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River Bend NATURE CENTER

Spring 2018, Volume 38, Issue 2

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

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Director's Desk

By Breanna Wheeler, Executive Director

Chart the Future

Each season brings its own flurry of activity at River Bend and we are gearing up to celebrate 40 years and are looking forward to having you be part of it. The Kickoff of the RBNC 40th Anniversary will be at Faribault Heritage Days and there will be monthly themed activities through June 2019.

One way that you can help us chart the future of RBNC is by attending a **Community Meeting on Thursday, April 12 at 6:30 PM at the RBNC Interpretive Center**. The input received at this meeting will help set the groundwork for development of a new strategic plan which will be released as part of the 40th Anniversary. The RBNC Board is seeking your input on the following questions:

1. **What does River Bend Nature Center do well?**
2. **How can River Bend Nature Center be improved?**
3. **With limited resources, are there activities or programs that River Bend Nature Center should de-emphasize or discontinue?**
4. **Are there opportunities on the horizon that River Bend Nature Center should be preparing for?**

The meeting will have a welcome by Board President, Steve Underdahl; information on the state of RBNC by Executive Director, Breanna Wheeler, information about the strategic planning process with Board Members, Tim Madigan and Dirk Peterson and time for discussion. If you are unable to attend and want to contribute, you can contribute by speaking with a member of the Board or by filling in the form at www.rbnc.org/community-meeting

The RBNC Board of Directors and Staff are committed to the long term sustainability of River Bend Nature Center and are currently hard at work evaluating structure and implementing plans to ensure that River Bend Nature Center is here for generations to come.

To that end, in May 2018, we will change our program staffing model from the current temporary staff structure (four full time positions that begin and end twice a year with new employees) to hiring three regular (meaning ongoing/no end date) Naturalist / Program Coordinators. What brought us to this point?

1. *The expectations of the positions have increased and evolved – they are no longer internships.*
2. *With a large number of opportunities in the job market for job seekers, recruitment has been increasingly difficult at RBNC and other nature centers with the seasonal structure.*
3. *Twice a year turnover of multiple staff members (currently four) is financially and logistically unsustainable. A large portion of one full time staff member's time has been spent hiring and training new staff. The time spent hiring and training can be better spent investing in our core activities and mission.*

We are currently interviewing for these positions to begin in mid-May and will share more information as the process continues.

Meanwhile, we hope to see you at the Maple Syrup Fun Run and Pancake Brunch at River Bend on May 5 and at the Faribault Heritage Days Parade on Saturday, June 16! Thank you for your interest and commitment to the success of River Bend Nature Center.

Scholarships
Available

Registration is now open, hurry—camps are filling up

SUMMER CAMP

2018

Members
receive
discounts
on camp
registrations,
join today!

Half-Day & Whole-Day Camps For Children Ages 3 to 14

JOIN US FOR ADVENTURE AND DISCOVERY!

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Faribault, Minnesota



Maple Syrup Fun Run & Pancake Brunch

Saturday, May 5th, 2018



River Bend Nature Center

1000 Rustad Rd—PO Box 186
Faribault, MN 55021

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Abigail Barten, Environmental Educator

Augusta Grumdahl, Environmental Educator

Allison Shaw, Environmental Educator

Leah Weston, Environmental Educator

Maple Syrup Fun Run and Pancake Brunch

By Stephanie Rathsack, Volunteer/Resource Coordinator

Calling all runners and hungry folks! The Maple Syrup Fun Run and Pancake Brunch is **Saturday, May 5th**. Sign up today to run in the **50k, 25k, 10k, or 5k**. You can also register for a **One-Mile Walk**. Registration includes a bib and race t-shirt. Regardless of the registration time, all runners receive free admission to the Pancake Brunch. If you can't be here on May 5th, no worries! You can register to be a **Remote Runner** and receive a t-shirt after the race has ended. We also have a **Couch Potato** option where you don't have to run and receive a t-shirt after the race. (All event participants are guaranteed a t-shirt only if registered before 4pm on Friday, April 20, 2018!)

