



River Bend
NATURE CENTER

PO Box 186
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Faribault, MN
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www.rbnc.org

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River Bend
NATURE CENTER

Winter 2022, Volume 44, Issue 1
January, February, March

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

Upcoming Programs

January

- 11– Little Sprouts Snowy Days
- 14– Luminary Hike/Snowshoe
- 17– School’s Out Adventure Day
- 19– Lunch & Learn: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle By Molly Olson
- 22– Science Day Give a Hoot about Owls
- 22– Science Day Animal Tracking
- 25– Little Sprouts Meet the Animal Ambassadors

February

- 5– Bagels & Birds
- 5– MN Raptors with the University of MN Raptor Center’s live raptors!
- 8– Little Sprouts Ice Exploration
- 11– Adult Night Out Luminary Hike/Snowshoe
- 16– Lunch & Learn: Trumpeter Swan Conservation By Larry Vorwerk
- 19– Science Day Extreme Animal Survival
- 19– Science Day 3R’s
- 21– School’s Out Adventure Day
- 22– Little Sprouts Snow Science

March

- 5– Bagels & Birds
- 5– Maple Syruping
- 8– Little Sprouts Maple Trees
- 16– Lunch & Learn: Environmental Good News By Janet Mitchell
- 18– Science Day March Migration
- 18– Science Day Maple Syruping
- 19– Maple Syruping
- 25– All About Owls

Director’s Desk

By: Breanna Wheeler

As I sit down at the end of the year to reflect on the past year and wonder about what the new year will bring, I keep coming back to gratefulness for the community of River Bend Nature Center supporters who continue to power RBNC with generous gifts of money, time, and promoting this resource with others. Your support brings me hope of a bright future and makes me realize that the importance of having nature connection and opportunities for education, conservation, and outdoor recreation so close to home is not just something I value, but is shared widely by you! I am grateful that together, we are making a difference.

Looking back, here are a few highlights of the past year that you made possible:

- **EDUCATION**
 - Building and enhancing high quality school program partnerships - Faribault Public Schools, Nerstrand Elementary School, Divine Mercy Catholic School, Faribault Lutheran School, Rice County Waste Education, Clean River Partners Stormwater Education, Faribault High School internship course, and building new connections with afterschool programs in Northfield.
 - Partnership with MN Master Naturalist program with capstone projects to develop content for history of Native Americans, regional center, and quarries.
 - Pay What you Can Summer Camps and Adventure Days, Maple Syrup Fun Run, Ramble, and Bats Bones & Bonfires.
 - Purchase of new program supplies: snowshoes, nets, and GPS units.
- **CONSERVATION / LAND / FACILITIES**
 - Invasive species removal continues to preserve rare species and encourage species diversity which makes a healthier ecosystem.
 - A new entrance sign (the old wood sign carved by Ivan Whillock has moved into the building and will be part of a forthcoming RBNC history exhibit).
 - Cleaning up and streamlining the buildings and storage.

Here are some ways you can help and things to look forward to:

- Contact us to set up a program for your school, daycare, club, or family.
- Check out upcoming programs – Moonlight Snowshoe/Walks, Maple Syrup Fun Run on 5/7/22, MN Master Naturalist Big Woods, Big Rivers Biome course, Little Sprouts, Science Days, Adventure Days, and soon Summer Camp registration will open!
- Become a Business Member – show your support of RBNC and receive discounts on facility rentals and programs.
- Volunteer or intern with us.
- Watch for upcoming improvements to Interpretive Center building.
- Anticipate a new resource – we will geolocate all memorials and gather information on the people and their connection with RBNC.
- Three St. Olaf students will work with us in January to learn about nonprofits and assist with marketing, diversity and inclusion, and volunteer recruitment efforts.
- Watch for raffle tickets to be on sale soon for a spring drawing.

As you read this, we will be enjoying increased sunlight each day and moving toward spring, the flow of the sap begins which means maple syruping time! Please let us know of your interest in helping with the process. It is labor intensive and we could use a few extra hands collecting sap and tending the evaporator. As always, a heartfelt thank you and best wishes in 2022.

May 7, 2022
MAPLE SYRUP FUN RUN & PANCAKE BRUNCH
Now with chip timing by Anderson Race Management!

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER

Registration opens soon!



