



River Bend  
NATURE CENTER

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River Bend  
NATURE CENTER

Spring 2019, Volume 41, Issue 2

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

## Director's Desk: Benefits of Nature

By Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

By the time you read this, Minnesotans everywhere should be dashing out to play in puddles of mud leftover from the record breaking snow we received as I wrote this article! Or will they? It is a growing concern of mine as I make my way through neighborhoods and parks and notice the shrinking number of people spending time outside. Does anyone else wonder, as I do, where all the kids scurrying to the school bus in the mornings spend their time? Or surprised at the lack of other people outside on nice days or evenings? In his 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv highlights how this cultural shift toward the indoors is harming us.

It certainly is not a challenge that is foreign to me. My devices pull my attention away from important things like real life face to face interactions and hobbies. Too often, I find myself surprised to look up to see how hours have passed while I made little progress on the ever growing email, text, and social media deluge. Every day, limiting screen time is a topic of discussion or argument at my house and I can't believe how distracted it has made my family and me even being more sensitive than most for the need to escape it!

What worries me is that, as time passes, fewer people are "growing up" with nature and more people have livelihoods that only put them outside for a few minutes a day to walk to a car or building. This change to and increasing need and fixation on indoor "plug ins" / screens / schedules may not be registering with many people for the damaging effects it can have on health – their own, their family, the community and the planet.

I come to work every day because I believe wholeheartedly in the importance of River Bend Nature Center and places like it to heal the strains that life puts on us. River Bend Nature Center is a highly valued resource in the community and provides a place where school children can "grow up" with nature (and by the way, Faribault Public School students have for two generations!) and the public can connect with nature.

Through the programs and activities we provide, people understand natural systems and our connections within them and are inspired to conserve and be stewards of the natural world. Because of this education and the opportunities to build appreciation for nature, we are able to give back to the natural world and work to remedy the strains we have placed upon it. How wonderful it is for our corner of the world to have the resource of River Bend Nature Center - it offers me hope.

Your investment is a necessary part of the equation. If River Bend Nature Center is a part of your life, and you love it and value it as much as me, please join me as a member/donor to support RBNC's operations. In 2018, over half of our yearly operating money came from memberships and donations – it is vital to our ability to continue that you/your neighbors/friends join, renew, donate, and volunteer! We do not receive any city, county, state or federal funding from taxes. We are a 501c3 nonprofit, not a city park. Thank you and hope to see you outside!

### Program Highlights

#### April

- 6 Bagels & Birds
- 12 Soups on Buckthorn!
- 17 Lunch & Learn: Faribault High School Wildlife Biology Research
- 20 Earth Day Geocaching: Cache In Trash Out
- 24 Conservation Conversation & Cookies
- 26 Soups on Buckthorn!
- 27 Hike and Hygge
- 27 Animal Ambassadors: Meet the Animals

#### May

- 4 Maple Syrup Fun Run and Pancake Breakfast
- 8 Adult Splatter Paint Archery
- 11 Bagels & Birds
- 11 Mother's Day Geo-Bouquets
- 15 Lunch & Learn: Insects are Important
- 17 Adult Night Out: Foodie Feast-Wild Edibles and Outdoor Cooking
- 17 Garlic, Garlic Everywhere
- 20 Homeschool Science Day
- 21 Parent and Child Preschool Program- Baby Animals Everywhere!
- 25 Hike and Hygge

#### June

- 1 Bagels & Birds
- 13 Adult Night Out: Splatter Paint Archery
- 14 Buckthorn Battles
- 15 Breakfast Before Buckthorn
- 19 Lunch and Learn: After Itasca
- 20 Family Float
- 22 Dutch Oven Cooking
- 29 Hike and Hygge

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER  
**SUMMER CAMP 2019**  
 WHOLE AND HALF DAY CAMPS FOR CHILDREN  
 GRADES PRE-K TO 8TH GRADE

Registration begins  
 January 21st!