After the run, we have a Pancake Brunch with beverages, hot pancakes, sausage links and real River Bend maple syrup. All runners get free admission to the brunch after they complete the race. Brunch is available to the public for \$7 per person (\$5 for River Bend Members).

Register online for the Maple Syrup Fun Run and the Pancake Brunch on our website. Walk-in registration will be available the day of the event.

You can also find maps of the race routes and a schedule for the day at: www.rbnc.org/fun-run

Hurry, pre-registration prices go up April 20, 2018!



Race Entry Fees	50K Run	25K Run	10K Run	5K Run	1 Mile
Pre-registration	\$65	\$50	\$40	\$35	\$30
Race Day Registration	\$70	\$55	\$45	\$40	\$35

Tales of the Trails

With Jason Pecore, Land & Facility Assistant

A Pileated Woodpecker, a cry of the Blue jay, a flock of Robins, Red-Winged Blackbirds, and the "Springs here" whistle of the Chickadee are the sounds and sights just outside of the Interpretive Center.

As the days get longer and the warming of the sun melts the snow from the roof, icicles form as each drip is a reminder it is spring time and winter has released its icy grip. Now is a great time to get out on the trails to see and hear so many birds and other wildlife as they move in for the summer.

Plan a family picnic, send the kids to Summer Camp, or come to OWLS to learn more about the great natural world that surrounds us. There is a big world out there and a lot to explore and discover, come join the staff at River Bend to learn more about how to appreciate the natural world around us.



Red Winged Blackbird

Thank you Volunteers!

We really appreciate all of the volunteers that help and support us in various ways. Together, we are able to grow and improve River Bend Nature Center.

Check out the upcoming volunteer opportunities

Contact Stephanie Rathsack at programs@rbnc.org for more information.

Heritage Days Parade – As part of our plan to celebrate our 40th anniversary, River Bend Nature Center will be participating in the Faribault Heritage Days Parade. We are looking for creative and dedicated volunteers to help plan and build a float, as well as volunteers to be in the parade itself on June 16th.

Volunteer Naturalist – We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to fill our team of volunteer naturalists (VolNats) for our upcoming spring school programs! Share your love of the outdoors and insights with students by leading hikes, catching pond critters, and more while also expanding your own knowledge. Prior experience is not necessary; all training is provided for each offered program. Volunteers must be 16 years of age or older, and must also pass a background check.

Summer Camp Assistant- River Bend offers camps for children in Pre-K through 8th grade all summer long. Weekly session themes vary from outdoor adventures (rock climbing, canoeing, etc.) to nocturnal animals, water games, insects, science, and more. Youth volunteers attend trainings before assisting with age-appropriate camps by helping lead activities, set-up, and more. Volunteers must be between the ages of 11 and 17. (Camps require a minimum of 12 hours of service/camp week)



Holly Larry Monica Pat Glenn

Building Host – Be the face of River Bend! We need your help to keep the interpretive center open by running our front desk. Volunteers are trained in greeting visitors and answering phone calls. Available shifts include weekends/ weekdays with timeslots of 2-8 hours available. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older, and must also pass a background check.

Trail Docent- Be an active presence on River Bend's trails and provide information to trail users, answer questions, and promote River Bend programming and memberships. Volunteers may also work at a provided table with artifacts, leaflets, or other talking points. Must be 18 years of age or older.

Program Leader – River Bend has been host to countless programs over the years, and we are looking for volunteers to plan/ lead programs that would be presented to the general public. Past topics have covered anything from backyard astronomy to fossil hunting to river ecology. Program Leaders will discuss their ideas with River Bend staff and will work together to create a program that is fun and engaging.

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Thank you MSAB!

Taking care of River Bend's resident Animal Ambassadors is a lot of work, and no one knows this better than our student volunteers from the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB). These dedicated individuals come in multiple times a week to feed and care for the animals that call River Bend home. Thank you so much to our amazing animal care volunteers from MSAB! Your hard work and passion for the animals you care for is deeply appreciated and greatly admired!



Generosity Spotlight

Thank you to all members and donors whose generous support helps River Bend in its mission to help people discover, enjoy, understand, and preserve the incredible natural world that surrounds us.

