



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

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# River Bend NATURE CENTER

Fall 2019, Volume 41, Issue 4

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

## Director's Desk: Time Keeps on Ticking

By: Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

On the last meeting of a class I took, we were instructed to bring along an item that had significance to our personal experience during our graduate studies to share with our classmates. These type of exercises can plague me as I overthink what might be just right. On the morning of the class, I picked up a timer from one of my kids' board games. You know, the ones that you flip and the salty looking substance travels from one side to the other. And it was perfect. Because if there was anything that became clear to me during that busy time, it was how fast time was going. I'd sit down to write papers and read and look up at the clock and hours and daylight had become night. I'm not sure how much of it was the schooling or just living in midlife that continues to constantly impress upon me the value of time.

A blog I read talked about children losing unstructured time as the school day, homework, and extracurricular activities have filled more time in children's lives. I think what it says is true for all ages and River Bend Nature Center and natural areas like it can help fill this need for unstructured time and provide other benefits as well. It said:

"[Kids need] time to learn who they are. Time to explore their surroundings. Time to figure out how to enjoy their own company and how to structure their free time. Time to think, and to dream, and to dawdle, and to wonder." (1000 Hours Outside, 5/4/19)

Seasons change and the calendar year changes and one of the things that helps me in the swirl is to be outside and reconnect with nature. When I'm outside, time sometimes seems to stop. Research is beginning to show that nature heals. Some doctors are prescribing time in nature and asking their patients how much time they spend outside along with collecting data like weight, blood pressure, and alcohol/caffeine intake. Some are even trying to write these outdoor prescriptions at a level equal to prescribing pills.

As levels of depression, anxiety and obesity rates spike, having natural areas like River Bend Nature Center nearby impacts (and has the potential to positively impact even more) the health and wellness of people. Research is finding that nature may be effective in resetting our fight or flight response and helping our body's systems get back in sync. Studies show that in as few as 15 minutes spent in nature, improvements in cortisol (the stress hormone), blood pressure and heart rate are seen.

The programs that River Bend Nature Center provides for schools and the public may be some of the only times that some students and families get to spend outside. Through these connections made at RBNC, people learn to be stewards for the health of our planet. New interests and skills are fostered – take a look at what we have to offer and hope to see you take some time for yourself – at a program, on the trails, volunteering, or joining/renewing membership or donating to this important resource as the year comes to a close! Thank you.

### Program Highlights

#### October

- 5 Ramble: *A Ramble Through Time*
- 12 Bagels & Birds
- 12 Girl Scout Badges: Hiker & Outdoor Art Creator
- 14 Tree Identification Walk
- 15 Forest Bathing
- 16 Lunch & Learn: Watershed in Your Front Yard
- 16 School's Out Adventure Day: Kids in the Wild
- 17 School's Out Adventure Day: Spinning in Circles
- 18 School's Out Adventure Day: A Little Dirt Won't Hurt
- 19 Girl Scout Badge: Archery
- 26 Fall Festival: Bats, Bones, & Bonfires

#### November

- 2 Bagels & Birds
- 4 School's Out Adventure Day: Animal Antics
- 8 Homeschool Science Day
- 9 Hike and Hygge
- 9 Stewardship Day: Buckthorn Battles
- 16 Girl Scout Badges: Animal Habitats & Outdoor Art Explorer
- 20 Lunch & Learn: What's in a Spice Cake?
- 23 Papermaking Holiday Cards
- 28-30 **Building Closed**

#### December

- 7 Bagels & Birds
- 13 Homeschool Science Day
- 14 Papermaking: Holiday Cards
- 18 Lunch & Learn: Engaging While Aging
- 21 Fossil Ornaments
- 25 **Building Closed**

#### January

- 1 **Building Closed**

**RAMBLE**  
38TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2019  
*A Ramble through Time*  
TICKETS AT WWW.RBNC.ORG/RAMBLE

**Fall Festival**  
**Bats, Bones, Bonfires**  
OCTOBER 26, 2019  
4-8PM AT RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER  
FOOD TRUCKS~JIVIN' IVAN & THE KINGS OF SWING  
CHILDREN'S GAMES~ILLUMINATED TRAIL  
\$7/PERSON, \$5/MEMBER

# River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186  
Faribault, MN 55021

## Board of Directors

Dustin Simpson, *President*  
Jane McWilliams, *Vice-President*  
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Kathy Lockner  
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Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

Sherri Becker, Operations Director

Katy Anderegg, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Molly Olson, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Brittany Smith, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

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## Farewell Kelly!