Members receive  
 discounts on registration!

rbnc.org 507-332-7151 1000 Rustad Road  
 Faribault, MN 55021

**Maple Syrup Fun Run  
 & Pancake Brunch**  
 Saturday, May 4th, 2019

# River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186  
Faribault, MN 55021

## Board of Directors

Dustin Simpson, *President*  
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## Staff

Breanna Wheeler, *Executive Director*  
Sherri Becker, *Operations Director*  
Molly Olson, *Naturalist/Program Coordinator*  
Kelly Peterson, *Naturalist/Program Coordinator*  
Brittany Smith, *Naturalist/Program Coordinator*

## Mission Moments

By: Allison Shaw, *Naturalist/Program Coordinator*

River Bend Nature Center's mission is to help people discover, enjoy, and understand the incredible natural world that surrounds us. Staff have the opportunity to see River Bend's mission playing out in the lives of others, and have taken to calling them "mission moments". Here are a few from the first months of 2019:

After a very busy and exciting School's Out! Adventure Day with a STEM focus, some white tailed deer visiting the bird feeders captivated the attention of elementary students.

A homeschooled student attended a School's Out! Adventure Day with his brother. There, he met and became friends with another student. A few months later, the two carpoled to Adventure Day together!



Monday, January 28th with the first in a four-day string of snow and cold weather days off of school. One family took the opportunity before it got too cold to rent snowshoes and spend the afternoon at River Bend before hunkering down for the next few days.



Thank You and best wishes to Allison Shaw, as she pursues a Master's degree. She was a great asset to the team and worked with us the past year and half. She will be missed. Thank you Allison!



## Preregister for the Maple Syrup Fun Run by April 19

By: Molly Olson *Naturalist/Program Coordinator*

Don't forget to sign up for the Maple Syrup Fun Run/ Pancake Brunch to be held May 4. **Pre-registration deadline is April 19 to ensure a t-shirt and a discount on the price.** All race registrations include a t-shirt and admission to the pancake breakfast. Day of registration is available.

Can't make it? **Remote Runners** at \$40 receive a t-shirt.

Not a runner? **Couch Potato** at \$40 receive a t-shirt and admission to the pancake brunch.

Help recruit people to sign up 4/1-4/19 and receive complimentary business memberships/or an upgrade on existing membership:  
Recruit 3-8 people = Advocate Membership  
Recruit 9-14 people = Patron Membership  
Recruit 15-19 people = Founder Membership  
Recruit 20+ people = Star Membership

**All proceeds fund River Bend Nature Center!**  
**Thank you!**

## THANK YOU SPONSORS



## Homeschool Science Days Spring 2019

For the 2018-2019 school year, River Bend Nature Center invites homeschool families and co-ops the opportunity to experience all of the seasons at the nature center. Each seasonal homeschool science day, two age-specific educational programs are offered in the morning and two age-specific recreational programs are offered in the afternoon. Sign up for one or sign up for them both! We invite you to bring a lunch and enjoy it in the Interpretive Center between programs. Students may be dropped off for both programs, including lunch.

### **April Showers Bring May Flowers (ages 3-7)**

Explore the different signs of spring's arrival, from warmer weather to wildlife. Go on a hike to find colorful spring ephemeral flowers as well! May 20 from 10:30-12:00, \$8/student

### **Water Quality Testing (ages 8-14)**

Search for life in River Bend's ponds. We will use the caught water monsters as bio indicators of water quality and perform additional tests to determine which site has the cleanest water. May 20 from 10:30-12:00, \$8/student

### **Reptiles and Amphibians (ages 3-7)**

Learn about what makes reptiles and amphibians unique. Meet some of them up close and discover the habitats they call home! May 20 from 12:30-2:00, \$8/student

### **Geocaching (ages 8-14)**

Discover how geocaching works and practice using a GPS to locate geocaches at the Nature Center. May 20 from 12:30-2:00, \$8/student

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## Generosity Spotlight: Charitable Gambling

We would like to thank the dedicated individuals who serve on the Charitable Gambling Committee and carry out the Charitable Gambling operations of River Bend Nature Center.

