



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

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Faribault, MN
Permit #35

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



River Bend NATURE CENTER

Winter 2020, Volume 42, Issue 1

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

Director's Desk: Make it a New Year in Nature

By: Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

Happy New Year from River Bend Nature Center! A fresh calendar and wintry weather inspire me to think about the year ahead and make plans to address the things I want to be better at. It's a relaxed kind of resolution activity knowing full well that life will throw its curve balls that will knock me off course (again and again).

In this spirit, one that shows up on my list each year is to make sure to get outside. This year, I'm going to think about it as getting "back to nature". What I like about this phrase is that it is more forgiving as it suggests that there is something that pulls us away and that we must return (again and again). We must be gentle with ourselves and keep working to get back to the things that are important as we face the day to day tasks that pull us off track from all the things we need/want to do and be.

The other thing I like about the intention to get "back to nature" is that it can mean different things to different people. It can mean anything that works for you: from sitting outside and breathing in the fresh air, taking a walk, making sustainable choices like composting or growing your own food, to sleeping under the stars. What will you do to get back to nature in the new year?

Need some inspiration? Here are a few ideas:

- Visit River Bend Nature Center/try a program or volunteer – there is something for everyone!
- Keep track of or journal the seasonal changes you notice/learn about the MN Phenology Network <https://mnpn.usanpn.org/>
- Become a MN Master Naturalist <https://www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org/>
- Learn about ways you can become a citizen scientist <https://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/citizen-science/>
- Go to your library and check out nature themed books to learn more or to share with others.
- Challenge yourself to spend an hour outside every day! Bring a family member or friend. See how many days in a row you can do. Compete with others. Is an hour too much? Start with 10-20 minutes and work your way up.

In this new year, I hope you will make time to get back to nature at River Bend Nature Center! There are many ways to be involved with your favorite nonprofit nature center from educational programs, to volunteering, to being a member/donor. Your involvement in these ways keeps us operating to provide an important place for the community and region to discover, enjoy, understand and preserve the natural world, now and for generations to come.

Program Highlights

January

- 4 Bagels & Birds
- 11 Learn to Ski
- 15 Lunch & Learn: *10,000 feet up & 10,000 years ago*— by Carrie Jennings
Freshwater Society
- 20 School's Out Adventure Day:
Winter Survival
- 21 Learn to Ski
- 24 Homeschool Science Day: Winter
Birds (am); Snowshoeing and
Kicksledding (pm)
- 25 Learn to Ski
- 28 Learn to Ski

February

- 1 Bagels & Birds
- 1 Learn to Ski
- 8 Papermaking: Valentines
- 13 Adult Night Out— Moonlight
Snowshoe
- 14 School's Out Adventure Day: All
Around the World
- 15 Snowshoe and Animal Signs
Walk
- 17 School's Out Adventure Day:
Kitchen Science
- 19 Lunch & Learn: Reduce, Reuse,
Recycle, & More!— by Evan Pak,
MN GreenCorps Member
- 21 Homeschool Science Day: Homes
& Habitats (am);
Winter Weather (pm)
- 22 Snowshoe and Animal Signs Walk
- 25 Snowshoe and Animal Signs Walk
- 29 Snowshoe and Animal Signs Walk

March

- 7 Bagels & Birds
- 10-12 School's Out Adventure Days
- 11 Maple Syruping
- 13 Mike Lynch Starwatch
- 14 Maple Syruping
- 14 Stewardship Days: Buckthorn
- 18 Lunch & Learn: Squirrel Study
by Faribault High School
students
- 20 Homeschool Science Day: Maple
Syruping (am); Snowshoeing &
Kicksledding (pm)
- 20 Stewardship Days: Buckthorn
- 21 Maple Syruping
- 23 Maple Syruping
- 25-27 School's Out Adventure Days

MAPLE SYRUP FUN RUN

Registration Now Open!

50K, 25K, 10K, 5K, & 1 MILE

River Bend Nature Center
Faribault, MN
May 2, 2020
register at: rbnc.org/fun-run

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER

SUMMER CAMP 2020

WHOLE AND HALF DAY CAMPS FOR CHILDREN
GRADES PRE-K TO 8TH GRADE

Registration begins in
January!