Thank you to Kelly Peterson for her contributions as Naturalist/ Public Program Coordinator this past year. Kelly is pursuing a teaching license and looking forward to working with students in the classroom. Good luck!



## Welcome GreenCorps Member, Evan Pak, to RBNC!

Evan Pak will join us as a GreenCorps member from late September until August 2020. His focus will be on waste reduction activities and invasive species removal. Evan moved to Northfield in 2003 and has enjoyed exploring the surrounding natural areas ever since. Between the Carleton Arb, St. Olaf Natural Lands, Big Woods State Park, and River Bend, he believes we are incredibly lucky to have such high quality outdoor spaces. Early on in his education at St. Olaf, he realized that he wanted to help other develop their own connection to nature and the environment. While in college, he took on leadership roles in both the outdoors and cycling clubs. In his free time, Evan enjoys photography and cycling. When he's not out chasing sunsets and wildlife with his camera, you can often find him exploring roads and trails with one of his bikes. He graduated in May and is incredibly excited to take the next step in his journey with GreenCorps. He can't wait to get to better know River Bend itself, as well as all of those who visit.



## Board Of Giving

The front entryway at River Bend has a new display called the Board of Giving. The intent is similar to that of a giving tree. Take down an item or items from the board, write your name and what item(s) you took, then bring those items in next time you visit. These supplies help support the events and programs that River Bend provides to the community. Alternatively you can call the interpretive center if you wish to donate but are not here in person.



## Calling Volunteers!

By: Molly Olson, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

We have many dedicated volunteers that help at River Bend in a variety of ways. Together, we are able to grow and improve River Bend Nature Center.

**Volunteer Naturalists**— Do you love telling people about cool things in nature? Then become a Volunteer Naturalist! VolNats help out with school groups, outreach events, and waste education. No previous teaching experience necessary, volunteers will be trained. Help educate young minds!

**Trail and Natural Resource Volunteers**— We are seeking volunteers to help out with various trail and natural resource projects. See our scheduled stewardship days.

**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!

**Cleaner**— can include vacuuming, dusting, and cleaning bathrooms.

**Photographer**— to document special events and programs.

**Bird Feeder**—fill our bird feeders weekly, includes climbing a ladder to reach the top feeders.

**Interpretive Display Volunteer**- change out our interpretive displays in the building once a month.

**Check out more volunteer opportunities at [www.rbnc.org/volunteer](http://www.rbnc.org/volunteer).** Contact Molly Olson at [programs@rbnc.org](mailto:programs@rbnc.org) for more information.

## Homeschool Science Days-Fall/Winter 2019

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, age-specific educational programs are offered in the morning and 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 or parents may attend. Visit [rbnc.org/homeschool](http://rbnc.org/homeschool) to register.

**Decomposition Expedition** (ages 4-14), Fri, November 8, 10:00-11:30am, \$10/person, \$8/member  
Explore a decomposing log and look for evidence of how the log is changing. Make possible explanations for what might be causing log to disappear. Then learn about common “suspects”—organisms that decompose wood—and the signature evidence they each leave behind. A true nature mystery!

**Survival** (ages 4-14), Fri, November 8, 12:00-1:30pm, \$10/person, \$8/member  
Learn the art of fire building and shelter building in this basic skills course. After this class, you'll be comfortable setting up camp in any circumstance.

**Waste Warriors** (ages 4-14), Fri, December 13, 10-11:30am, \$10/student, \$8/member  
Reduce, reuse, recycle! Create new paper from old paper, learn how to reuse simple household items, and get some simple tips for reducing household waste from our Minnesota GreenCorps member.

**Ooey, Gooyey** (ages 4-14), Fri, December 13, 12:00-1:30pm, \$10/student, \$8/member  
Save the handwashing for another day. Get your hands sticky with some hands-on science. Design and build with marshmallows, create stretchy slime, and more!

# NEW BUSINESS MEMBERS

## Patron



## Advocate

HealthFinders Collaborative

Quality Appliance

Angell's Images

For more information on becoming a business member, contact us at rbncinfo@rbnc.org or at 507-332-7151

## 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.

## Ramble 38th Annual Fundraising Event: *A Ramble Through Time*

Join us for the 38th Annual River Bend Ramble on Saturday, October 5, 2019 at 4:30pm at River Bend Nature Center. It will be an evening you will not want to miss as we celebrate River Bend and raise needed funds. As we wrap up our 40th Anniversary, we want to invite founders, their families, and people key to the development of RBNC to join us. If you have been or know someone who has been involved, please contact us.

