



River Bend

NATURE CENTER

Winter 2023, Volume 45, Issue 1
January, February, March



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

Upcoming Programs

JANUARY

- Jan 6 - Full Moon Luminary Hike
- Jan 7 - Bagels & Birds
- Jan 7 - Animal Tracking
- Jan 9 - Homeschool: Survival
- Jan 10 - Little Sprouts: Clouds, Snow, Ice
- Jan 18 - Lunch & Learn: Sustainability
- Jan 21 - Drop-in Bird Feeder Making
- Jan 24 - Little Sprouts: Animal Ambassadors

FEBRUARY

- Feb 3 - Full Moon Luminary Hike
- Feb 4 - Bagels & Birds
- Feb 4 - All About Owls
- Feb 7 - Little Sprouts Animals in Winter
- Feb 13 - Homeschool: Nature Study & Journaling
- Feb 15 - Lunch & Learn: Regenerative Farming
- Feb 18 - Drop-in Paper Making
- Feb 21 - Little Sprouts Sounds in Nature

MARCH

- Mar 4 - Bagels & Birds
- Mar 4 - How to Attract Wildlife
- Mar 13 - Homeschool: Maple Syruping/ Tree ID
- Mar 14 - Little Sprouts: Maple Trees & Sap
- Mar 15 - Lunch & Learn: MN Zoo Turtle Conservation
- Mar 18 - Maple Syruping
- Mar 28 - Maple Syruping
- Mar 30 - Maple Syruping

The newsletter is available on our website too!

Director's Desk: Into the New Year!

By: Brad Bourn, Executive Director

Dear friends-

I'm finding winter to be a great time to be the director of River Bend. It's fun to see all but the most serious of runners be replaced with skiers and snowshoers while youth on field trips have transitioned from shorts and sandals into moon boots and mittens.

Beyond seeing the changes in how River Bend visitors use the nature center, the winter has afforded staff, board members, and me the opportunity to get in front of our work a little more and plan for the future. This year, staff is excited to be implementing a budget and a work plan that we think better helps care for the physical amenities of River Bend and positions us to be a more inclusive and welcoming space for all of Faribault residents, neighbors, and guests. To that end, you'll see some fun and exciting new faces at River Bend along with what we hope are more opportunities for volunteers to engage with us. While we're working on quite a few exciting initiatives, I'm really proud to highlight in this newsletter that in partnership with staff at the Minnesota Academy for the Deaf and St. Olaf's Center for Global Engagement we're starting to implement a new adaptive recreation program at River Bend to better support community members with different physical and developmental abilities to enjoy the outdoors more. For generations, folks with different physical and developmental abilities have relied on River Bend to be a place to connect with the outdoors and find acceptance. but there are times where River Bend has fall short. We're hopeful that this project will help serve as a roadmap for intentional investments in adaptive recreation opportunities at River Bend.

I'm so proud of the work that our staff and volunteers are doing to advance our work to make River Bend a more inclusive space for everyone but there is still a lot of work to do. One project here or one grant there does not create a lasting change. That's why I'm asking for your help. In the months ahead, River Bend Nature Center will be embarking on the creation of a new strategic plan that will help us guide and prioritize our work for years to come. We'd like to know your thoughts and priorities in this work. I'm hoping that you can take a few moments to take this important introductory survey on how you use River Bend and how you think we can be of most benefit to the community. This won't be your only chance to share your thoughts with us but it's a helpful first step. We expect our initial strategic plan survey will be available by early February and we'll be able to use your feedback in the development of our work moving forward. You can complete the survey online at rbnc.org/strategic-planning or if you'd like it in another format, please email info@rbnc.org, stop by the nature center, or call us at (507)-332-7151.

Thanks for your continued interest and support of River Bend Nature Center. I hope you find this newsletter helpful and enjoyable. If you have any questions about the great work our staff and volunteers are doing, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Yours in service,

Brad Bourn

River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186
Faribault, MN 55021

Trail Hours: 6am - 10pm

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

Building may be closed during severe weather

Board of Directors

Dustin Dienst, *President*

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Staff

Brad Bourn, Executive Director

Katy Anderegg,
Associate Director Administration

Brittany Smith,
Associate Director Environmental Stewardship

Molly Olson,
Associate Director Programs and Engagement

Erin Tone, Naturalist/Program Coordinator

Matthew Johnson, Naturalist

Kate Ford, Naturalist

Zach McCarty, MN GreenCorps

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YEAR-END CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

Thank you supporters of River Bend Nature Center! Special thanks to The Putrah Foundation for your \$15,000 match and group of anonymous donors who came together for a \$6,000 match for Give to the Max day. You generously helped us raise over \$50,000 for our year-end campaign setting us up for a great 2023! With your support, we have been able to make much needed improvements to the grounds and interpretive center; foundation repairs to the building, new faucets in the bathrooms, dock boards replaced and new paint to some areas of the interpretive center. As a community resource, we want to be a quality place for you and your family to enjoy. Your contributions help us stay up-to-date with programs, equipment and safety.

