



River Bend
NATURE CENTER

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NATURE CENTER

The newsletter is going digital! If you would still like to receive a paper copy of the quarterly newsletter, please email rbncinfo@rbnc.org or call us at 507-332-7151

Winter 2021, Volume 43, Issue 1

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

Getting Grounded in Nature and our Lives

By: Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

The past year will not soon be forgotten and will continue to impact us all for quite some time. Where we will be a year from now and how we will get there are difficult to plan for and will continue to require much adaptability, creativity, and resilience. I don't know about you, but my well for these things sometimes feels like it's drying up. More than ever, this past year I found that getting away from the screens and into the outdoors grounded me and helped me cope and recharge that well.

As with a wise relative, teacher, or friend, we can turn to and learn from nature and take cues from both our human and nature kin to make sense of life. Just as there are dark times, there will be light. I often find myself drawn to the Straight River at RBNC or any river to contemplate.

In a forward to *A River Runs Through It*, Annie Proulx says that the parts of a river can also be seen as stages of life and the flow of time. We can understand these parts, the rapids and bends, are part of a sequence that repeat and make the river a whole. Similar to how the days and years add up to make our lives. As we study and notice the river, trees, prairie grasses, flowers, birds, butterflies, bugs, mushrooms, fish, and mammals, we can become inspired for how to live our own lives.

What we experience with nature is a gift that grounds us in the moment and allows us to relax, restore, and realize. Recently, I listened to a virtual talk by Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*. She spoke about how the natural world offers us gifts and below are a few ways she mentioned that we can give back. They reminded me so much of what we do and the mission of River Bend Nature Center.

- Pay attention to the wonders of nature
- Know the names of the plants and trees and the parts of nature you come into contact with
- Give back to heal the land and our relationship with it through ecosystem restoration

You can work on these activities on your own and/or support initiatives at RBNC that help others be able to do them as well:

- Become a member / renew your membership. Encourage others households and businesses to join at rbnc.org/membership.
- Donate regularly as you are able throughout the year at rbnc.org/donate
- Book education and outdoor experience programs for your school, business, club/organization, or family at <https://rbnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Programs-2020-2021.pdf>
- Get your business/employer involved – become a member, sponsor the Fun Run, Camps, Ramble, or Bats Bones & Bonfires; group volunteering; team building program, match donations
- Host a small outdoor party to introduce friends interested in donating to education, conservation and recreation at RBNC
- Leave a legacy by including RBNC in your estate plan or will
- You can contact us at rbncinfo@rbnc.org

Thank you for your involvement at RBNC. We are so grateful to the you for your ongoing support to continue helping people discover, enjoy, understand and preserve the incredible natural world! May you find grounding from the gifts of nature and peace in 2021.

Programs at a Glance:

Jan 28– Full Moon Luminary Hike

Feb 4– Virtual Papermaking Demo with Q&A

Feb 17– Virtual Lunch & Learn: Composting

Keep up to date with new programs at rbnc.org/upcoming-programs

FULL MOON LUMINARY HIKE/SNOWSHOE
Thursday, January 28, 2021, 6-8pm
ALL AGES. COST: \$10/PERSON (5 & UNDER ARE FREE)

**JOIN RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER
AS A MEMBER TODAY!**
RBNC.ORG/MEMBERSHIP
 River Bend
NATURE CENTER

River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186
Faribault, MN 55021

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RBNC Highlights of 2020

By: Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

The RBNC team has been incredibly adaptable to the changing circumstances that we have all faced since March 2020. We have retained staff this past year with lengths of working at RBNC ranging from 14 months to almost five years. The average length staff members have worked at RBNC is 2 ½ years. Working with a group that knows each other and RBNC has been key to our ability to move forward during challenging times.

The RBNC team of naturalists continues to proudly support the mission by delivering numerous programs safely in-person and has launched several creative virtual methods. Some highlights from 2020 include: continuing our partnerships with Faribault Public Schools, Nerstrand Elementary School, and Faribault Lutheran School, Northfield Community School, and many others to provide engaging and educational science curriculum through hands-on learning and naturalist-led discussions; a successful summer camp season with 12 micro-camps and 7 traditional day camps; hosting the Maple Syrup Fun Run through a virtual format; and providing outdoor recreation experiences like the Family Float and Hike and Hygge.

In addition, River Bend was able to accomplish 20 acres of invasive species removal, an acre prepped and planted with oak, walnut, and hickory seed, and another acre prepped to plant over 600 trees in the spring. This is a good start to restoring Minnesota native woodland species and preserving habitat for the federally endangered dwarf trout lily.