SUMMER CAMP 2022

WHOLE DAY CAMPS
FOR CHILDREN GRADES K TO 8TH GRADE

Members receive discounts on registration!

rbnc.org 507-332-7151

1000 Rustad Road
Faribault, MN 55021



River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186
Faribault, MN 55021

Trail Hours: 6am-10pm

Building Hours: Fridays: 10am-4pm
1st and 3rd Saturdays: 10am-2pm

During the week the building is reserved for prescheduled programs.

Board of Directors

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Brittany Smith, *Naturalist/Natural Resources Manager*
Katy Anderegg, *Naturalist/Operations Manager*
Molly Olson, *Naturalist/Marketing Coordinator*
Kevin Mattson, *Naturalist*
Matthew Johnson, *Naturalist*

Inside this Issue

Director's Desk	1
Summer Camp	2
News & Notes	3
Winter Recreation at River Bend	4
Naturalist Notebook	5
Business Members	6
Maple Syrup Fun Run & Pancake Brunch	7
River Bend Facilities Updates	7



SUMMER CAMP

A SUMMER OF DISCOVERY

FULL DAY CAMPS FOR CHILDREN GRADES K-8

\$55
\$30 FOR MEMBERS

Thanks to generous donors and community partners, RBNC summer camps are \$55, \$30 for members. Limited spots available, register today! Camps run 9am-4pm. Camps are open to children entering the listed grades in fall 2022.

Meadowlarks (Gr.K-2) June 13-14 June 15-16 July 6-7 July 11-12 July 13-14 July 18-19	Hérons (Gr. 3-5) June 27-28 June 29-30 July 6-7 July 18-19 July 25-26 July 27-28	Adventure Is Out There (Gr.5-8) June 20-21 Outdoor Sports June 22-23 Zoology July 20-21 MN State Parks
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Adventure Is Out There Camps are \$75 (\$50 for members) and include offsite fees & travel. Camps run 8:30am-4:00pm

Summer Camp Sponsors



Dr. Karen and Simon Zeller



rbnc.org/summer-camp

507-332-7151 1000 Rustad Road Faribault, MN 55021

Summer Camp planning is almost done! Make sure to keep an eye on our website for camp themes and registration to open in mid-January. Consider becoming a summer camp sponsor! Summer camp sponsors help to make it affordable for more families to send their kids to a fun summer experience they won't forget. Contact rbncinfo@rbnc.org for more information or call 507-332-7151.



MAPLE SYRUP FUN RUN & PANCAKE BRUNCH

1 MILE, 5K, 10K, 25K, 50K
May 7, 2022

River Bend Nature Center
Faribault, MN

Now with chip timing by Anderson Race Management!

Sign up today!
rbnc.org/fun-run

River Bend Facility Updates

River Bend has some exciting updates, made possible by the support/donations of the community. As you enter, the first thing you will see is a new sign created by Sakatah Carvers, Signs, & Creations that replaces the original wood sign carved by Ivan Whillock that had been in place since 1980! The original sign has been relocated to the interpretive center and will be the centerpiece of a new display of how River Bend Nature Center came to be.

At Kid's In the Wild, volunteers Wendy, Bill, & Lauren Wustenberg, Dr. Hugh and Melodee Smith, Bruce Danielson, and Andy Ekblad worked hard to clean up the play area. A few dead trees were cut down and made into stepping blocks, invasive buckthorn removed, walkways cleared, weeded, and prepared for your next adventure in outdoor play.

Inside the interpretive center you will find a new water fountain with a water bottle refill station which was funded in part by a Rice County SHIP mini-grant that allows easy access to drinking water to encourage hydration and discourage single-use plastics.

And finally, out on the trails, you'll notice that volunteers Glenn and Kathleen Holman have been diligently restoring maps and trail signs on key intersections. Glenn, Kathleen, and others help clear trees that fall on trails after storms.

Thank you to everyone who makes RBNC a special place for our community!



Maple Syrup Fun Run & Pancake Brunch

Looking to make a New Year's resolution? Planning your 2022 race calendar? Register today for the Maple Syrup Fun Run at River Bend on May 7th and receive early bird pricing! All runners receive admission to the pancake brunch with maple syrup made right at RBNC, a t-shirt, and a goodie bag.

New this year— chip timing by Anderson Race Management!

For all the details and to register, visit rbnc.org/fun-run

Interested in sponsoring this event? Contact us at rbncinfo@rbnc.org by 1/10/22!



RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER BUSINESS MEMBERS

STAR



The Putrah Foundation

ADVOCATE

- A&W Restaurant
- Anderka Construction
- Anderson Race Management
- Clean River Partners
- Country School Financial
- Donahue's Greenhouse
- Faribault Animal Center
- Faribault Public Schools
- Faribo Sno-Go Club
- Humphrey Manlift Company, Inc.
- Krause Feeds & Supplies
- Quality Appliance
- Tom's Lock & Key

**Become a Business Member
at rbnc.org/membership**

**Contact us at rbncinfo@rbnc.org or
call 507-332-7151. THANK YOU!**

FOUNDER



Faribault Flyers Bike & Ski Club

PATRON



- Erickson Furniture
- Faribault Area Retired Educators
- Faribault Rotary Youth Services, Inc.
- Fette Electronics
- KidzRule Daycare & Preschool
- Parker Kohl Funeral Home
- Sertoma Club of Faribault

News & Notes

RBNC Staff Accomplishments

Katy recently completed a certificate in Ecology Conservation and Management through Ducks Unlimited. The course encompassed the history of ecology and conservation and management practices used today with goals to conserve, restore and protect wildlife and increase biodiversity in grasslands, forests and wetlands. If you have questions regarding what she learned give her a call or send an email.

Molly and Kevin recently completed a teacher workshop for creating K-5th grade curriculum that aligns with the new state science standards. It gave insight into the new science standards and how to weave them together throughout the year to make a compelling science course. They look forward to developing new programs for River Bend and being a resource for elementary school teachers when they are developing the new science curriculum.

Breanna has been appointed by DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen to serve on the Natural Heritage Advisory Committee. This committee advises MN DNR programs on sustaining the natural heritage and biological diversity of Minnesota's native prairies, forests, wetlands, and native plants and animals. The Committee is a citizen voice for protecting high quality natural resources and promoting conservation.

Natural Resource Grants

River Bend Nature Center is proud to announce receipt of a \$10,000 grant from the Xcel Energy Foundation to assist with continued restoration of woodland habitat on 26 acres to remove buckthorn and other invasive species to improve species diversity. In addition, these funds make it possible for River Bend Nature Center to engage the community with volunteer opportunities and conservation education through mid-2022.

It is especially important at River Bend Nature Center to keep areas around where the federally endangered dwarf trout lily has been found free from the competition these invasive species place on the habitat. Addressing invasive species is not a quick or inexpensive process and requires about seven year of intensive work and planning with continued attention for decades to be successful and allow a variety of native vegetation and wildlife to succeed.



Internship Opportunities at River Bend

River Bend is seeking Spring Environmental Education Interns for March through May. Apply by January 21. River Bend is also seeking Summer Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Interns for June through August. Apply by February 18. For detailed position descriptions and how to apply, visit rbnc.org/employment-opportunities

Volunteering at River Bend

River Bend is looking for volunteers for various activities. Cross-country ski trail groomers utilize River Bend's snowmobiles to pack the trails, and to create ski tracks. Maple syruping volunteers watch the evaporator and stoke the fire, or help bottle the syrup in the interpretive center. Volunteer Naturalists help primarily to deliver school programs to kindergarten through eighth grade. Front desk greeters help by welcoming visitors to the building and answering questions. For more information on volunteer positions and how to become a River Bend Volunteer, visit rbnc.org/volunteer

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, 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.

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

Winter Recreation at River Bend

By: Brittany Smith

It's that time of year when the snow starts to pile up and the mercury drops. Never fear, River Bend is here! River Bend has seven miles of groomed ski trails. RBNC's cross country ski trails receive funding from the MN DNR. As such, you must have a MN State Ski pass which you can purchase online at <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/skiing/skipass/index.html>. A team of dedicated volunteers work hard to maintain the ski trails, so please be respectful and walk to the side of the ski tracks and not on the ski tracks. Thank you!

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

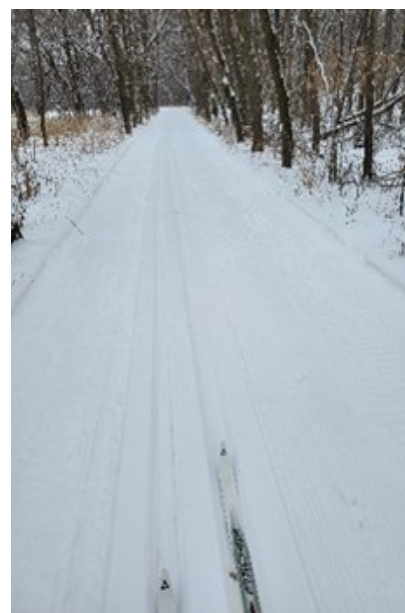
One-year: \$25

(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.)