Thank you Members—We would not be here without you!

Members and donors are important to River Bend Nature Center because River Bend is not a city park and does not receive any regular government funding through taxes. This year marks the 40th Anniversary of River Bend and as a commemoration, in this issue we had the opportunity to interview a couple of our members and this is what they said about being a member and their involvement with River Bend. Please become a member or encourage someone you know to join today at www.rbnc.org

Introducing Betty Mealey, a long time member of River Bend.

RB: What is your favorite memory of River Bend?

Betty: I do remember when they first starting talking about opening a Nature Center there. My husband, Hudson “Hockey” Mealey, and I were against it at first. We were concerned with what kind of people it would attract and bring in. We lived right next to the South side of the land and our concern was that people would be roaming around in the woods. You know that was during the “hippy times”. But, River Bend came in and we were so glad they did. We became good friends with our neighbors to the North. In fact, my husband “Hockey” would go down to River Bend after work and be there all the rest of the day.

I really enjoyed working at the different events River Bend had. I helped with the pancake brunch, setting everything up and serving pancakes. It was a lot of fun talking to people. I also really liked hiking in the woods, there was always something new to see.

RB: Why is River Bend important to you now?

Betty: It is so close to the community and is a great location.

RB: Why do you think others should be involved with River Bend?

Betty: Faribault should be proud of what they have in their backyard. People should be members of River Bend because a lot of people are using it so they should support it and get involved.

RB: Anything else you would like to add?

Betty: Well, I think you guys are doing a great job and keep up the good work. You have come a long way.

Introducing Anne DeMuth, memories from when she was a young lady in High School.

RB: What is your favorite memory of River Bend?

Anne: We lived in Faribault when I was in High School and after school we would go to, what was then, the Faribault Regional Center. We would walk around the woods. It was for our 50th Class Reunion, that Sue Carlson organized the reunion for our class and we had it at River Bend Nature Center. It was really great to have it there and come back home to the area and I realized that I missed it.


RB: Why is River Bend important to you now?

Anne: My parents remained in Faribault even though I had moved away. They spent a lot of time at River Bend helping at the different events and things going on there. My mom was a born naturalist. She loved the outdoors and started her first phenology bird book around the age of 5 years old. My sister and her husband also support River Bend and it is important to our whole family.

RB: Why do you think others should be involved with River Bend Nature Center?

Anne: People should know about the world they live in. I would ask people to support programs that teach children about the natural world around us. That is the most important thing is to teach the children about nature and how to preserve the natural world that is all around us. That is what the staff at River Bend does, keep up the good work.

Thank you Betty and Anne for your comments and sharing your memories of River Bend with us. It was a joy talking with you.



River Bend
NATURE CENTER

Pack Your Leash and Poop Bags!

By Allison Shaw, Environmental Educator



River Bend Nature Center welcomes you and your canine companions to enjoy its 743 acres and 10 miles of trails, which are open daily from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm. We know that all of the sights, sounds, and smells of nature can be very exciting for your pet to explore. **How-**

ever, River Bend’s regulations require that you must have your pet on a leash not more than six feet in length or a retractable leash not longer than 20 feet at all times. The regulations also state that you must not intentionally or carelessly leave behind your pet’s waste. These rules are in effect to ensure the safety of other visitors, your pet’s safety, and the safety of the wildlife and vegetation at the nature center.

Keeping your pet appropriately tethered and in control at all times helps keep other visitors to the nature center safe. In addition to other public visitors, River Bend has many students visiting on field trips during the school year and for camps in the summertime. Unleashed dogs are responsible for two-thirds of dog bites that occur across the nation on an annual basis. Even if you don’t believe your pet to be a danger to others, many adults and children have some degree of cynophobia, or fear of dogs. Allowing others the ability to avoid an encounter with your pet by keeping your pet on a leash shows others respect. Cleaning up after your pet also shows respect to the students and visitors trying to enjoy the nature center.