Moving forward into 2021, our key areas of focus will be to expand school offerings and partnerships for programs, increase business membership and sponsorship, and develop a proposal and plan to improve signage. Thank you for your support of the mission of RBNC!



Program Updates

By: David Foley, Lead Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Due to the spike in Covid-19 cases, River Bend has suspended in-person programs for the remainder of 2020. We will not be renting skis or snowshoes at this time. Continue to check our website at rbnc.org for updates.

School Programs

Naturalists are offering virtual school programs for this winter/early spring. If you are or know a classroom teacher looking for dynamic online programming that covers MN state science standards, email education@rbnc.org or call us at 507-332-7151. Read more about these offerings on our website at rbnc.org/fieldtrips

Full Moon Luminary Hike/Snowshoe

All ages. Cost \$10/person, 5 & under are free

Thursday, January 28, 2021, 6-8pm

Enjoy the full moon with a luminary hike through River Bend. Trails are packed snow, but participants are welcome to bring their own snowshoes. RBNC will not be providing snowshoes. To help with spacing, please pre-register for an entry time, this allows for better distancing. Thank you.

Virtual Lunch & Learn: Composting

Open to adults, Cost: \$12/person (\$10 for members)

February 17; 12pm-1pm

Learn about the importance of composting, the difference between backyard composting and industrial composting, and ways you can participate in nature's recycling program. This will be a virtual presentation using google meet. Any valid email address can join the presentation. Upon registration the google meet link will be emailed to you. If you do not receive it, check your promotions and spam folders, then contact education@rbnc.org

River Bend At Home

Looking for something different? Contact our naturalist team at education@rbnc.org to discuss options for learning at home. Perfect for homeschool cohorts, distance learning students, or any curious young person wanting to learn about the wonders of the natural world!



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RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER BUSINESS MEMBERS

STAR



Advocate

- A&W Restaurant
- Anderka Construction
- Boldt Funeral Home
- Cable Connection & Supply Co., Inc.
- Cannon River Watershed Partnership
- Cedar Lake Electric
- Country School Financial
- Donahue's Greenhouse
- Faribault Animal Center
- Faribault Area Retired Educators
- Faribault Public Schools
- Faribo Sno-Go Club
- HomeTown Federal Credit Union
- Humphrey Manlift Company, Inc.
- Krause Feeds & Supplies
- Pawn MN LLC
- Parker Kohl Funeral Home
- Quality Appliance
- Schieck Orthodontics
- Tom's Lock & Key

FOUNDER



PATRON



- Faribault Flyers Bike & Ski Club
- Faribault Rotary Youth Services
- Reese Winter & Associates Ltd.
- Sertoma Club of Faribault

Become a Business Member today at rbnc.org/membership

For more information on:

- How to sponsor 2021 events (Fun Run, Camps, Ramble, or Bats Bones & Bonfire)
- Group volunteering
- Team building programs
- How to match employee donations
- How to buy memberships for your employees

Contact us at rbncinfo@rbnc.org or call 507-332-7151

THANK YOU!

News & Notes

New and Upgraded Membership Promotion

If you enjoy the trails, interpretive center, programming, or just observing nature from your car on a drive down Rustad Road, consider becoming a member or upgrading your membership. Nature is important for our physical and mental wellbeing. To ensure River Bend is here for you now and in the future, please join or donate today!

JOIN RBNC AS A MEMBER TODAY!

(Member Promotion Valid for New Members or Membership Upgrade Only)

Basic \$40	Advocate \$100	Patron \$250	Founder \$500	Star \$1000
Member Level Perk • Member Sticker	Member Level Perk • Member Sticker • \$50 Voucher (Household Only)	Member Level Perks • Member Sticker • \$100 Voucher • \$50 of your membership to scholarship fund	Member Level Perks • Member Sticker • \$250 Voucher • \$100 of your membership to scholarship fund	Member Level Perks • Member Sticker • \$500 Voucher • \$200 of your membership to scholarship fund

All household memberships at any of the above levels receive the following program discounts:
\$25 off summer camps, \$10 off adventure days, \$5 off snowshoe/ski rentals
Using the voucher affects the tax deductibility of your donation

Honor Point Memorial Bricks

Honor your loved ones, living or deceased, at a gorgeous overlook on the Straight River. Honor Point serves as a way to recognize people's contributions that support programming and other environmental education initiatives at River Bend. Memorial contributions such as this help advance River Bend's mission of helping people discover, enjoy, understand and preserve the incredible natural world that surrounds us. Not only are your loved ones remembered by all who visit Honor Point, but their legacy lives on in the experiences of all the children and families who participate in River Bend's programs. For more information email rbncinfo@rbnc.org or call 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.

