



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge



Winter Calendar of Events

December, January, February

2014-2015

Winter Festival set for Tuesday, December 30

Trumpeter Swan, photo Mike Sweet



The cold snow creaks under your snowshoes, and a lone chickadee calls out its “dee-dee-dee” warning as you hike past. The only other sounds you hear are the creak of tree branches swaying in the wind. It is quiet! Deep snow absorbs sound and traffic noise is non-existent. Down below the bluff it is only you, a bald eagle, a lone coyote, and nothing else.

Winter in the refuge is similar to hiking in the wilderness in other parts of the country. There are few people braving the cold and those that do are far from the trails, off on their own adventures. Wild animals are much easier to spot and track in the winter. Visitors will often see more wildlife out in the winter than during any other season. The silence and solitude of the river bottoms in winter can be awe-inspiring, peaceful, and refreshing more than at any other time of year.

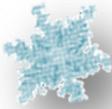


Traditional Snowshoes, photo Julie Prairie

Please join us on Tuesday, December 30 for a day of winter fun! We will have outdoor activities such as snowshoeing, photography, and bird hikes. Indoor activities will include books by the fireplace and kid-friendly nature cartoons.

See page 6 for the schedule.

December



5 Making Tracks! Healthy Hikes

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center
9:00 am-12:00 pm

23 Beginner Snowshoeing for

Families
Bloomington Education and Visitor Center
1:00 pm-3:00 pm

6 Bird Watching Trek

Wilkie Unit
8:00 am-10:00 am

30 Winter Festival

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center
9:00 am-4:00 pm

6 Go Outside and Play!

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center
10:30 am-11:30 am

7 Bird Language

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center
9:00 am-1:00 pm

7 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

8 Bird Watching Trek

Wilkie Unit
8:00 am-10:00 am

Winter Hours

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center
November 1 through March 31

Monday-Friday, 9 am-4 pm and open every first full weekend of the month:

November 1 and 2
December 6 and 7
January 3 and 4
February 7 and 8
March 7 and 8

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center
Year-round
Tuesday-Friday, 9 am-4 pm

Connect with the Refuge

<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesotavalley>

<http://www.facebook.com/MNValleyNWR>

<http://twitter.com/usfwsmnvalley#>

January

2 Off the Beaten Path Snowshoe

Trek

Louisville Swamp
9:00 am-12:00 pm

3 Winter Photography Lecture &

Hike

Bloomington Education and Visitor
Center
9:30 am-12:00 pm

4 Bird Language

Bloomington Education and Visitor
Center
9:00 am-1:00 pm

4 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Education and Visitor
Center
3:00 pm-4:00 pm

10 Bird Watching Trek

Wilkie Unit
8:00 am-10:00 am

10 Environmental Education

Cohort

Bloomington Education and Visitor
Center
9:30 am-12:00 pm
****See page 10 for details****

10 Refuge Partner Teacher

Orientation

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor
Center
11:00 am-12:00 pm
****See page 9 for details****

10 Refuge Partner Teacher

Winter Training

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor
Center
12:30 pm-3:30 pm
****See page 9 for details****

13 Refuge Partner Teacher

Orientation

Bloomington Education and Visitor
Center
4:00 pm-5:00 pm
****See page 11 for details****

14 Refuge Partner Teacher

Winter Training

Bloomington Education and Visitor
Center
4:00 pm-7:00 pm
****See page 11 for details****

19 Bird Watching Trek

Wilkie Unit
8:00 am-10:00 am

February



7 Environmental Education

Cohort

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center

9:30 am-12:00 pm

See page 10 for details

7 Winter Photo Hike

Bloomington Ferry Unit

7:00 am-9:00 am

8 Bird Language

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center

9:00 am-1:00 pm

8 Call of the Wild Film Fest

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center

3:00 pm-4:00 pm



Program Descriptions

Beginner Snowshoeing for Families

Discover a fun new way to explore outside in winter! We will learn a bit about snowshoes, then strap them on and wind our way down into the river valley, looking for animal tracks as we go. Recommended for families with children ages 8 and up. Snowshoes are provided at no cost.

Mara Koenig, Park Ranger

Bird Language

Join us as we gather on the slopes of the Minnesota River Valley to explore what the birds are telling us about our surroundings. We will split the time between the classroom and outdoors. Bring a notebook, pencils, and something to sit on outdoors. To register visit:

<http://www.mntracking.org/>

Donnie Phyllaier, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist

Bird Watching Trek

Join in on a winter bird walk. The open water at Blue Lake has Trumpeter Swans, geese, and many species of ducks on it. Other birds over-wintering here include Bald Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks, and Northern Shrikes. Bring your binoculars, field guide, and dress for the weather.