Thank you Stacy Dupont, Doug Zahn, LaVonne Brick, Gene Buhr, George Smith, Sue Carlson, Dave Green, Lori Johnson, Connie Jensen, Tricia Johnson, Kellsey Meyer, and Tiffany Johnson.

There are many tasks associated with this operation that require an above and beyond type of commitment and these activities have helped River Bend further its mission in the community. We appreciate all you do!

Charitable gambling has been an important funding source for the nature center for several decades. The current locations where gaming benefits River Bend Nature Center are Boxer's Bar & Grill and Roberd's Lake Resort.

## Calling Summer Camp Assistants

by: Kelly Peterson, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Join River Bend Nature Center for a summer of fun by becoming a summer camp assistant for 2019! Summer Camp assistants are responsible students, ages 13-17 years old, who want experience working with younger kids, ages 3-14 years old, and have a love for outdoor activities. They will help the naturalist staff with preparing activities, helping campers make good decisions, and have a positive attitude in all activities. It is a great way to meet new friends, gain training and experience working with young children, and earn volunteer hours in a fun way.

To apply to be a volunteer Summer Camp Assistant, you must be between the age of 13 and 17 by June 1, 2019. Prospective candidates must fill out the application and waiver, as well as send in a letter of recommendation. The application materials can be found at [www.rbnc.org/summer-camp-forms](http://www.rbnc.org/summer-camp-forms). Completed application materials may be mailed, faxed, emailed (programs@rbnc.org), or brought to River Bend in person before May 1, 2019.



## Thank You Business Members

### STAR

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

KGPCo

### FOUNDER

Paddington's Seed & Feed  
State Bank of Faribault

Reliance Bank

### PATRON

Cannon River STEM School  
Faribault Rotary Youth Services, Inc.  
Prairie Avenue Leasing, Ltd.  
Schroder Concessions Inc.

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Sertoma Club of Faribault

### ADVOCATE

A & W Restaurant  
Boldt Funeral Home  
Cannon River Watershed Partnership  
Faribault Area Retired Educators  
Faribault Animal Center  
Hoffman & Hamer Law Office  
HomeTown Federal Credit Union  
Humphrey Manlift Company Inc.  
Krause Feeds & Supplies Inc.  
Mortenson Fire & Safety, Inc.

Anderka Construction  
Cedar Lake Electric, Inc.  
Bauer Restoration  
Donahue's Greenhouse  
Faribo Sno-Go Club, Inc.  
Quality Appliance  
Tom's Lock and Key LLC  
MN Orienteering Club  
Parker Kohl Funeral Home

## Grants in the Works for Spring 2019

By: Brittany Smith, Naturalist/ Program Coordinator

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

There are approximately 25 wooded acres enrolled in the EQIP grant. The goals of the EQIP grant are to restore and enhance the hardwood forest habitat. Over the next 3 years, activities involved in accomplishing the grant project are buckthorn and honeysuckle removal, opening up the ground layer, direct seeding, and tree planting. This year, however, the primary focus will be on buckthorn and honeysuckle removal. Funds for the EQIP grant are through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This financial assistance will only go so far and will not cover all the work that needs to be accomplished, so volunteers are greatly needed. Contact us with if you or your group is interested in getting involved!

### Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant



It is very exciting and rewarding for River Bend to have been selected to receive funding through a CPL grant. Agencies sponsoring this grant are the State of Minnesota and Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). This grant will help accomplish 54 acres of work, over the next three years, to enhance and protect Dwarf Trout Lily habitat.