Leave a Legacy at River Bend Nature Center

There are many ways you can help your favorite nonprofit nature center that not only help today but into the future. Besides memberships and donations and memorial or tribute bricks at Honor Point, you can also write River Bend Nature Center into your will or estate plan. Please contact us for further information should you be interested in cash or noncash donations now or in the future.

Recommended Reading List

Kids:

- Snowflake Bentley*—Jacqueline Briggs Martin
- Owl Moon*—Jane Yolen
- The Snowy Day*— Ezra Jack Keats
- The Mitten*— Jan Brett

Adults:

- Journal of a Prairie Year*— Paul Gruchow
- A Sand County Almanac*— Aldo Leopold
- Silent Spring*— Rachel Carson
- Last Child in the Woods*— Richard Louv
- The Saga of the "Not" So Straight River*— Roy Anderson (local history)
- Locally Laid*— Lucie B. Amundsen (based in Duluth)
- Untamed*—Will Harlan

Winter Recreation at River Bend Nature Center

By: Brittany Smith-Naturalist/Program Coordinator

It is that time of year when the snow starts to pile up and the mercury drops. Never fear, River Bend is here! River Bend will have groomed ski trails. These trails are made possible through the MN Grant-in-Aid program and a MN Ski Pass is **REQUIRED** to ski. Volunteers work hard to maintain the ski trails so please be respectful in how you utilize the trails.

Per MN DNR website:

If you are 16 or older, you must have a Great Minnesota Ski Pass to ski on groomed trails in Minnesota state parks or state forests, or on state or grant-in-aid trails. Sign your Ski Pass and be sure to carry it with you every time you go skiing.

Ski Pass rates

Daily: \$10

One-year: \$25

(Effective from July 1 to June 30, corresponding to the winter season.)

Three-year: \$70

(Effective from July 1 to June 30 for three winter seasons, including the purchasing season.)

Duplicate passes: \$2.50

Snowshoeing, hiking, and fat tire biking are allowed as well, please stay on the trails. When on trails with set ski tracks, stay to the side to avoid ruining the set track. As fun as it may be to explore the deeper snow off trail, please don't. There are many hazards buried beneath the snow and it is for your safety to stay on designated trails.

River Bend will NOT be renting out snowshoes or skis at this time due to COVID-19.

Thank you! Have a fun and safe time exploring River Bend Nature Center in the winter!



Naturalist Notebook

By: Katy Anderegg, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Great Horned Owl

Bubo virginianus

I go out on nature walks nearly every day in search of wildlife. It's most obvious in the spring, summer and fall, but life starts to quiet down in the winter as most animals take shelter for longer periods of time or migrate south. Some days I wonder if anything lives in the stretch of woods I stumbled upon.

At dusk, sitting silent in a tree, listening for the slightest sound, turning its head 270 degrees, is a Great Horned Owl. Its silhouette stands out against the fading sun with large ear tufts atop its head on an oval shaped body. It's ready to hunt and will eat small rodents or small mammals such as rabbits or skunks. Unsuspecting prey are unable to hear the owl approach. Soft edges on the flight feathers muffle the sound of air turbulence. Sharp talons snatch up the prey before they know what hit them. Food is swallowed whole if small enough or torn in pieces with its sharp bill. Hours later, the owl regurgitates the indigestible parts of bones, fur and teeth in a pellet formed in the gizzard.



The Great Horned Owl calls, hoo huhoo, hooo, hoooh, defending its breeding and hunting territory. The call can be heard a long distance away, often around midnight or early in the morning just before sunrise and most notably in the winter months beginning in November. Using the nests of other animals or a tree cavity the female will lay 1-5 eggs. Being attentive parents, both the male and female take care of the owlets up to six weeks after fledging. Great Horned Owls grow up to 23 inches in length and weigh up to 5.5 pounds becoming the largest owl in North America. Their plumage is various shades of grayish-brown with fine horizontal stripes on the body and under its wings and tail feathers and a white patch on the throat providing great camouflage against the trees.

Great Horned Owls are admired for their strength and stealthy hunting style. I encourage you to get out this winter around dusk to search for this amazing animal. They are common and live in temperate and coniferous woods. You will often find them perched high up in a tree searching for prey.

Photo by Dick Daniels, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Great-horned_Owl_RWD_at_CRC1.jpg, no modifications