Thank you so much!

~ River Bend Nature Center Staff & Board Members



MAPLE SYRUP FUN RUN & PANCAKE BRUNCH

Saturday
May 6, 2023

Chip Timing by
Anderson Race Management!





River Bend
NATURE CENTER

SUMMER CAMP

ADVENTURES WAITING TO HAPPEN...

FULL DAY CAMPS FOR CHILDREN GRADES K-9



Summer Camps \$55 (\$30 for members) 9:00-4:00pm

Camps are open to children entering the listed grades in fall 2023.

Adventure Is Out There \$75 (\$50 for members) 8:30-4:00pm

Includes offsite fees & travel

Meadowlarks (Going into Gr.K-2)

June 19-20

June 21-22

June 26-27

June 28-29

July 17-18

July 19-20

July 31-Aug 1

Hérons (Going into Gr. 3-5)

June 12-13

June 14-15

July 10-11

July 12-13

July 17-18

July 19-20

July 31-Aug 1

Adventure Is Out There (Going into Gr.5-9)

June 26-27 Outdoor Sports

June 28-29 Ology

July 24-25 Outdoor Sports

July 26-27 Ology



Sponsored by:



rbnc.org/summer-camp . 507-332-7151 . 1000 Rustad Road Faribault, MN 55021

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER BUSINESS MEMBERS

STAR



The Putrah Foundation
Faribault Rotary Youth Services, Inc.

Advocate

A&W Restaurant
Anderka Construction
Clean River Partners
Community Co-op
Comprehensive Wealth Solutions
Country School Financial
Donahue's Greenhouse
Faribault Animal Center
Faribault Rental Equipment, Inc.
Faribault Transportation Company
Faribault Public Schools
Faribo Sno-Go Club
Glenn's Service & Towing
Humphrey Manlift Company, Inc.
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FOUNDER



Faribault Flyers Bike & Ski Club

PATRON



Chappuis Jewelers
Erickson Furniture



Faribault Area Retired Educators



Fette Electronics
Mercury Minnesota
Schroder Concessions
Sertoma Club of Faribault

THANK YOU for your Support!

Become a Business Member

River Bend Nature Center's business memberships can now give you more perks for your business and employees! Memberships begin at \$100 with additional employee wellness packages starting at \$500. A business membership is a great way for your company to support River Bend while benefitting your employees. For more information on our business membership programs contact Katy at anderegg@rbnc.org or Brad at bourn@rbnc.org or call 507-332-7151.



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 River Bend staff.

Each program accommodates groups up to 20 for a duration of one hour and thirty minutes. Programs start at \$200.



Left Photo: A family gathering around a warm fire enjoying s'mores. Rent the amphitheater for your next gathering!

Right Photo: Fat tire biking is a great way to get outdoors and stay active during the winter.

FACILITY RENTALS

Membership vouchers can be used for rental spaces to host your next meeting, company picnic, staff appreciation day, etc.

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

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

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



News & Notes

Invest in a Nature Class & Yourself

Everyone is welcome to visit the nature center and enjoy a class with our knowledgeable staff. From young kids to senior living centers, everyone can still learn something new while exploring the great outdoors. Our classes include a wide variety of topics and we're always open to suggestions. Call 507-332-7151 or email rbncinfo@rbnc.org to inquire about scheduling a class. To get a taste of what we do, join us for a one hour nature program on the 1st or 3rd Saturday of the month this fall and winter. We hope to see you soon!



River Bend Gift Shop

Buy for yourself or make it a gift! Choose from a variety of nature gifts and visit the nature center. Or, you can shop online at rbnc.org. More t-shirts in stock now!



Homeschool Programs are Back!

Sign up your kids or grandkids for a two hour outdoor educational program on the 2nd Monday of the month from 1-3 pm. You don't have to be homeschooled to join us! Come on out if you have a day off of school. You don't want to miss out on all the fun! These programs are tailored for ages 5-12. The program fee is \$10 per child. If your child is older, call us and we'll see about adding a program if we get enough interest. Visit rbnc.org for all programs October-May.



Snowshoe Rentals Available!

Come out to River Bend for a fun time and rent our snowshoes! Poles available upon request.