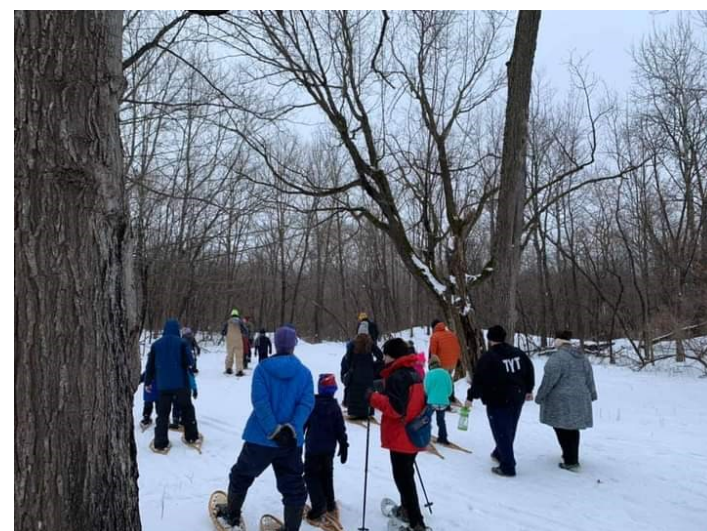
Duplicate passes: \$2.50



Snowshoeing, hiking, and fat tire biking are allowed as well, please stay on the trails. When on trails with set ski tracks, please stay to the side to avoid ruining the set track. Snowmobiles are ONLY ALLOWED on Teepee Tonka, Dairy Lane, and Rabbit trails. Please stay on designated trails.

Thank you!

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



Naturalist Notebook

By: Kevin Mattson

In 2021 my mother and I participated in our first big year: a year-long "hunt" for different wild bird species. There's a great book on the subject: The Big Year by Mark Obmascik, and even a movie adaptation, which is what inspired us to participate. Most of our birding took place in Minnesota, but we found ourselves birding in other states as well, so we would classify this as a "USA Contiguous 48 States Big Year". On January 1st we began recording every species of bird we saw. Our goal was to see 100 unique species of birds in 2021, which at the time didn't seem very difficult, but we quickly realized that unless you're able to identify a bird by sound or in a split second as it darts through a forest canopy, hitting 100 is a pretty lofty goal! As the year comes to an end, I'm proud to say that we reached our goal; I identified 119 species of birds, and my mother identified 110, which for someone who doesn't work outside like me, is incredible! Famous birders who participate in the big year are known to hit 800+ birds in the 48 states alone, which is humbling and almost unbelievable!

Regardless of my number, it's almost impossible to put into words what this experience gave me. I spent more time outside this year than any other year. I truly appreciated and connected with nature. I found my head in the clouds more often than I care to admit (which can land you in hot water with people who are trying to talk to you). And yet, I found so much support along the way; people seemed truly enthusiastic to join me on this journey, even if they had very little interest in birds. I had seasoned birders and new birders helping me identify birds and adding to my number as well. I spent this year not only looking for birds, but I also spent it with people, sharing my passion for birding and helping them find their own special moments in nature.

As for the birds themselves, I certainly had some highlights: On Easter Sunday I saw a common loon while on a casual walk in Maple Grove, which was the earliest I had ever seen one. On a cold May morning while backpacking the Superior Hiking Trail I felt a ruffed grouse drumming as I woke up, which is a bizarre feeling. As a group of summer campers and I kayaked at Alexander Park, we marveled at a great-crested flycatcher. In September, my family and I were in awe over a great grey owl sitting on a telephone line in the Sax Zim Bog. While on a vacation with friends in Phoenix this October, a greater roadrunner darted around us at the Desert Botanical Garden. Finally, on New Year's Eve, the last day of my big year, I had the pleasure of seeing a snowy owl for the first time on the runway at MSP international airport. You would be amazed what you can find if you look and listen a little closer when you're outside. If you're able and interested, I would highly recommend you challenge yourself to participate in the big year; it was an experience I will never forget, and someday I hope to challenge myself to do it again.



Great grey owl by: Kevin Mattson