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River Bend NATURE CENTER

Fall 2020, Volume 42, Issue 4

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

Director's Desk

By: Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

Over the last six months, I have felt scattered by the uncertainty and change the pandemic has caused and maybe you have too. One thing that has kept me grounded and grateful is nature nearby. I would bet that my walks to get outside for some fresh air and to observe nature nearby have increased by at least five times compared with pre-COVID times. I would bet that the number of visitors doing the same thing at River Bend Nature Center have increased by at least five times, too.

As I drive into RBNC or walk on the trails, I never stop being amazed with

- ◆ What it means to have 743 acres of forests, prairies, ponds, the Straight River, and trails to explore right here, with no entrance fees
- ◆ What it means to have two generations of students from Faribault and across southern MN have their start in nature right here with outdoor and environmental education classes (and the community partners that value this and make this possible)
- ◆ What it means to have a dedicated staff, volunteer, and Board of Director team committed to the future- adapting and continuing the learning experiences, conserving natural resources, and providing top caliber experiences right here
- ◆ What it means to have you – the community – households, businesses/organizations who, year after year, provide the majority of financial resources to make this all happen right here.

Everyone has a story of what River Bend Nature Center means to them. This year we collected video stories of the impact RBNC has had on people. You can view these on our website or social media.

They show that RBNC is for everyone to discover and enjoy the wonder and beauty and the awe that the natural world brings. And now, more than ever, we are remembering that our time in nature, and having the opportunity to understand and preserve the natural world through opportunities at RBNC is so important for us as individuals, as families, as a community, and as a planet.

It is really something to think of all that can be accomplished through the mission of RBNC - what it means when we help people discover, enjoy, understand and preserve the incredible natural world. It is a big deal and your financial help makes it possible.

Over the next year, RBNC seeks to continue the mission and adapt to changing times. General support is most needed, however, if you would like to contribute to a specific project, please note that in your donation to

- Fund a Forest - \$5,000 is needed
- Entrance Sign Restoration - \$4,000 is needed

Please take out your phone, visit rbnc.org or text RBNC to 44321. Or, take out your checkbook and please donate generously to support adaptation of education programs from a distance, to continue conservation and recreation activities, and to ensure that future generations can continue to experience the magic of River Bend Nature Center.

Thank you!

Program Highlights

October

- 12 Science Day 1st-5th graders
Leaf it to Nature
Animal Adaptations
- 16 School's Out Adventure Day:
Nature's Mysteries
- 22 Adult Night Out: Campfire
Nature Trivia
- 26 Science Day 5th-8th graders
Nature Notes on Fall
Phenology
Creatures of the Night

November

- 4 Walk/Ride with a Naturalist
- 9 Science Day 1st-5th graders
Camouflage Creatures
Survival
- 18 Virtual Lunch & Learn:
Insects in Ecosystems by
Claire LaCanne
- 23 Science Day 6th-8th graders
Decomposition Expedition
Survival
- 25 School's Out Adventure Day:
Treasure Hunters

December

- 7 Science Day 1st-8th graders
Winged Winter Warriors
- 30 School's Out Adventure Day:
Winter Adventurers

NEW! Pollinator Sanctuary
Program for Adults date TBD

We will not be having Bats, Bones,
and Bonfires this year.

You can keep up to date with
programs at rbnc.org

JOIN RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER
AS A MEMBER TODAY!

RBNC.ORG/MEMBERSHIP



River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186
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Katy Anderegg, *Naturalist/Program Coordinator*
Molly Olson, *Naturalist/Program Coordinator*
Brittany Smith, *Naturalist/Program Coordinator*

Adventure Days!

School is Out Adventure Days are day-long camps open to kindergarten through 5th grade students on days when school's not in session, but the craving for adventure and exploration is strong! River Bend's team of naturalists will provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and activities to interact with, discover, and understand nature. Due to safety precautions, these days are limited to 8 children, masks are required, and the majority of the time will be spent outside.

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Time and Cost:

9AM to 3:30PM, with optional childcare from 8AM to 4:30PM for an additional fee.

Price per student: \$50/person, \$40/member

Optional before and after care for an additional \$10/student

"Pay What You Can" scholarships are available. Visit our website at <https://rbnc.org/adventureday> to find the application.

What should I bring?

Students should come prepared to spend the day outside - bring appropriate outdoor gear. Bring a lunch and any snacks needed to get through a full day of high activity.

[Friday, October 16 \(MEA break\) Nature's Mysteries](#)

Join us for a day dedicated to unraveling nature's mysteries. Be a detective as you investigate "Who done it" nature mystery.

[Wednesday, November 25 \(Thanksgiving break\) Treasure Hunters](#)

Join us for a day dedicated to hunting nature's treasures! Learn to navigate through the woods, read a map, and more; all skills needed to find treasure!

[Wednesday, December 30 \(Winter break\) Winter Adventurers](#)

Join us for a day dedicated to adventures outside! Build shelters, make fires, and explore!

New Adult Programs

River Bend is offering a **NEW Pollinator Sanctuary program** beginning in November. Learn all about pollinators and how to set up a successful sanctuary through this one hour course. Materials include a guidebook, pollinator sanctuary sign, and 1/2 hour on-site consultation at your home. Dates and more details to come. Visit our website for more information.

River Bend is hosting **Adult Night Out: Campfire Nature Trivia** on Thursday, October 22 at 6:30pm. Enjoy a night out around a campfire with s'mores while testing your nature knowledge. Bring a headlamp!

Science Days-Fall 2020

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

River Bend Nature Center invites homeschool families, co-ops, and distance learners the opportunity to experience all of the seasons at the nature center. Each day, two topics are offered with two sessions of each topic, to ensure the groups are small. Sign up for one or sign up for them both! Visit rbnc.org/sciencedays to register. Always dress for the weather!

