, and community.

Greg is survived by his loving family: wife, Suzanne; seven sons, Zack, Alex, Joe (Bonnie), Marty, James, Mickey (Marcella), and Mark (Minda); 10 grandchildren; two sisters, Jody (Steve) Griffiths, and Gay (Gary) Martin; brother-in-law, and Tom (Linda) Gagnon.