Using a leash also allows you to keep an eye on your pet to make sure that it stays safe from harm. Letting your pet run loose increases its risk of getting bitten by another dog, even one on a leash. It puts your pet at risk of drowning or getting lost. There are also native or invasive plants which your loose pet could consume without your knowledge that could be poisonous in large amounts, including Bittersweet Nightshade (*S. dulcamara*) and Creeping Charlie (*G. hederacea*). A pet running through long grass will also pick up more ticks, which may carry Lyme disease, than a pet kept on a leash on the trails.

While the nature center’s environment poses certain risks to your pet, your pet also poses risks to the environment at the nature center as well. Your pet may frighten, harm, or even kill wildlife including birds and small mammals. Your pet’s waste may be just as harmful. As of 1991, the EPA categorizes dog waste as a non-source point pollutant, which puts it in the same category as herbicides and insecticides. By not picking up after your pet, their waste pollutes the ponds and river at River Bend. Wild animals spread plant’s seeds in their waste from the fruit they consume, which is a benefit your pet’s waste does not provide. Wild animals are consuming nutrients from the ecosystem, and then promptly returning those same nutrients. When we start adding in nutrients from pet waste, the ecosystem balance is thrown out of equilibrium. You may not think that leaving your pet’s waste just one time will have an effect, but it is the cumulative effect you need to have in mind when visiting with your pet.

Keeping your pet on a leash helps protect other visitors, your own pet, and the nature that you and others come to River Bend to enjoy. We love seeing your pets on trails, and even in the Interpretive Center with permission—on their leashes, of course!

Registration is now open, hurry camps are filling up



Half-Day & Whole-Day Camps For Children Ages 3 to 14

JOIN US FOR ADVENTURE AND DISCOVERY!



By Stephanie Rath sack,
Volunteer/Resource Coordinator

Looking for something fun for the kids or grandkids this summer? Look no further than River Bend Nature Center!

Throughout June, July, and August, River Bend offers a variety of half and full day camps for youth entering preschool through 8th grade. Each River Bend Summer Camp offers a unique experience based on the age range and topic being focused on. Topics this year include **“Creepy Crawlies”**, **“Time Rovers”**, **“Outdoor Survival”**, and much more. Popular as always are our **“Adventure is Out There”** camps which this year are split into three sessions that give participants a chance to “choose their own adventure” with both on and offsite options available. Also new to our camp line-up this year is a **Counselors-in-Training** camp for 6th-8th graders where participants will learn leadership skills and how to work in a camp setting. Our summer camps offer a range of activities from exploring nature to rock climbing. Each camp is directed by experienced educators and naturalists with hands-on activities designed to help your child learn about and appreciate nature while having fun! Camps are grouped by age, activity, and generally take place Monday - Thursday. Every River Bend Summer Camp provides a daily snack and a multitude of fun and exciting games and activities.

For more information or to register, visit the Interpretive Center to pick up a 2018 summer camp brochure or visit our website at www.rbnc.org/summer-camp.



News & Notes

River Bend Rapids -

Have you seen the River Bend Rapids? This is a monthly e-mail that is sent around the beginning of the month. To keep up with all the goings-on of RBNC, please give us a call to add your email address to your account so that you can receive these. Not an email user? Call us and let us know at 507-332-7151 and we can print updates for you to pick up at the Interpretive Center.

Have an interest or talent you'd like to share?

We want to hear from you and explore how to turn your interest/talent/hobby into a meaningful, purposeful volunteer activity that benefits both you and River Bend Nature Center. Call us at 507-332-7151 or email programs@rbnc.org. Thank you!

Restoration club on Saturdays

We had several people express interest in helping with Restoration on Saturdays—your wish to help with our needs is granted! Restoration Club will now be on Saturdays, here are the dates:
April 14th, 2:00—4:00 pm
May 12th, 2:00—4:00 pm
June 9th, 2:00—4:00 pm
July 14th, 2:00—4:00 pm
Thank you for your interest in Restoring and conserving natural habitat.

Calling All Volunteers!