Member fee: \$12, Non-member fee: \$18

Additional Days: \$5/day

Snowshoes can be picked up/dropped off during open hours. Typically, M-F 8-4:00 pm, 1st/3rd Saturday of the month, 10-2 pm, but please call ahead to arrange your rental.

For pick up/drop off outside of open hours, utilize the Snowshoe locker. Pre-arrange pick up/drop off with River Bend staff and you will be provided with a locker code to collect/drop off the gear. Any gear that is not returned on time will be subject to additional charges. Gear that is returned broken or missing will be subject to replacement/repair charges. All phone calls and email requests will be responded to within 24 hours (M-F).

News & Notes

Thank You! You helped make Bats, Bones and Bonfires a great success!

Saturday was a beautiful day that drew over 650 people out to River Bend Nature Center for a day full of fun and free give-a-aways. Thank you to Shattuck St. Mary's School, Trump's Orchard, Mike Provancha, The Holman's and all the volunteers who helped work the event.

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Event Sponsors

The Putrah Foundation

Mark L. Zeller

Barton Jackson Agency LLC



New Volunteer Bulletin Coming Soon!

Are you looking for ways to give back and spend some time in nature? Starting in January be on the look out for our volunteer bulletin for opportunities to get involved at River Bend Nature Center.

If you are interested in helping out, please email Erin Tone, tone@rbnc.org.

CURRENT VOLUNTEER NEEDS

Snowshoe Luminary Volunteers, 3 Shifts

Friday, January 6 & Friday, February 3

4-6 pm - Place & light luminaries along the trail

6-8 pm - Monitor and maintain trail during event

8-9 pm - Help extinguish and collect luminaries

Ski Trail Grooming

We are looking for volunteers to learn how to help groom our 7+ miles of ski trails throughout the season using snowmobiles and grooming equipment. Volunteers will be given training and equipment to use.

Land Restoration: Buckthorn Removal

Do you like being outside? Do you want to volunteer but your schedule is variable? Do you want to help restore the land to native conditions? Come help remove buckthorn!

We are looking to assign small sections of land to consistent volunteers for buckthorn removal. Our naturalists are happy to provide training and equipment.

VOLUNTEER HOURS LOG

In 2022, **1,171.9 total hours** have been logged for volunteers. THANK YOU! If you haven't recorded, please make sure to log the hours you complete! Having these recorded helps us with reporting. Thank you for your hard work and dedication!

You can either log your hours in the binder at the Interpretive Center or email them to rbncinfo@rbnc.org.

Natural Resource Updates

By: Brittany Smith, Associate Director of Natural Resources

Winter Recreation at River Bend

Tis 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. Please remember 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

MN Ski Passes are to be purchased through MN DNR by phone, online, or at any location where MN DNR license and permits are sold. Go to <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/skiing/skipass/index.html> to get your ski pass. 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 damaging 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.

Snowshoe Rentals Available

Monday - Friday 10:00am-4:00pm

1st and 3rd Saturdays 10:00am-2:00pm

**Please call ahead if you are planning to do a rental. **

Snowshoe Rental Fees

River Bend Member fee: \$12 Non-member fee: \$18

Get a FREE Snowshoe rental with the purchase of a membership!



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

Naturalist Notebook

By: Matt Johnson, Naturalist

How Birds Survive Winter

As we find ourselves in the grip of winter, it's hard not to marvel at the resilience of our native wildlife. How can so many living things that seem so small and fragile survive such a harsh climate? The answer is that many animals have developed unique adaptations to survive during the winter. A great example can be found in our birds. It's hard to fathom how birds can deal with such cold temperatures, considering that their feathers don't seem to provide nearly enough warmth. So how do they do it?

While birds are warm-blooded, they also have the ability to regulate their body temperature in a variety of ways. Birds tend to run naturally warmer than humans, which can prove to be very beneficial during colder months. However, oddly enough, some small birds will actually lower their body temperature to conserve energy. This process is called regulated hypothermia and generally occurs overnight during periods of inactivity. Like many other animals, some birds will also add more body fat during the winter months to give themselves another layer of insulation.

Another interesting aspect of bird physiology that assists in survival, involves the heart. The general rule in nature is that smaller animals have faster heart rates, and birds are no exception. The resting heart rate of a small bird is faster than an exercising human many times over. This is made possible due to the fact that a bird's heart is oversized, helping to offset heat loss from such a relatively small body.

In an effort to make the most of their body heat, many birds can also be seen "puffing" their feathers. This technique allows for warm air to be trapped within the feathers, helping to create an added layer of protection from the cold. This practice is not all that different from how we as humans stay warm in the winter, through our use of oversized coats. The traditional use of goose down in puffer jackets can be attributed to the brilliance of birds.



