



Upcoming Nature Programs



JANUARY

- Jan 4 - Bagels & Birds
- Jan 4 - Story Time: Wilbur the Hognose Snake
- Jan 4 - Sweet Reads Book Club
- Jan 6 - Little Sprouts: Animals Around the World
- Jan 11 - Fat Tire Bike Race
- Jan 13 - Homeschool: Winter Birding
- Jan 15 - Lunch & Learn: History of Faribault
- Jan 18 - Family Fun - Meet the Animal Ambassadors
- Jan 20 - Little Sprouts: Animal Tracks and Signs
- Jan 25 - Family Snowshoeing
- Jan 30 - Luminary Snowshoe Hike, Family Night

MARCH

- Mar 1 - Bagels & Birds
- Mar 1 - Story Time: Maple Syruping
- Mar 1 - Sweet Reads Book Club
- Mar 8 - Stewardship Saturday: Invasive Species
- Mar 10 - Little Sprouts: Maple Syruping
- Mar 10 - Homeschool: Maple Syruping & Nature Play
- Mar 15 - Maple Syruping Programs
- Mar 19 - Lunch & Learn: Alexander Faribault
- Mar 22 - Maple Syruping Programs

FEBRUARY

- Feb 1 - Bagels & Birds
- Feb 1 - Story Time: Winter Weather
- Feb 1 - Sweet Reads Book Club
- Feb 3 - Little Sprouts: Icy Weather
- Feb 8 - Family Papermaking
- Feb 10 - Homeschool: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Feb 13 - Luminary Snowshoe Hike, Adults Night
- Feb 15 - Little Sprouts: Animals Around the World
- Feb 17 - Little Sprouts: Rocks Rock!
- Feb 19 - Lunch & Learn: Lake Superior

SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 11

Snow Crush Event

JANUARY 15

Arts & Nature Family Membership Night

JAN 30 & FEB 13

Luminary Hikes

Priority Registration for River Bend Members opens Saturday, January 11th!

General Public
registration
opens Feb 1st

SUMMER CAMP

MEMORIES THAT WILL LAST A LIFETIME...

Full day camps for children entering
Grades K-9 in the Fall of 2025

Register at www.rbnc.org/summer-camp

Adventure
is
OUT THERE!

Discounts
For
Members

River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd - PO Box 186
Faribault, MN 55021

Trail Hours: 6 am - 10 pm

Building Hours: Mon 8 am - 7pm

Tues-Fri 8 am - 4 pm, Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm

Board of Directors

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Kate Ford, Leah Inman

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Evelyn Rosas, Nick Smoczyk & Autumn Pozniak



January 11, 2025

BEGINNER, INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED LEVEL

RACE STARTS 1:00 PM

Find more information & Register online by
Friday, January 10 at 12pm

www.rbnc.org/snow-crush

Same day registration available 11:00-12:30 PM



Event hosted at River Bend Nature Center
1000 Rustad Road . Faribault, MN

SPONSORED BY



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Director's Desk

Brad Bourn, Executive Director

Historic work at River Bend in 2025

Dear friends-

We just completed an amazing 2024 thanks to the dedication of River Bend staff, volunteers, and supporters like you. Thank you.

We've done so much work in expanding access to nature in our community in the last year. You may have read in the news recently about our work convening green space providers throughout the region to begin planning a regional outdoor bill of rights and inclusion plan or our work in securing over \$1 million dollars in 2024 to expand our Outdoor Diversity Initiatives to create a career pathway program for people with barriers to better access gainful careers in conservation. While we've done our best to praise this work from the treetops, we've also been in the quiet stages of lining up a historic gift to our Faribault community that I'm pleased to write about now.

Just a few days ago, we completed the initial paperwork on a tentative donation agreement with the Trust for Public Land to receive a gift of nearly 46 acres of land in 2025 to ultimately be incorporated into River Bend for the public's enjoyment and benefit.

The donation will come after the Trust for Public Land completes the purchase of Straight River Farm from our near neighbors and friends, Bill and Maggie Hein. For over two decades, the Heins have tended their farms providing healthy food like apples and berries to surrounding neighbors, schools, grocery stores, and markets across Minnesota. As Bill and Maggie enter retirement, they are building on their legacy by working with the Trust for Public Land and River Bend to ensure their farm is converted to a public green space for current and future generations.