Dwarf Trout Lilies are an endangered spring wildflower that are only found in a few places in the world; the Minnesota counties of Rice, Goodhue, and Steele. The Dwarf Trout Lily was first discovered in Faribault and the plant was officially listed as a new species in 1871. Dwarf Trout Lily found itself on the federally endangered species list in 1986 and remains there today. Attempts to grow these plants outside of their natural habitat have usually been unsuccessful due to the way these plants reproduce, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website. Enhancing, maintaining, and protecting the natural habitat of the Dwarf Trout Lily is vital to its success and River Bend will be part of that legacy with the help of these funds.

### Volunteer Opportunity:

As with most forms of grants, there is a need for in-kind match in the form of volunteer hours. Activities that will be available for volunteers to help with will be buckthorn and honeysuckle removal, piling brush in some areas, pulling garlic mustard and dame's rocket. Contact us with your interest!

## Become a MN Master Naturalist at River Bend!

By: Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

Join Master Naturalist instructors Breanna Wheeler, Carol Trosset, and guest speakers to watch the early summer beauty of a restored prairie unfold at River Bend Nature Center and learn about the natural and cultural history of the Prairies & Potholes biome of Minnesota.

Participants will learn about geology, plants and trees, animals, ecology, water, and human impacts on the environment as well as how to convey this knowledge to others and be a steward of the land. This is a great life-long learning and fellowship opportunity and perfect time of the year to experience the buzz of insects, chirp of birds and bloom of color in the prairie!

All participants will work towards completing a capstone project during the course. **The 40-hour course will run on Saturdays from 9 AM - 5 PM from June 1, 2019 to July 13, 2019 (no class on July 6).** Daily schedules will vary and include classroom learning, on and off-site field experiences/trips, guest presenters, and a whole lot of fun. The course cost is \$295 and includes course manuals and supplies. To register, please visit <https://www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org/>

## Extra Perks to Become a Business Member by April 30!

Get noticed and help support River Bend Nature Center by becoming a Business Member! **RBNC is currently offering some great specials and marketing perks for businesses who join as new members by April 30th.** To become a new member visit [rbnc.org/membership](http://rbnc.org/membership). Thank you to all of the Business Members at River Bend Nature Center! See a listing of current business members on page 6.

**Advocate (\$100/year)** earn the opportunity to place a marketing item in Maple Syrup Fun Run race bags from 300 participants.

**Patron (\$250/year)** is able to put a marketing item in Maple Syrup Fun Run race bags, and \$100 off a building rental or team building program.

**Founder (\$500/year)** receives 1/2 off rental of the Interpretive Center for use by 12/31/19 (\$250 value) **OR** a Team building program for your staff to use by 12/31/19 (\$250 value)

**Star (\$1,000/year)** receives one free rental of the Interpretive Center for use by 12/31/19 (\$500 value) **OR** 2 Team building programs for your staff to use by 12/31/19 (\$500 value).

Learn about team building programs on page 4.



# News & Notes

## RBNC 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Wrap Up Event

Plans are currently being made for a special prairie party to conclude the yearlong River Bend Nature Center 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to be held the evening of June 6. Mark your calendars and watch for details.

## Earth Day Cache In Trash Out April 20!

Spend Earth Day cleaning up this incredible resource in the community. Cache In Trash Out<sup>®</sup> is an ongoing environmental initiative supported by the worldwide geocaching community and encourages people—geocachers or not—to get out and clean up the community. River Bend will be hosting a Cache In Trash Out<sup>®</sup> event to celebrate Earth Day. Come and celebrate with us as we pick up trash and find a few of our new geocaches in the mean-time. This event runs from 10AM-2PM and is free for all ages.

## Family Camp – Go Outside and Play!

July 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9am-3pm

Re-energize as a family this summer as you attend summer camp together! Each day will have a variety of activity options to get your family working as a team and having fun together. Meet other families that share a love for getting outside and playing just like your family does. Some examples of activities already planned include: biking, Snipe Hunt, Underwater World, archery, Sasquatch Mystery, geocaching, and a competitive game of Family Olympics. Price per day: \$25/person or \$125/family (\$20/member or \$100/member family). Scholarships are available. Register separately for each day – sign up for one or join for both! See the full schedule online at [rbnc.org/upcoming-programs](http://rbnc.org/upcoming-programs)

## Team Building Programs

Looking for a fun way to build team chemistry and productivity in your organization or company? Then book a team building program at River Bend Nature Center. These fun, hands-on programs help teams build stronger relationships, effective communication, and develop problem solving strategies. These skills all lead to better results, job satisfaction, and happy employees. River Bend staff construct a custom program based on your organizational goals. Contact us for more information.

