

River Bend

Spring 2022, Volume 44, Issue 2 April, May, June



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

The newsletter is now digital!

If you would still like to receive a paper copy please email rbncinfo@rbnc.org or call us at 507-332-7151

Upcoming Programs

APRIL

April 2 - Birds and Bagels

April 2 - Peregrine Falcons with Jackie Fallon

April 12 - Little Sprouts Shapes in Nature

April 26 - Little Sprouts Birds and Nests

April 29 - Adult Night Out Spring Ephemerals

MAY

May 7 - Maple Syrup Fun Run and Pancake Breakfast

May 10 - Little Sprouts Worms and Mud

May 18 - Lunch & Learn FHS Field Biology Internship Class

May 21 - Create Your Own Pollinator Sanctuary

May 24 - Little Sprouts What's in the Water?

JUNE & JULY

June 23 - Create Your Own Pollinator Sanctuary

Summer Camp!
See details inside

SAVE THE DATE:

JULY 21 - Annual Meeting

AUGUST 26– Ramble

Director's Desk: Nature Pep Talk

By: Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

The end of cold winter and the desire for the thaw of spring is sprinkled with the flirt of an occasional day where less bulky coats and layers are needed and the sun's warmth strengthens, light increases, and the chirps of birds and flowing water sweeten the air. And soon, spring will awaken into summer – this time of increasing daylight and activity in the natural world is intoxicating.

While I wait for seasons to change, I am grateful for inspirational learning that can replicate the wonder and awe that will soon fill my days outside. Last week, I signed up to listen to a talk about Tamarack Nature Preserve in Woodbury because it sounded like an intriguing place to visit. Beforehand, I knew nothing of the speaker, Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock, who through this short talk, stoked my fire which had been dulled with a touch of the midwinter blahs.

Mohlenbrock's interest in plants was sparked by his high school biology teacher, Esther Smith, in the late 1940s. One assignment was to find all the trees native to the area he lived in in Illinois. His reference book had two species that were no longer thought to exist, but gave last known locations. His Dad took him in search of the yellowwood tree by driving him to go talk to the postmaster of the last place the tree had been recorded. They inquired if there were any old foresters in the area. The postmaster referred them to a local bar where they found a retired forester who remembered cutting yellowwood trees. This man, though it was difficult with his arthritis, led them to a place he remembered from decades before. There, at 16-years old, Mohlenbrock rediscovered a tree that hadn't been seen for 20-30 years. He similarly found a short leaf pine that had last been seen in a town that no longer existed by sleuthing out a church with the town name, exploring along a creek and also re-finding this tree.

How does this relate back to River Bend Nature Center and you? It is about the importance of nature mentors who get us out exploring, natural places where we have access to connect, and opportunities for learning. You never know who or what your actions will inspire and how it impacts lives across geography and time.

From improved health, education, and career outcomes to connections with others and the world us, **generations have ignited their love of nature at RBNC** from visits with school, family, and friends. The benefits of these nature connections ripples outward to the world around us, now and into the future and <u>your continued support is essential in making this happen.</u> Thank you!

Mohlenbrock's parting advice was to keep looking, see what's over the next hill, around the bend in the creek, keep learning, pay attention to plants, stick to it, and they become like old friends. He recommends a "life list" of plants, similar to what birders do... sounds like a crisp, new adventure to me. What do you say?

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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Katy Anderegg, Naturalist/Operations Manager

Molly Olson, Naturalist/Marketing Coordinator

Kevin Mattson, Naturalist

Matthew Johnson, Naturalist

In This Issue

Director's Desk	1
Summer Camp	2
Maple Syrup Fun Run	3
Business Members	4-5
News & Notes	6-7
Natural Resource Updates	8
Naturalist Notebook	9
Story Spotlight	10-11
Ramble/ Volunteer Thank You	12









SUMMER CAMP

A SUMMER OF DISCOVERY

FULL DAY CAMPS FOR CHILDREN GRADES K-8



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

Camps are open to children entering the listed grades in fall 2022.