River Bend and the Trust for Public Land will be working together in the months and years ahead to restore the farmland to critical habitat and establish

walking trails through the 46 acres located just southeast of the Nature Center and includes an additional access point to the Straight River.

As the Faribault community continues to grow, investing in habitat restoration and expanding public green spaces is critical to our mission of *inspiring curiosity, care, and respect for nature*.

Please join me in thanking the Trust for Public Land and the Heins for making this historic contribution to River Bend Nature Center and the Faribault community possible. You can learn more about this work and how you can get involved in the days, months, and years ahead by visiting rbnc.org/straightriverfarmproject.

Interested in the Outdoor Career Pathways ENROLLING NOW

12 Weeks of Paid Winter Career Training

You will Learn -

- Ski Trail Grooming
- MN Master Naturalist Certification
- Chainsaw Certification
- Trail Restoration/Maintenance Training
- Career Coaching and Job Search Assistance
- Tree Inspector Certification
- Environmental Justice Education

Questions?
Contact
Quanda Arch
arch@rbnc.org

Hands on training with classroom coursework in person
and online begins in February 2025

All participants must be:

- Eligible to work in the United States and
- 18 years of age or older at the time of enrollment and
- Not enrolled in any K-12 school and
- Seeking employment and
- One or more of the following:
 - At or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines adjusted for respective family size
 - An individual of color
- Solid Reading and Communication Skills

The State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) funded (or funded in part) this training through a grant. The grant recipient created this training. DEED does not endorse this publicity or training or make guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability or ownership of the information herein or elsewhere.

Educational Programs

Molly Dulka, Associate Director of Programs and Engagement

Volunteer for the Maple Syrup Fun Run!

Are you passionate about the outdoors/River Bend and want to give back to your community? We need your help for an exciting race event at the beautiful River Bend! This race is not only an opportunity to support outdoor exercise for all ages, but also a chance to immerse yourself in the serene environment of nature while contributing to a great cause.

We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to assist with a variety of roles on race day, including helping with registration, guiding participants along the course, managing water stations, and assisting with post-race activities such as the pancake breakfast. Whether you're a seasoned volunteer or a first-timer, we welcome everyone to lend a hand in making this event a success. This is also a great opportunity for businesses to create a group volunteer day.

Volunteers will get a unique experience of the race

behind the scenes. You'll be helping participants stay hydrated, cheering on the runners, and ensuring everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience. This is a great way to engage with your community, enjoy the fresh air, and see the race from a different perspective. Volunteering for this event is not just about supporting the race; it's also about showing your love for nature and outdoor activities. The event will take place on Saturday, May 3, and there are shifts available throughout the day, so you can volunteer for as long as you're able. In appreciation for your help, all volunteers will receive snacks, a pancake breakfast, and the satisfaction of knowing you played a vital role in the success of the race.

Sign up today and be a part of something special! Together, we can make this race a memorable event for participants and the local community alike. To volunteer, visit rbnc.org/volunteer or contact Morgan Heier at heier@rbnc.org. We look forward to seeing you there!

Registration is now Open!



MAPLE SYRUP FUN RUN *Pancake Breakfast*

May 3, 2025 . Faribault, Minnesota
One Mile, 5K, 10K, 25K, 50K

Chip timing by Anderson Race Management!

Early Bird Registration Ends March 31st!

www.rbnc.org/fun-run

Conservation Corner

Brittany Smith, Associate Director of Environmental Stewardship

Reminders this winter to help everyone enjoy the trails

As we step into the new year and hopefully see the return of some Minnesota snow, please keep a few items in mind.

- **Ski passes are required** to ski the trails as they are part of the Grant-in-Aid Ski Trail Program through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Ski passes must be purchased through the MN Department of Natural Resources. They are not available at the nature center.
- **Snowmobiles are not allowed on all River Bend Trails.** Only the designated snowmobile trail.
- **No other motorized vehicles are allowed on the trails at anytime.**
- **Please stay on the designated trails.**
- **Please do not walk or allow your dog to walk down the middle of the ski tracks;** most of the trails are wide enough to walk along either side.