Heritage Day Parade is just around the corner and to kick-off our 40th Anniversary we want all walks-of-life to join in. Wave to your friends and family, pass out River Bend flyers, and **walk in a parade on June 16th**. Please call us now to sign up as a volunteer parade participant. Call us at 507-332-7151 or email programs@rbnc.org.

River Bend is also presenting a float in the parade. **Float builders** are needed now to help *design* and *construct* the Heritage Day Parade float. Call us at 507-332-7151 or email programs@rbnc.org.

OWLS Lunch & Learn for adults of all ages

Third Wednesday, 12—2 pm
April 18th—Bio-economy
May 16th—Prairie Restoration
June 20th—Story Tellers for Policy
July 18th—From a Tractor's Seat

Do you have a flexible lunch schedule? Join River Bend for lunch and learn something about a natural history topic. To get on our OWLS emailing contact list, please call or email RBNC. OWLS lunch is \$10 for member, \$12 for nonmember.



Phenology Update

January: Turtle Pond completely frozen
Frequent sun dogs
Red fox spotted on Rustad
Whitetail deer bucks forming large social groups
Large crow roost on Dairy Lane
Swans flying over River Bend
Blizzard with 17+ inches of snow
Robins returning
February: Pileated woodpeckers heard/sighted
Mallard ducks on the river
Freezing rain
Beautiful crescent moon
Chickadees singing their "Spring's here!" call
March: Maple sap flowing



What to expect in April/May/June:

With Spring here, River Bend comes alive with House Wrens, Gray Catbirds, and Spring ephemerals. Look for the rare Minnesota Dwarf Trout Lily to begin

to bloom in late April early May. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Towhee, Killdeer, and Wood Ducks arrive. Showy Lady Slipper and Purple Lilacs bloom. Also seen in April and May are the Northern Baltimore Oriole, Brown Thrasher and the Purple Martin. Frogs begin to chirp and the Spiny Soft-Shell Turtles emerge from their frozen hibernation.

As you explore River Bend, stop into the Interpretive Center and let us know what you see.

- **Reusable water bottles**
- High heat large hot glue gun
- Super glue
- Shipping tape
- **Batteries—any size**
- Pelts
- Rolling projector cart
- **Safety pins**
- Kids waxless skis and boots
- Postage Stamps
- Kids snow pants, boots & socks
- Paracord

River Bend Wish List

Often times we have people asking if we need different items that they are willing to part with. First, thank you for thinking of River Bend for these items, it is greatly appreciated. We thought it might be helpful to let everyone know what is needed. So, please see the list to the right and if there is something that you can help us out with, we can put it to good use.

If you have something that is not on this list, give us a call and we can let you know if it is something we are able to use.

Phone number:
(507) 332-7151

Or email:
rbncinfo@rbnc.org

Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness.