Meadowlarks (Going into Gr.K-2)	Herons (Going into Gr. 3-5	Adventur (Going into
June 13-14	June 27-28	June 20-21
June 15-16	June 29-30	June 22-23
July 6-7	July 6-7	July 20-21
July 11-12	July 18-19	Adventure Is Out \$75 (\$50 for include offsite
July 13-14	July 25-26	
July 18-19	July 27-28	

Adventure Is Out There (Going into Gr.5-8)

June 20-21 Outdoor Sports June 22-23 Zoology July 20-21 MN State Parks

Adventure Is Out There Camps are \$75 (\$50 for members) and include offsite fees & travel. Camps run 8:30am-4:00pm

Summer Camp Sponsors



BUILDING AMERICA®

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Dr. Karen and Simon Zeller



rbnc.org/summer-camp

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

Because of generous donors and community partners who believe in our mission, River Bend is excited to offer our dynamic 2-day camps for a fraction of the cost they have traditionally been (\$135+ value). This means we are able to provide summer camp in an inclusive way to our entire community, without sacrificing quality. River Bend Summer Camps have a variety of fun and engaging themes this year that your child is sure to love! Make it a summer they will never forget by making new friends, playing games, exploring outside, and more. Adventure Is Out There Camps will meet at River Bend Nature Center before hitting the road and heading out on an adventure. For more information and to register, visit rbnc.org/summer-camp.





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The Putrah Foundation

Advocate

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THANK YOU for your Support!

Become a Business Member

Become a Business Member today at rbnc.org/membership

For more information on:
How to sponsor 2022 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

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

Connect with your community and become a River Bend Nature Center Business Member

Membership Perks

New \$100 Memberships

Marketing item at Maple Syrup Fun Run by 4/15/22 + business name listed on website, kiosks, and newsletter

New \$250 Memberships

Marketing item at Maple Syrup Fun Run by 4/15/22 + \$100 voucher for rental or program + business logo listed on website, kiosks and newsletter

New \$500 Memberships

Marketing item at Maple Syrup Fun Run by 4/15/22 + \$250 voucher for rental or program + business logo listed on website, kiosks, and newsletter

New \$1000 Memberships

Marketing item at Maple Syrup Fun Run by 4/15/22 + \$500 voucher for rental or program + business logo listed on website, kiosks, and newsletter





Leave a Legacy at River Bend Nature Center

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

FACILITY & GREEN SPACE RENTALS

Use your voucher and choose from the following rental spaces to host your next meeting, company picnic, staff appreciation day, etc.

Amphitheater or Lawn - starts at \$50
Trailside Building - starts at \$100
Interpretive Center - starts at \$250

NATURALIST-LED PROGRAMS

Use your voucher for a variety of naturalist-led programs. Choose one or multiple offerings! Our most popular offerings:

Archery, Compass Course, Orienteering, Survival Skills, Canoeing/Kayaking, Guided Walk/Snowshoe, Team Building and more!

Team building has many benefits for groups, committees and businesses. It improves productivity, increases motivation, encourages collaboration, identifies leadership qualities, and builds trust and respect among teammates. Team building programs are facilitated from start to finish by a RBNC naturalist.

Each program accommodates groups up to 20 for a duration of one hour and thirty minutes. Programs start at \$150.

Vouchers must be redeemed within 1 year.
(Voucher use affects tax deductibility of membership donation)

For more information, contact rbncinfo@rbnc.org or 507-332-7151

Left Photo: Federated Insurance Employees spent a few hours on a sunny afternoon removing buckthorn from critical Dwarf Trout Lily Habitat.

Right Photo: Minnesota Master Naturalist Program for adult education. Our buildings are available for conferences or meetings.

News & Notes

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Thanks to everyone who donated to RBNC at the end of 2021 - your generous support earned RBNC the full matching funds from The Putrah Foundation and other friends of RBNC. Besides strengthening education, conservation, recreation, and social connections at RBNC, your financial gifts helped:

- * Retain and grow the RBNC staff team to address program demand
- * Adapt science curriculum based educational programs to accommodate smaller groups and / or online audiences through hands-on learning and naturalist-led discussions
- * Provide programs at greatly reduced cost to participants offering "pay what you can" options to increase accessibility
- * Accomplish nearly 60 acres of invasive species removal, planting 600 trees to restore MN native woodland species and preserve habitat for the federally endangered dwarf trout lily and other rare species.