Goldfinch



Cardinal

Truth be told, nature can be deceiving. Remember to never underestimate the ability of even our smallest creatures to endure. While survival may be influenced by a variety of factors, it is not accidental. Every bird we see on a frigid winter morning is a reminder of both the struggle and triumph of nature.

***Join us every 1st Saturday at 10:00am for Bagels & Birds,
Free Program!***

Story Spotlight

By: Molly Olson, Associate Director of Programs & Erin Tone, Naturalist

MNA Conference Highlights

We, Molly Olson and Erin Tone, are excited that we have been elected to the board of directors for Minnesota Naturalists' Association (MNA). The MNA is a professional association of more than 100 nature educators from parks and nature centers across Minnesota. We will work to professionalize the field of naturalists, define best practices, and work on advocacy issues related to the field.

Last month, River Bend staff attended the Minnesota Naturalist Association annual conference at Long Lake Conservation Center in Palisade, Minnesota. MNA is a non-profit organization of naturalists and other environmental educators throughout the state. During the conference, our staff attended sessions and discussions ranging from equity and inclusion in environmental education to ambassador animal care and enrichment. The conference provided staff with the opportunity to connect and collaborate with other educators around the state. Some of the highlights included a wonderful keynote presentation by Radious Guess on equity in the outdoors, an astronomy demonstration by the Minnesota Astronomical Society, multiple porcupine sightings, and River Bend winning this year's MNA best maple syrup!

Our staff was excited to receive the Minnesota Naturalist Association's (MNA) prestigious culinary award of Best Maple Syrup of 2022! River Bend won on a blind taste test against seven other nature centers at the MNA conference. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make this possible and creating such a sweet treat!

Each year at River Bend, staff and volunteers set out bags to collect maple sap, boil it down and bottle it as part of our educational programs and to sell it in our gift shop. We also serve the syrup at our annual Maple Syrup Fun Run held on the first Saturday in May. Thanks to the MNA award, we have sold out of Maple Syrup this year! Visit us next spring during Maple Syruping season to purchase your bottle of tasty sweetness. Next time you're at River Bend, stop by to check out our Golden Maple Leaf award!



Pictured Left to Right: Erin, Zach, Molly holding the Golden Maple Leaf award for Best Maple Syrup of 2022!



Story Spotlight

By: Zach McCarty, Minnesota GreenCorps Member

Educating Rice County Students

My past few months at River Bend have been both busy and exciting, especially as I've started on a new career path in environmental and sustainability education. Like the students in Rice County, I was taught about the basics of recycling in elementary school, and like them was also taught that sharing the knowledge I had was one of the best things to help our waste system work. Almost 15 years later, it's easy to think that as an adult I have more valuable things than just the basic knowledge of recycling and waste disposal to contribute to the community. But the more I've learned about and interacted with our waste systems in my new role, the more I've seen the importance of that basic education I and so many others received in elementary school.



Students learning about waste reduction

Join us Saturday, Feb 18 for a paper making class at River Bend

This all goes to say that I am eager to do my best to help others start or continue this education. Be it students, community members, or even just my friends and family, I'm excited to empower others to make small, but meaningful changes to our community. I take comfort in knowing that while waste management and recycling is a huge, daunting system, plenty can be done through small changes and basic education.

Since starting at River Bend, I've had the opportunity to tour a materials recovery facility (recycling center), take master recycler courses, and talk to a variety of experts in the waste management field. Surprisingly, all the folks in these fields emphasize that educating the general public on the basics of waste disposal will make the biggest impact moving forward, as opposed to major technological or systematic changes. Small, preventable mistakes, like not emptying recyclable containers or placing recycling in a trash bag, drastically slow down waste management systems and prevent many materials from being recycled properly. From these conversations, I saw that the recycling education that River Bend provides is valuable, not only for helping first time learners in 3rd and 4th grade, but also for adults looking to help make a change.



River Bend
NATURE CENTER

A parent/child class exploring the natural world.
For children birth-5 years old. Each week has planned educational activities and nature-play time.
Dress for the weather.
On the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, from 9:30-11 am

Little Sprouts

January 10 - Clouds, Snow, Ice
January 24 - Animal Ambassadors
February 7 - Animals in Winter
February 21 - Sounds in Nature
March 14 - Maple Trees & Sap



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PO Box 186
1000 Rustad Rd
Faribault, MN
55021
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Return Service Requested

Save the Date: Minnesota Master Naturalist Class

We are offering Prairies and Potholes late summer 2023!
Watch our website for more information. Tentative dates are July 31 - August 4.

**Full Moon Luminary
Snowshoe Hike**

January 6, 2023 Sign up today!
February 3, 2023 rbnc.org/programs



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