Naturalist Notebook

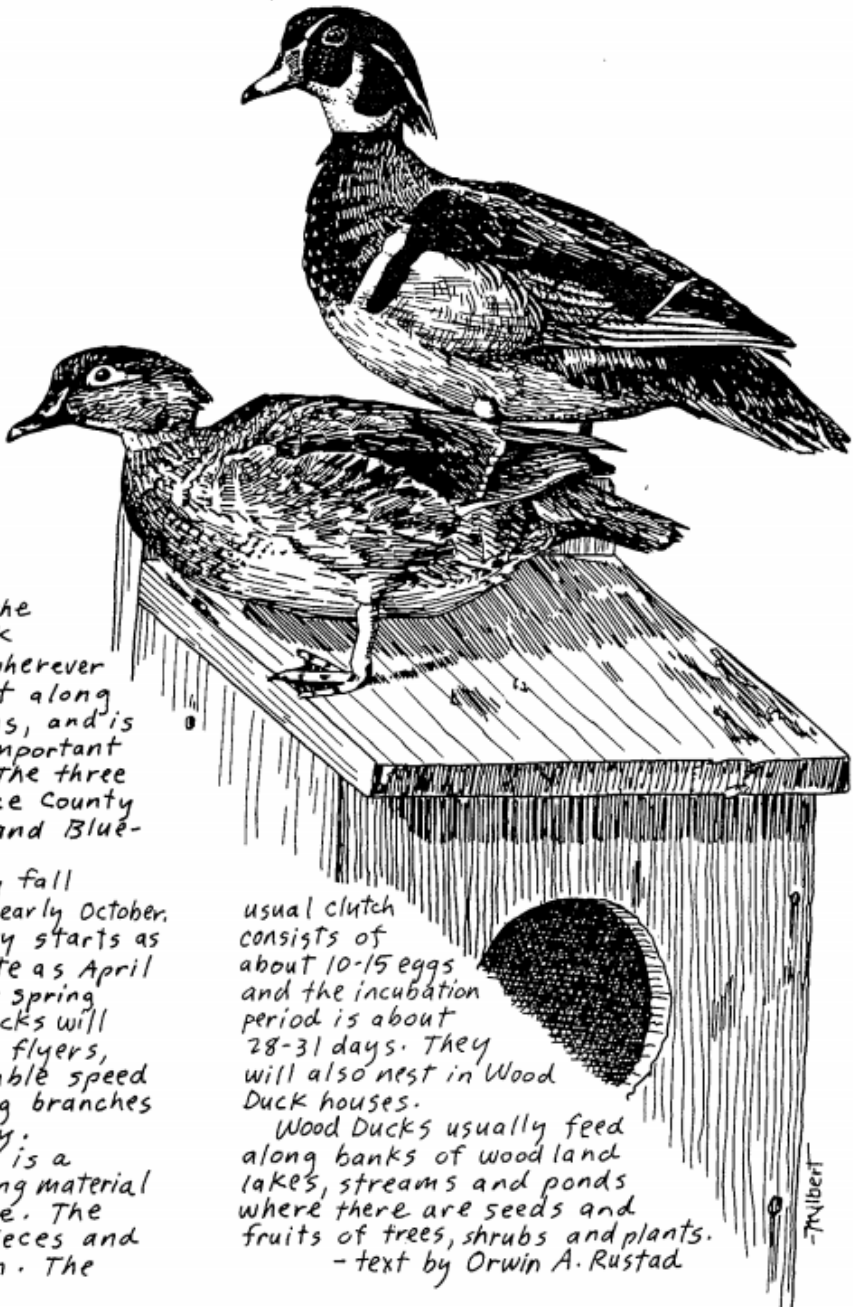
Text by Augusta Grumdahl, Environmental Educator

River Bend Nature Center is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. We decided to have a blast from the past with this Naturalist Notebook. This Naturalist Notebook was written by Orwin A. Rustad for the summer of 1985 newsletter. Orwin A. Rustad was one of the earliest founders of River Bend Nature Center.

Former Vice President of the Nature Center's first board of directors, Kay Janky, had this to say about Rustad: "Orwin's dream, his influence, his knowledge, his perseverance, his foresight, his unswerving devotion to the dream of a Nature Center kept us going."

Below Text by Orwin A. Rustad

WOOD DUCK



The male Wood Duck in spring plumage is considered the most beautiful duck in the world. It is found only in North America and its breeding range is confined to the United States. The Wood Duck nests throughout the state wherever there is ideal wooded habitat along lake shores, rivers and streams, and is considered one of the more important nesting ducks in Minnesota. The three common ducks nesting in Rice County are the Wood Duck, Mallard, and Blue-winged Teal.

The Wood Duck is an early fall migrant leaving Minnesota in early October. Spring migration in Rice County starts as early as March 5th to as late as April 22nd. The 21 year average for spring arrival is April 5th. Wood Ducks will perch in trees, and are good flyers, being seen flying at considerable speed through forest areas dodging branches and trunks with great agility.

The preferred nesting site is a natural tree cavity. No nesting material is carried into the hollow tree. The nest is made among wood pieces and bark and is lined with down. The

usual clutch consists of about 10-15 eggs and the incubation period is about 28-31 days. They will also nest in Wood Duck houses. Wood Ducks usually feed along banks of wood land lakes, streams and ponds where there are seeds and fruits of trees, shrubs and plants.
-text by Orwin A. Rustad