Members receive
discounts on registration!



1000 Rustad Road
Faribault, MN 55021



River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186
Faribault, MN 55021

Board of Directors

Dustin Simpson, *President*
Jane McWilliams, *Vice-President*
Mark Thacher, *Treasurer*
Kathy Lockner, *Secretary*
Peter van Sluis, *City Council Liaison*
Dustin Dienst
Erin Liu
Patrick Mader
John Sheesley
Simon Zeller

Staff

Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

Sherri Becker, Operations Director

David Foley, Lead Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Katy Anderegg, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Molly Olson, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Brittany Smith, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Evan Pak, Minnesota GreenCorps Member

Inside this Issue

Director's Desk	1
Welcome David Foley	2
Thank You Bats Volunteers	2
News & Notes	3
Natural Resource Updates	4
Nature Time Returns	4
Naturalist Notebook	5
Business Members	6
Summer Camps	7
Homeschool Classes	7

WELCOME DAVID FOLEY

Welcome to David Foley who serves River Bend Nature Center as Lead Naturalist / Program Coordinator. He attended MSU-Mankato and received a bachelor's degree in Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services with a career track in Natural Resource Management. He has a background working with 4H and youth development. David lives in his hometown Dundas with his wife Emily, and twin boys, Theo and Weston. They raise a small herd of dairy goats and enjoy being outside as often as possible! His role will be to lead the naturalist team, program development, public programs and summer camps.



Thank You Bats Volunteers

Thank you to all of the volunteers and sponsors of the Fall Festival: Bats, Bones, & Bonfires. Your work made it a big success as we had over 800 attendees! It was a chilly but clear evening for the celebration.



Summer Camps

By: David Foley, Lead Naturalist/Program Coordinator

While we enjoy the winter season and all it has to offer, it's hard not to think about the excitement of summer camp! River Bend camp programs nurture social skills, promote healthy living, enhance self-confidence, and allow kids to use their creative thinking skills in the natural world. Lifelong memories will be made through camp traditions, hands-on learning experiences, and creative play. With half-day and full-day offerings for preschool through 7th graders, there are many options to choose from. Look for summer camp dates COMING SOON. Scholarships will be available on a first come first served basis.



Homeschool Science Days-Winter 2020

Perfect for distance learners, day care, and those at home!

River Bend Nature Center invites homeschool families and co-ops the opportunity to experience all of the seasons at the nature center. Each 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 to register.

Winter Birds (ages 4-14), Fri, January 24, 10:00-11:30am, \$10/person, \$8/member

Ever wonder how birds survive a Minnesota winter? Discover what birds spend the winter at River Bend on a bird hike with binoculars and learn how other birds make the long migration south. Dress to be outside.

Snowshoeing and Kicksledding (ages 4-14), Fri, January 24, 12:00-1:30pm, \$10/person, \$8/member

Learn about the history and technique of these fun forms of winter transportation. Explore River Bend's winter landscape on a snowshoe hike, and maybe even participate in a kicksled race! Alternate activities will be provided in the case of no snow. Dress to be outside.

Homes and Habitats (ages 4-14), Fri, February 21, 10:00-11:30am, \$10/person, \$8/member

A habitat is more than just a home. It is a certain area where an animal prefers to live and can find everything that it needs to survive. Students will learn the difference between homes and habitats through activities and outdoor exploration.

Winter Weather (ages 4-14), Fri, February 21, 12:00-1:30pm, \$10/person, \$8/member

Weather has multiple characteristics that we experience on a daily basis. Many of these characteristic are observable and measurable. Students will take a closer look at temperature, cloud cover and precipitation.