Going forward, your gifts continues the above activities and:

- * Expansion of school offerings and partnerships to offer a more diverse set of year-round environmental and outdoor education programs that meet community needs and further the mission of RBNC
- * Continued habitat restoration activities
- * Interpretive Center upgrades and facility planning
- * Development of a Master Plan and continued diversification of funding sources
- * Improved way finding and educational signage

Thank you for your dedication to RBNC!



With your generous donations and support, we were able to purchase new snowshoes this year. Snowshoeing programs are in high demand and these will be a great addition to what we can provide.

Key Community Partners of 2021



Introducing the 2021 Key Community Partners

The Putrah Foundation, Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation, Xcel Energy Foundation, In Memory of Larry & Diane Barta In Honor of Delores Barta, Marvin & Sandi Trandem, Union Pacific, Henkel, Robert Speckhals, Dr. Karen & Simon Zeller, The State Bank of Faribault, Packy & Karen Mader, Marvin & Sara Schrader, Dr. Richard & Nancie Huston, Mary Ellen Thomas Estate, Dave & Judy Lee, Shattuck St. Mary's School, Bill & Mary Niermann, In Memory of Art Soeters, Janet Mitchell, Tom & Linda Gagnon, Harry & LaNaya Brown, 1st United Bank, In Memory of Tom Cloutier, and Wilma Smith.

Key Community Partners are the largest financial donors through their membership, donations and grants to RBNC. We are grateful to these leaders in giving, and everyone for their gifts of any size, as well as time and services which are just as necessary to help more people connect with nature at RBNC, now and into the future. THANK YOU!

News & Notes

ST. OLAF COLLEGE NON-PROFIT MICROCREDENTIAL

A new January course was offered in 2022 to introduce St. Olaf students interested in nonprofit organizations to all of the elements that are necessary for a nonprofit organization to function successfully. In partnership with the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, students received workshops addressing funding, finance, governance and leadership, board of directors, programs and evaluation, engagement strategies, racial equity and disability inclusion, operations and HR, marketing, storytelling, policy, strategic planning and change, and volunteer management.

RBNC worked with two students, Natasia Preys and Shelby Louk, who were invited to learn more about RBNC over the course of the month and contribute a project to assist RBNC in areas of need. They were able bring fresh eyes and recommendations for RBNC in areas of marketing, diversity/equity/inclusion, and student volunteer/intern considerations. We look forward to using their recommendations as we move into 2022. Thank you, Shelby and Natasia!



Presented by: Jackie Fallon Wildlife Biologist, Master Falconer & Educator

Saturday, April 2, 2022

11:00am-12:00pm & 12:30pm-1:30pm

Cost: \$5/Child 12 and under, \$10/Adult pre-registration required. Visit rbnc.org/upcoming-programs

Come and learn about the peregrine story, what is being done right here in Minnesota to help the species and what we have discovered about them after 40 years of research.



Program held at River Bend Nature Center 1000 Rustad Rd. Faribault, MN 55021

River Bend Gift Shop

Maple Syrup kits, survival kits, owl pellet kits, T-shirts and more **now available!** We have something for every nature enthusiast. Buy for yourself or make it a gift! Visit the nature center on Fridays 10-4pm or every 1st or 3rd Saturday from 10-2pm to shop our store or go online at rbnc.org. Shipping is not available. Call us to arrange a time to pick up your purchase.





Natural Resource Updates

By: Brittany Smith, Naturalist/Resources Manager

Grants funding programs and land management

River Bend Nature Center continues to achieve its mission helping people discover, enjoy, understand, and preserve the incredible natural world around us! This mission is made possible by donor support that enables us to seek out, apply for, and receive grants to supplement community giving.

Thank you, to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, for granting River Bend funds through the No Child Left Inside Grant Program. The grant will be used to supplement the current inventory of bows by adding more size options, allowing River Bend to offer these programs to a broader age range of participants. River Bend currently utilizes the archery equipment for middle school programs to demonstrate some basic concepts of physics. The expanded inventory of bows will expand the archery programs to summer camp, public programs, and birthday party themes. Shooting sports play a part in Minnesota's outdoor sports history and River Bend looks forward to continuing to build upon it as well as connecting area youth to the great outdoors.