Leaf It to Nature (1st-5th graders) Mon, October 12, 10am-11am or 1pm-2pm \$10/person

Explore the wonderful changing of the seasons at River Bend! Learn all about plants, and learn what trees do to get ready for winter.

Animal Adaptations (1st-5th graders) Mon, October 12, 11am-12pm or 2pm-3pm, \$10/person

Explore the wonderful changing of the seasons at River Bend! Learn all about how animals get ready to survive the winter.

Nature Notes on Fall Phenology (6th-8th graders), Mon, October 26, 10am-11am or 1pm-2pm, \$10/person

You can be a scientist! Learn how to document the changes you see in nature, especially in the transitional season of Fall.

Creatures of the Night (6th-8th graders), Mon, October 26, 11am-12pm or 2pm-3pm, \$10/person

Explore the mysterious world of nocturnal animals. Discover what adaptations they have to help them navigate at night.

Camouflage Creatures (1st-5th graders), Mon, November 9, 10am-11am or 1pm-2pm, \$10/person

Learn all about how animals use their colors to blend into their surroundings, and how that helps them survive.

Survival (1st-5th graders), Mon, November 9, 11am-12pm or 2pm-3pm, \$10/person

Have fun learning about how to survive in the wild. Then practice your skills at River Bend with a Naturalist.

Decomposition Expedition (6th-8th graders), Mon, November 23, 10am-11am or 1pm-2pm, \$10/person

Explore the wonderful world of decomposition. Learn about what and how things decompose, as well as some of nature's decomposers.

Survival (6th-8th graders), Mon, November 23, 11am-12pm or 2pm-3pm, \$10/person

Have fun learning about how to survive in the wild. Then practice your skills at River Bend with a Naturalist.

Winged Winter Warriors (1st-5th graders) Mon, December 7, 10am-11am or 1pm-2pm

Winged Winter Warriors (6th-8th graders) Mon, December 7, 11am-12pm or 2pm-3pm

Learn all about our winged friends that stay in Minnesota over the winter.

Inside this Issue

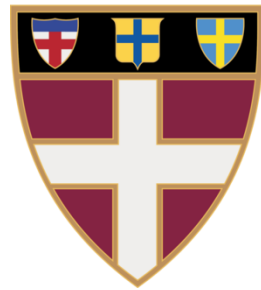
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News & Notes

A Ramble Like Never Before is in the Books!

Thank you to everyone who sponsored, donated, attended, and supported River Bend during A Ramble Like Never Before. While it was not a "usual" Ramble, the support of the community was felt. Your involvement continues the River Bend legacy of helping people experience the joy of spending time outdoors. We are grateful for your generosity!



Naturalist Katy leading Walk with a Naturalist Program

"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 Science Days. 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. If you would like to donate to the scholarship fund, please call 507-332-7151.



Little Chicago performing at Music on the Prairie

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

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.

Outdoor Updates

By: Brittany Smith, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

River Bend Nature Center Internship: Field Biologist

It is exciting to share that River Bend Nature Center and Faribault High School are partnering to provide an internship opportunity for Faribault High School seniors that are interested in Field Biology! Students will get to experience hands on field work, design and conduct scientific studies and learn different management techniques.



Deer Management Hunt

The hunt will take place starting Sunday, October 25 to Sunday, November 1, 2020. The trails will remain open and accessible to the public. As always, please stay on the designated trails. Designated trails are those that are found on the current trail map that can be found on the website. It will also be vital to keep your dogs on their leash. It is River Bend's policy that all pets must be leashed at all times.



Cross-Country Ski Trails

It is that time of year again when River Bend starts to gear up for cross-country ski season! Volunteers and staff will be working to cut back brush along the trails and preparing them for when the snow starts to fall. If you or anyone you know is interested in helping to maintain and groom the cross-country ski trails please contact River Bend.

Invasive Species Management Continues

No matter the season there is always work to be done with invasive species. Right now, is the prime time to work on buckthorn. It is planned to have chainsaw crews onsite during the fall months to continue cutting and treating buckthorn. This winter you may see staff and volunteers out cutting and burning buckthorn brush piles.

Naturalist Notebook

By: Katy Anderegg, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Cattails

Typha latifolia

No plant is more recognizable in a wetland than the Cattail. It's one of the first plants you learn about as a child. Known for the brown "hotdog shaped" seed head perched at the top of the stem, cattails are not only fun to play with by watching the seed head explode with the slightest touch, but they are the survival plant of the wild. By that, I mean every part of the plant is edible and useful in making material goods.



Wet environments such as ponds and marshes are where cattails are commonly found, but they can grow in any area with high moisture levels. Their root is called a rhizome, an underground/underwater network of tuberous roots that spread rapidly. Native Americans and early settlers would consume the rhizome by grinding it down or like a potato due to the high starch content. Growing to six feet or more, cattails really stand out. The plant forms from the rhizome into a single stem with sprouting leaves about an inch wide. Young leaf shoots in the spring are edible and can be consumed raw or cooked. Fully formed leaves are durable and have been used in making mats, chair seats, or baskets by weaving them.

Both male and female organs are housed on a single plant which makes cattails self-pollinators. Young seed heads can be harvested in the spring and cooked up like corn on the cob. As summer progresses, pollen can be collected and used as a thickener or flour additive. The stem of the plant can be served and eaten like asparagus. But, if you happen to get lost or stranded outside near a pond, look to the brown, woolly seed head for warmth. The fluffy seeds have been used in life preservers during WWI and by Native Americans to line moccasins, baby diapers, clothing and to make pillows.

Cattails are amazing plants for their versatility, but as with everything in the wild, research before you consume anything. At the very least, cattails are great for building shelter and staying warm.