## Summer Camp Registration is Now Open!

We have summer camps for children entering grades PreK – 8. Check out some of the camps that we are super excited about:

### Disco Fever – entering 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> grade

Celebrate an era of groovy tunes that inspire scientific thought. Discover just how animals are “Stayin’ Alive” throughout the winter, how Earth, Wind, and Fire work together with such a force on our planet, how volcanoes erupt with such a “Disco Inferno”, and figure out just how “We are Family” with other species. Camp will start and end each day with a quick disco dance party to get the blood and the brains movin’ and groovin’.

### -Ology – entering 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade

Still deciding whether you’d like to go into herpetology, geology, hydrology, entomology, mammalogy, dendrology, ornithology, pedology, or ichthyology? Explore the different fields of science at River Bend and meet scientists from the Rice Soil and Water Conservation District, the National Resources Conservation Services, the U of M Extension, a plant pathologist, and more.

### Can I Eat it? – entering 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade

Answer this commonly asked question as we learn how to identify (and eat!) edible plants found at River Bend. We’ll supplement our wild edibles with some camp food –traditional and not so traditional—that we’ll make over a fire and with a Dutch oven.



Check out our full list of offerings at [rbnc.org/summer-camp](http://rbnc.org/summer-camp).

# Naturalist Notebook

By: Molly Olson, Naturalist/Program Coordinator


As we finish the celebration of River Bend’s 40th Anniversary, we are taking a look back at one of Orwin Rustad’s writings. Many of his writings incorporate phenology, the study of the seasonal changes. One sign of spring is the sound of frogs singing their mating calls. Enjoy the observations of one of the early phenologists of River Bend Nature Center.

## River Bend Naturalists Notebook

Presented by: RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER, Faribault, MN 55021

# LEOPARD FROG

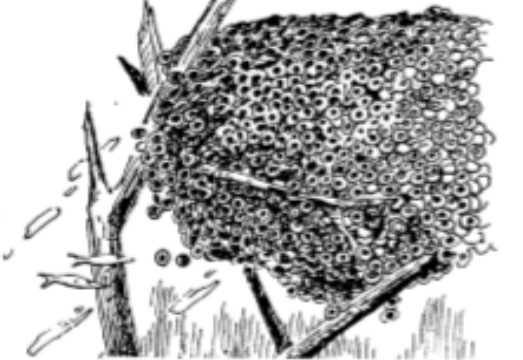
*Rana pipiens*



M. Olson

The Leopard Frog is a large green frog with black spots rimmed with white, thus its name. It is considered one of the most beautiful frogs and is very common in marshes and around ponds, reaching a maximum length of about 4". Hibernation takes place in the mud bottoms of ponds and under litter. They burrow head first into the mud instead of backing into it as do the toads.

In spring the low guttural croaking – like the sound of rubbing two balloons together can be heard in the ponds at the Nature Center.



The eggs are laid in masses, attached to dead twigs, weed stalks or other support material found from a few inches to a foot or so beneath the surface. Egg and tadpole development varies greatly with weather, but usually by early July newly metamorphosed frogs will be abundant. The food of the Leopard Frog consists of various insects and spiders. Its enemies are varied as this abundant species is a source of food for many carnivorous reptiles, birds and mammals, such as the Garter Snake, American Merganser, Great Blue Heron, and various hawks. In its tadpole stage it is a source of food for fishes. Perhaps the greatest destruction of the Leopard frog is caused by traffic during the mass movements of the frogs crossing the roads to and from ponds.