Thank you, to the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) and the State of Minnesota, for granting funds through the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant (CPL) to continue managing invasive species in the Big Woods Habitat. The funds will be used to continue the buckthorn management that was started about three years ago to manage buckthorn and enhance the native woodlands in acres that are adjacent to areas of the federally endangered dwarf trout lily. The funding will continue this work for another three years!

Faribault High School Field Biology Internship at River Bend Nature Center

In its second year, the partnership between FHS and RBNC with the Field Biology Internship is successful and rewarding. The class is comprised of nine seniors from FHS that are gaining real-life, hands on experiences in field biology and natural resource careers. They meet weekly, either in-person or virtually with different professionals learning about the opportunities available in these career fields. In the fall of '21, students took part in the archery deer hunt hosted at River Bend by conducting whitetail deer surveys with the use of trail cams, collected harvest data, and learned how to extract lymph nodes from deer for Chronic Wasting Disease testing. Over the winter, they surveyed plants present on the southern part of the nature center collecting data and writing a habitat restoration management plan for RBNC. The students identified what species were present, native and non-native, devised a plan to restore the area, as well as wrote up a budget to restore and manage the area. This coming spring, students will participate in the process of making maple syrup from tapping trees to boiling sap and learning the historical importance of it to native cultures. For their final, they will be working on individual projects and will be presenting them at the Lunch and Learn program, Wednesday, May 18, 2022 from 6:00pm-8:00pm. Come see what the students have been working on!





Photos: Interns surveying prairie insects, DNR training students on lymph node extractions

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in volunteering? Check out the natural resource volunteering events River Bend will be hosting in partnership with **Great River Greening!**

https://www.greatrivergreening.org/events

Naturalist Notebook

By: Kevin Mattson, Naturalist

Maple Syruping

Every year, as March approaches, I always find myself feeling a little more in tune with the weather. I catch myself constantly checking my phone's weather app, looking for which day might be the start of my maple syruping season. The days I'm looking for are when overnight temperatures are below freezing, and daytime temperatures are nearing 40 degrees Fahrenheit. I begin to get anxious, excitedly preparing my materials for tapping the trees. Drill? Check. Spiles? Check. Sap bags? Check. When the temperatures are finally agreeable and I decide I've had enough waiting, I haphazardly throw my materials in a five gallon bucket and get in the woods. Of course, the real work starts once you start to fill the sap bags and boiling begins. The first few days (and sometimes weeks) of the season can be slow; the bags may take multiple days to fill up, which can make you feel like you need to get more spiles in trees. However, once the snow melts and the ground starts to thaw, you'll quickly find that keeping up with the constant flow of sap is more work than you expected. After you put in the effort, you're rewarded with something amazing. For me, turning sap into syrup is a miracle; taking water and boiling it into a sweet, sticky, caramelized topping that I can share with others is something I take great pride in.

Maple syruping is historically significant to the survival of Native Americans, who would boil sap into syrup (and even further into maple sugar) to create a year-round food source. The Ojibwe people were known to use maple sugar as a seasoning on meat or in soups. Typically, maple syruping was done as a big group effort by the Ojibwe people, who would gather in the spring to divvy up the many important roles to ensure a successful harvest, such as gathering firewood, collecting the sap, boiling the sap, and storing the maple sugar. At River Bend Nature Center, we work together to boil maple sap into syrup in similar ways. Throughout the year, skilled volunteers will process downed trees on the trails to use for firewood, which we split just before the syruping season with a log splitter. Our Faribault High School internship class helps us tap trees and collect the sap periodically in the mornings when the sap is flowing, working together to quickly fill the sap collection barrels. Lastly, volunteers and staff boil the maple sap down in our wood-fueled evaporator, which fills the air with sweet-smelling steam, before jarring it to be used for future sales and events.







Photos: Tree tapping and sap boiling at River Bend Nature Center

While many Minnesotans enjoy hunting and gathering, I think one of the best, untapped resources may be right in our backyards. Maple syruping at home is a great way to get outside and get in touch with spring, but if you are looking for more opportunities to learn about maple syruping, or are looking for the materials to do it yourself, look no further! Starting in March, River Bend will need many volunteers to help us with maple syruping, so if you are interested in helping, please contact us! Additionally, RBNC will be selling maple syruping kits for you to use at home. Lastly, the nature center will be offering public maple syruping programs, so be sure to look on our website or give us a call for more information.