Your investments power our ability to help more people discover, enjoy, understand and preserve the natural world. You are changing lives and impacting the health of individuals, families, the community, and the planet by supporting the education, conservation, and recreation programs and activities that River Bend provides.

Even if you did not purchase a ticket to the event, there are activities throughout the day for the public to attend:

- 12-5:30 Artisan Market
- 1-2:30pm Adult Splatter Paint Archery Program
- Golf cart tours of the trails throughout the afternoon

Raffle tickets for wall of wine and wall of beer will be available for purchase, and you can bid by proxy on live auction items.

### Thank you, Ramble Sponsors!

#### Platinum



#### Gold

Dr. Karen & Simon Zeller

#### Silver

Dr. Richard & Nancie Huston

Tom & Beverly Klemer

Marvin & Sara Schrader

Dr. Bill & Wendy Wustenberg



# Natural Resource Updates

By: Brittany Smith, Naturalist/ Program Coordinator

As you take a stroll along the trails at River Bend Nature Center, you will most likely notice a few changes and may have heard or will hear sounds not typically associated with nature. There are areas where large amounts of buckthorn and honeysuckle have been removed and this work will continue through the upcoming winter. This work is being done with grants that were awarded to River Bend.

One of the grants is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and activities over the next three years will involve buckthorn and honeysuckle removal, opening up the ground layer, direct seeding, and tree planting. However, this year the primary focus will be on buckthorn and honeysuckle removal. Funds for the EQIP grant are through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Another grant that was awarded to River Bend was a Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant. It is very exciting and rewarding for River Bend to have been selected to receive funding through the 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.

There will be a significant amount of work that will be occurring this winter. Work will be done with the assistance of natural resource contractors Zumbro Valley Forestry, Prairie Restoration Inc, and Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa. The work will involve the use of chainsaws and other equipment so please give the crews space, stay on designated trails, and let them do their work. Any questions should be directed to Brittany Smith.

Due to the natural resource work occurring, there will not be a deer hunt this season.

Another piece of exciting news is the 2019 Bluebird counts for River Bend are in and there were 48 fledged bluebirds this year. In 2018, there were 23 fledged bluebirds and past records have never been more than 30.

# Keep Pets as Pets and Wildlife Wild

By: Brittany Smith, Naturalist/ Program Coordinator

Please do not release pets into the wild. Pets learn to rely on humans for their needs and most likely will not survive on their own. Any animal that has been in captivity should not be released back into the wild. Invasive species and disease are two significant issues that wild animal populations are dealing with. Many times captive animals may appear to be completely healthy when in reality they may be carrying disease or parasites that could pose serious risk to the health of native wild populations. Also, please do not take any animals out of the wild to have as pets. It is best that pets remain as pets and wildlife remains in the wild.

It is illegal to let non-native species go into the wild. See MN State Statute 84D.08 ESCAPE OF NONNATIVE AND INVASIVE SPECIES for more information.

## Thank You Interns!

Thank you to Hannah Dotterweich, Matthew Johnson, and Sydney Schultz for their work with us over the summer. Together, they were able to rebuild the North Overlook steps, remove invasive species, and help with summer camps. We wish them all well in their next adventures.



# News & Notes

## Fall Festival: Bats, Bones & Bonfires

The family-friendly Bats, Bones, and Bonfires will be held on October 26, 2019 from 4-8pm. There will be food trucks, live music by Jivin' Ivan and the Kings of Swing, children's activities, a lit trail after dark and more! Prices are \$7/person, \$5/member.

## Welcome New Board Members

Welcome to River Bend's new Board Members, pictured from left to right, Erin Liu, Simon Zeller, Kathy Lockner, Patrick Mader, and John Sheesley.



## Give To The Max Day /Year End 2019

Please consider making a year end donation to River Bend Nature Center, watch for more information in early November. Your generosity powers the programs and activities and keeps this resource operating to connect people with nature!