Maple Syruping (ages 4-14), Fri, March 20, 10:00-11:30am, \$10/person, \$8/member

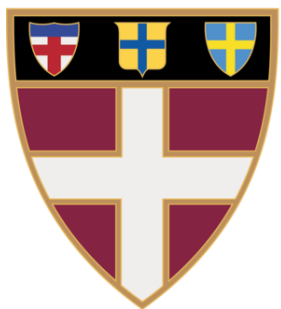
Explore the whole process of making maple syrup, from its history in Minnesota, to tapping a tree, to evaporating maple sap, and even taste testing the finished product! Dress to be outside.

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER
BUSINESS MEMBERS

STAR



SHATTUCK-
ST. MARY'S



FOUNDER



PATRON



Sertoma Faribault Club

Faribault Youth Rotary

Cannon River STEM School

Mercury Minnesota

Faribault Flyers Bike & Ski Club

Advocate

Faribo Sno-Go Club

Tom's Lock & Key

A&W Restaurant

Anderka Construction

MN Orienteering Club

Donahue's Greenhouse

Champion Sports

Metro Sales, Inc.

Bauer Restoration

Boldt Funeral Home

Cedar Lake Electric

Erickson Furniture

Humphrey Manlift Co.

Faribault Public Schools

Community Co-Op

Krause Feeds & Supplies

HealthFinders Collaborative

Quality Appliance

Angell's Images

Tony Langerud Insurance

HomeTown Federal Credit Union

Faribault Area Retired Educators

Cannon River Watershed Partnership

Hoffman, Hamer & Associates

News & Notes

The 38th Annual Ramble was a Success!

Thank you to everyone who donated, attended, and supported River Bend during our 38th Annual Ramble. Your involvement continues the River Bend legacy of helping people experience the joy of spending time outdoors. We are grateful for your generosity!



Apply to be an Environmental Education or Natural Resource and Land Management Intern for Spring/Summer 2020

Applicants are sought for environmental education internships for Spring 2020 which can be tailored to the needs of the applicant. Through the experience, interns will help plan and implement school programs, learn environmental education practices and techniques, and work with varying age groups and people of diverse cultures to understand the natural world. In addition, interns will work with volunteers and receive a good introduction into the operation and needs of a nonprofit nature center. Natural Resource and Land Management interns are sought for Spring and Summer 2020. Interns will gain hands on experience with habitat restoration practices and techniques. They will also gain experience with trail management. Applications considered on a rolling basis at www.rbnc.org

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

Registration is open for the Maple Syrup Fun Run on May 2, 2020!

The Maple Syrup Fun Run registration is now open at rbnc.org/fun-run. Enjoy the scenic views as you run/walk the trails around River Bend. Afterwards, join us for a delicious pancake breakfast served at the River Bend Nature Center Interpretive Center. Each runner receives a complimentary admission to the pancake breakfast and a Fun Run reusable bag. For more information visit our website at rbnc.org/fun-run

January is Learn to Ski Month!



Join us this January at River Bend for Ski lessons. We have many dates and times to choose from, and registration includes ski rental for the day! See the insert for details.

Pre-registration is highly recommended to reserve ski size.

Thank you Give To The Max Day /Year End Donors

Thank you to everyone who participated in Give to the Max Day, made a year-end donation, renewed your membership, or gave to the scholarship fund. Your generosity powers the programs and activities and keeps this resource operating to connect people with nature!

"Pay What You Can" Scholarships Available

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, scholarship funds are now available to anyone who would like to attend School's Out Adventure Days and summer camps. These funds are available in a "Pay What You Can" style, with the goal to make River Bend an affordable option to all members of the community. Your household does not need to meet any requirements to participate, financial or otherwise. There are limited funds available and are distributed on a first come, first served basis. For more information or to apply for the scholarship, visit rbnc.org/adventureday or rbnc.org/summer-camp. If you would like to donate to the scholarship fund, please call 507-332-7151

Natural Resource Updates

By: Evan Pak, MN GreenCorps member

Winter is upon us! Even though many plants and animals now lie dormant, we still have plenty of opportunities to protect the environment. Here in the land of ten thousand lakes, our natural landscape depends on water. It is easy to forget about water when everything freezes solid and disappears under a foot of snow. However, our decisions still matter.