- **Every dog must be leashed and picked up after.** River Bend's policy is dogs must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet and pick up after your dog. No matter how friendly your dog may be, not everyone who uses the trails enjoys being up close to unfamiliar dogs. Loose dogs can chase the wildlife, cause issues for skiers, bikers, and cars. **Training collars are not considered a leash so please use a leash for your dog.**

All are welcome and encouraged to visit River Bend Nature Center and enjoy the great outdoors; please be considerate of others and nature.

For more information on River Bend's policies, visit our website at www.rbnc.org/visitor-policies

We are recruiting Volunteers for Ski Trail Groomers. If you are interested, please email Brittany at smith@rbnc.org.

Thank you Bob, Glenn and other Faribo Bike & Ski club members for always doing amazing grooming of our trails. We have big shoes to fill!

Get your Ski Pass Here:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/skiing/skipass/index.html>

The logo below was created by MN DNR



Naturalist Notebook

Matt Johnson, Environmental Stewardship Coordinator

Growing Through Winter

Winter can often feel like a time when things slow down. A walk through the woods is filled with a sense of calm that only this season can create. Much of nature seemingly feels content to wait for warmer months ahead. Lost in this sense of dormancy, amazingly many trees are still using sunlight to grow. Chlorophyll, essential in the process of absorbing light, is not only just found in leaves that fall during the autumn. Through unique adaptations, the process of photosynthesis can still happen during winter.

The presence of green needles on our native conifers in an otherwise lifeless winter landscape, helps to illustrate that photosynthesis is still occurring. Needles share many of the same qualities as leaves, including

containing chlorophyll.

However, they are designed to be retained year-round, with the only exception being the Tamarack (*Larix laricina*). *Because of this, these trees are capable of capturing sunlight through winter, advantageous compared to other*

trees that would have a much shorter growing season in such a climate. Needles also help to retain water more effectively than leaves. It is no coincidence that colder climates are filled with needle-bearing trees such as pines and spruces.

But it's not just coniferous trees that can get a leg up in the cold. Many young trees can also benefit from winter sunlight. Because young bark is very thin, some trees actually have functioning chlorophylls present underneath. If you were to cut into the bark, you would actually see a thin layer of green. This gives young trees, often shaded during warmer months, a chance to generate more energy to grow.



Tamarack in the Fall

There are even a few species of deciduous trees that have also been found to be photosynthetic through maturity year-round. The most notable of these are our native aspens, Quaking Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and Bigtooth Aspen (*Populus grandidentata*). We often recognize these trees by their brilliant white bark. Underneath the surface of this unusual bark, are chlorophylls. While most trees eventually have bark that is too thick to allow sunlight to pass through, aspens have evolved to allow this process to continue even in winter. This is partially why aspen are notorious for being able to survive in extreme winter conditions where other deciduous trees simply can't.

Winter provides a great time to notice things out in nature that would have otherwise been missed. This is especially true for our trees. Spend some time identifying some of our native conifers or see if you can stumble upon an aspen forest. Even in the coldest sunshine, many of these trees are still hard at work, making the most of even the harshest of conditions.



Pine Tree in



Aspen Trees

Business Members

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Faribault Rotary Youth Services, Inc.



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Thank you business members for your support!

Enroll in River Bend's Business Wellness Membership

River Bend Nature Center's wellness program can be an essential part of helping your employees live a healthy life. When you join our wellness program today, your employees will receive membership perks and more! Contact Brad Bourn (bourn@rbnc.org) or Katy Anderegg (anderegg@rbnc.org) to discuss perks and enrollment.

	Bluebird	Heron	Owl
Small Employer	\$500	\$1000	\$2000
Medium Employer	\$1500	\$2500	\$3500
Large Employer	\$3000	\$4000	\$5000
Regional Employer (100+ employees or	Contact us to discuss pricing and benefits	Contact us to discuss pricing and benefits	Contact us to discuss pricing and benefits



River Bend
NATURE CENTER

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

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PAID
Faribault, MN
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Return Service Requested

Save the Date!

Membership Promo runs Jan 15 - March 15, \$25 Savings!

River Bend
NATURE CENTER

PARADISE CENTER
for the **Arts**

MEMBERSHIP NIGHT JANUARY 15, 2025 | 5:30-7:30 PM
AT THE PARADISE CENTER FOR THE ARTS!

FAMILY ARTS & NATURE MEMBERSHIP

\$100
for family membership

MEMBERSHIP VALID FOR ONE YEAR

Tours
Drinks
Animals
& More!

Become a member of two local nonprofit organizations