Story Spotlight

Becki Keilen, Faribault Public School Teacher, Roosevelt Elementary

The learning that happens on field trips to River Bend Nature Center impacts lives. From improved health, education, and career outcomes to connections with others and the world around us, generations of students have ignited their love of nature in their own backyard, here in Faribault, MN. The stories and impact of River Bend on people, like Becki Keilen, go back to the beginning of when the nature center first began.

Becki was born and raised in Faribault with River Bend Nature Center being an important part of her life. When she was in school, her class went on some of the earliest field trips to River Bend and she grew up exploring the trails with friends and classmates. Fast forward to today, she is a 24-year veteran of Faribault Public Schools, Kindergarten and 2nd grade teacher, and parent. Becki has been to the nature center on nearly 100 field trips with classes as a student and now as a teacher. She has met decades worth of dedicated River Bend naturalists and volunteers that give their all to share nature with students one field trip at a time.

My truest love for River Bend is seeing it through the eyes of my students. For many, it is their first field trip and experience outdoors. We explain nature in the classroom, but until they get out and experience it using their senses, they can't truly understand what we have right in our backyards. Everyone benefits to experience the changes over the seasons, see plants and animals in the wild, and experience the world around them. ~Becki Keilen



Becki as a student visiting River Bend in 1981.
Sitting on the far right.



Becki as a teacher visiting River Bend in 2021. Standing behind her students on the left.

Environmental Education Programs at River Bend Nature Center

What comes to mind when you think of River Bend Nature Center? Would school programs be at the top of your list? It should be! School field trips and educational programs are a major part of what River Bend staff work on every day, providing over 300 programs from September - May. Our program curriculum is aligned with Minnesota State Science Standards and provides supplemental, hands-on, outdoor experience for students Pre-K through 8th grade. If you are interested in learning more about what we offer, visit our website at **rbnc.org/field-trips.** To schedule a program with us, call 507-332-7151 or email education@rbnc.org.







Story Spotlight

Sue Coleman, Volunteer Naturalist for School Field Trips



Volunteer Naturalist leading a group of 5th graders during the Weathering & Erosion program.

Volunteer Naturalist leading a discussion on The Physics of Archery during a mini build activity.

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Program/Event Photographer** You can help capture special moments during our programs and events that will be marketed and displayed in the interpretive center and in many other places to promote River Bend.
- Maple Syruping The season is upon us to start collecting sap and we need you to help us! The sap we collect and make into syrup is sold here at River Bend and used during our Maple Syrup Fun Run & Pancake Brunch on May 7, 2022.
- Mailings/Flyer Distribution You can help us out by assembling our mailings and distributing flyers for our upcoming events at designated times.

Call or email us for more information about how you can get involved and visit our website at https://rbnc.org/volunteer

One of River Bend's most valuable assets are the volunteer naturalists that work along side our staff. They enable us to expand our reach in the community and provide priceless outdoor education to Faribault youth and in the surrounding community. Our volunteer naturalists come with a wide range of education and experience to share with students from being a retired zookeeper to an outdoor enthusiast or retired teacher, like Sue Coleman, who is River Bend's newest volunteer naturalist. After spending some time at River Bend with her family, Sue felt compelled to want to do more. We hope you'll be inspired by Sue's story and want to join in the fun of getting today's youth exposed to the outdoors! No prior experience is needed. We'll train you on what you need to know. Visit https://rbnc.org/volunteer for more information.

Thank you Sue for joining our team!

When I moved from Montana to Rice County in 2020, the River Bend Nature Center soon became one of my favorite places. I loved the variety of trails, particularly sharing them with my grandson. River Bend is a wonderful place to experience the changes of the seasons with the accompanying changes in the wildlife. As a recently retired teacher, sharing my love of nature with students in the school programs seemed a wonderful opportunity. I look

forward to learning more about nature through the variety of





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Thank You River Bend Volunteers!

We have many dedicated volunteers that help at River Bend in a countless ways. Your time, in-kind and monetary donations help supply our events, upgrade equipment and improve the quality of our programming altogether. Together, we are able to grow and improve River Bend Nature Center. Thank you for your support and efforts to keep River Bend moving forward!

Check out volunteer opportunities at www.rbnc.org/volunteer.

Contact Kevin Mattson at education@rbnc.org for more information.