Salt poses the winter’s greatest threat to water quality. While salt helps keep us safe, overuse doesn’t give any more benefit and only hurts the environment. When washed away by storm-water (melting snow or rain), salt makes its way to local waterways, where it poisons plants and animals. Even worse, unlike many other common water pollutants, salt doesn’t get filtered out by plants or soil. Instead, it steadily increases, building up toxicity. There isn’t any practical way to remove salt artificially. Once salt enters the water, it’s in there for good.

Fortunately, you have many opportunities to take action. While putting our roads, parking lots, and sidewalks on a salt-free diet may not seem practical, we can definitely use less. You’ll even save money by using salt correctly! To help protect our waterways, follow these simple tips:

- Remove as much snow and ice as possible before salting.
- Spread out salt efficiently. The grains should have somewhere between one and three inches between each other.
- Sweep up leftover salt once all ice has melted.
- Don’t use regular salt (sodium chloride) below 15 degrees. It won’t do anything below that temperature. Instead, use another deicing product rated for those low temperatures.



Nature Time Returns

By: Molly Olson, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Playing outside in nature was one of my favorite things to do as a child (and still is!). It helped me develop critical thinking skills and a love of nature. Preschool is my favorite age group to teach because they have a fresh perspective of the world. Every animal is new and exciting, no matter how small and every log is a place for discovery. Unfortunately, playing outside has become increasingly rare for children growing up in today’s world.

Nature Time is a partnership between River Bend Nature Center and Faribault ECFE that provides children with hands-on learning opportunities to explore nature and the world around them. Families explore and engage in experiential learning and guided discovery at River Bend with lessons from Naturalists and ECFC staff. Nature Time is for children 2 1/2 to 5 years of age, with sibling care available with advance notice. Registration is through Faribault ECFE.

This fall we had two sessions filled with fun. We dipped in the pond, caught frogs, and went “turkey hunting”. The preschoolers shared their findings with everyone around them, including members of the public. I look forward to creating more outdoor learning experiences this winter in the snow. See you on the trails!

Age 4 and above? Check out our at home options on page 7.



Naturalist Notebook

By: Katy Anderegg, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Illustration by: Moe Brand

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Turdidae

Nothing brings me more joy than taking my dog on a walk and we come across wildlife. I love to watch each animal and study how they behave and interact with their surroundings. The Eastern Bluebird is a beautiful sight to watch. The vibrancy of the blue feathers brings a smile to my face. This seemingly-sweet little bird lives in open fields with trees in which they can build their nest. Preferring 1.75 inch openings in pine or oak tress, the male bluebird will often use old woodpecker holes to entice a female to build her nest there. His mating display starts by carrying nesting material in and out of the nesting hole, perching and fluttering his wings. If a female finds him attractive, she will weave a nest out of grasses, pine needles and occasionally horse hair or turkey feathers. After 28-40 days, chicks hatch, blind, and clumsy with sparse gray downy feathers. Adult males feature brilliant blue feathers on their back and wings, with reddish-brown feathers on their throat and a white belly. Females are paler than the males featuring blue-grey feathers on her back and brighter blue streaks on her wings.

Eastern Bluebirds are a migratory bird. Most of Minnesota from the south western part of the state to the northeast is considered breeding ground for which they fly up here from the south during the warm months. The southeast corner of Minnesota is part of their year-round habitat. This past winter, I witnessed several bluebirds at River Bend Nature Center. I watched them perch in and around our St. Peter Sandstone pit just below Honor Point. Perhaps they were looking for food. During the summer, their diet consists mostly of insects while in the winter, they consume a variety of berries such as blueberries, currants, dogwood berries, hackberries and honeysuckle to name a few. On a rare occasion, bluebirds have been sighted eating salamanders, shrews, snakes, lizards and tree frogs. Even though the bluebird is small, growing up to 7 inches, it has a territorial attitude and is willing to attack other birds it sees as a threat for nesting spots.

Bring your cameras and binoculars to River Bend Nature Center, hike our trails and see if you can find a bluebird this winter. I hope you enjoy your time out here. Bring your friends and family. Happy Holidays, I wish you the best this coming New Year!