### Donation Requests

Can you help by providing:

- ◆ Heavy-duty children's winter gloves
- ◆ Children's snow pants
- ◆ Children's snow boots
- ◆ Toilet paper and paper towel tubes
- ◆ Bird seed
- ◆ Marshmallows
- ◆ Fudge striped cookies
- ◆ Apple cider

## River Bend Honors Key Community Partners & Held Annual Meeting

Your investments of all sizes, given through gifts of money and time, power the programs and activities of River Bend Nature Center. Thank you to the entire community for valuing the importance of connecting people with the natural world through education, conservation and recreation. Special thanks to our Key Community Partners and members for participating in this year's Annual Meeting festivities!

Thank you to [Vintage Escapes Winery & Vineyard](#) for donating the wine and [Faribault Cheese Caves](#) for donating the cheese tray for our Key Community Partners reception.



# Naturalist Notebook

By: Katy Anderegg, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Illustration by: Moe Brand

## **Highbush Cranberry *Viburnum opulus*.L. Ait** (formerly known as *Viburnum trilobum*)

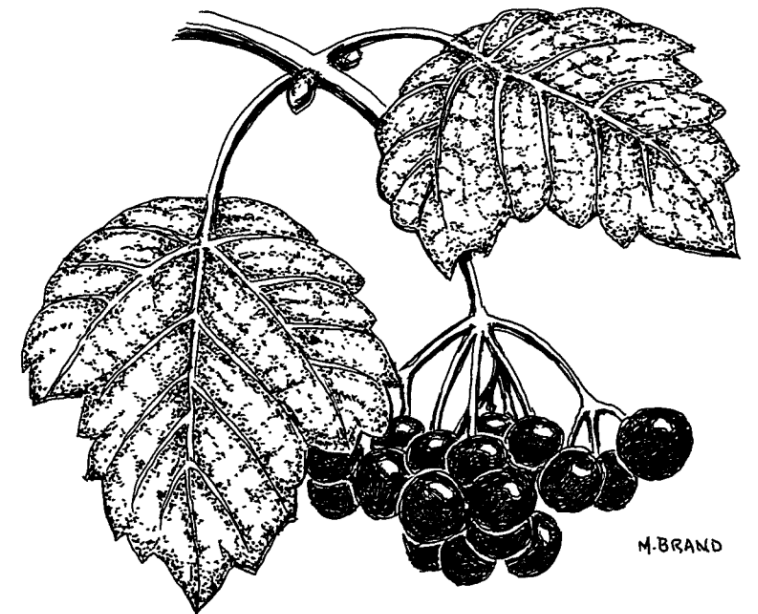
I think most everyone would agree that fall is the best season of Minnesota. It reminds us of cozy times curled up with a blanket and a warm drink, cool mornings and warm sunny days, a season of spices and wondrous beauty. The leaves will be turning soon and the fall harvest is underway. In this edition of naturalist notebook, I'll be highlighting the Highbush Cranberry shrub that provides great fall color, privacy, and edible fruit for both people and wildlife alike.

Highbush cranberry is a native shrub that features small leaves, about 2-4 inches long with a simple 3-lobed shape. They are glossy dark green in appearance in the summer and bring forth a brilliant yellow-red or purple-red fall color. Leaves are arranged opposite each other. It grows 8-15 ft tall and 8-10ft wide and can be used as a naturalized hedge screen. Hardiness zones range from 2-7.

Although, not a true cranberry bush, highbush cranberry is edible and can be used to make sauces, jams, and jellies among other things or be eaten raw. The fruit, or drupe, only 1/3 of an inch, ripens from August to September and is at its best after a light frost before it fully ripens. Like a cranberry, the taste is tart and slightly acidic. The fruit contains one or more seeds in the center. However, make sure you purchase the American variety and not the European variety as the fruit of the European shrub is inedible and bitter.

Highbush cranberry would be an excellent choice for any bird lover. Wildlife, especially birds love to feed on the fruit that lasts well into winter when food is more scarce. Another added benefit includes being a self-pollinating plant meaning this shrub doesn't require another shrub to pollinate the flat-top, white flowers that bloom in June. Each flower bears both male and female parts and are pollinated by wind or insects.

Look for highbush cranberry in its fall glory here at River Bend as you stroll along our winding trails, but we ask that the fruit not be harvested as it helps feed our wildlife. We have a saying here that we encourage everyone follow, "What lives here, grows here, dies here, stays here". Please keep this in mind as you walk or bike and enjoy the nature center. We want everyone to experience the same natural beauty.



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