Craig Mandel, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist



Call of the Wild Film Fest

Join us monthly for films featuring our favorite wildlife and their unique behaviors, habitat needs, and special adaptations. Discover how a variety of community partners work together to monitor and protect natural resources and manage habitat for humans and wildlife. Recommended for all ages.

December 7: Crane Song

January 4: Chasing Ice

February 8: Animals Behaving Badly

Environmental Education Cohort

You are invited to join a dedicated group of educators focused on integrating and embedding Environmental Education and outdoor learning into every day instruction. See page 10 for details. Free! Registration required;

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EECohort2014-15>



Did you know?

Snowshoes are available to borrow from both Bloomington and Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Centers! We have sizes available for school age children up to adult. There must be at least 6" of snow on the ground to use snowshoes.

Go Outside and Play!

The Twin Cities is home to hundreds of species of wildlife, thousands of acres of public lands, and millions of people. Discover how you can enjoy our diverse natural areas and learn about the history behind them. You'll get tips on appropriate activities in sensitive habitat and how to access natural areas using mass transit. We will also share some of our favorite spots for quick escapes from the city.



Judy Geck, Park Ranger

Making Tracks! Healthy Hike

Explore the floodplain forest and observe signs and sounds of year-round residents of the Minnesota River Valley. This 8 mile hike will take us through Long Meadow Lake and cross the river to Gun Club Lake, exploring some of the valley's best habitat. Come prepared for brisk walking with frequent stops.

Judy Geck, Park Ranger





Off the Beaten Path Snowshoe Trek

For endless opportunities to discover nature in its seasonal splendor, the national wildlife refuges are unsurpassed. Explore the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in one of its finest seasons and sense the pulse of winter wildlife. Observe signs and sounds of the year-round residents of Louisville Swamp while burning calories on this 5 mile snowshoe discovery hike. Contact Judy at 952-858-0731 to reserve snowshoes.

Judy Geck, Park Ranger

Cut this out for a handy reminder!



Winter Fun Day

Celebrate the season during winter break!

Family-friendly activities are tailored to introduce you and your family to a whole new way of enjoying winter. Inside, cozy up to the fireplace and enjoy reading winter books and watching fun nature cartoons. Outside, join in on a scheduled program designed to get you moving and enjoying winter! No registration required; snowshoes are provided at no cost. For outdoor activities, wear winter clothing in layers, including waterproof pants and boots.



Winter Fun Day Schedule of Events

*Tuesday, December 30, Bloomington Education and Visitor Center
3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington*

Indoor Activities

9:00 am-10:30 am: Bee Movie (PG)

10:45 am-12:15 pm: Over the Hedge (PG)

1:00 pm-2:30 pm: The Lorax (PG)

Continuous: Books by the fireplace

Outdoor Activities

9:00 am-10:00 am: Snowshoe Family Hike

10:15 am-11:15 am: Winter Bird Hike

11:30 am-12:30 pm: Snowshoe Games

1:00 pm-2:00 pm: Snowshoe Family Hike

1:00 pm-2:30 pm: Beginner Photography for Kids (12 and under and their families)

1:00 pm-2:30 pm: Beginner Photography for Teens (13 +) and Adults

3:00 pm-4:00 pm: Snowshoe Trek for Teens (13+) and Adults

Winter Photo Hike

Come explore and photograph the Bloomington Ferry Unit of the refuge. We will explore the area around Rice Lake taking advantage of the early morning light. Our hike will begin during civil twilight. The cool blue light during twilight provides additional interest to winter scenes. We will have an opportunity to capture the sunrise from the pedestrian bridge.

We will have a brief discussion of winter shooting techniques and then quickly head out on the trail in order to take advantage of the early morning light. Civil Twilight is set to begin at 7:02, and sunrise is at 7:33.

Don Tredinnick and Peter Berman,
Volunteer Refuge Naturalists



Trailhead Addresses

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center

3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington
Phone: 952-854-5900

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center

15865 Rapids Lake Road, Carver
Phone: 952-361-4500

Old Cedar Avenue:

9500 Old Cedar Ave S, Bloomington

Bloomington Ferry Unit:

11255 Bloomington Ferry Road, Bloomington

Winter Photography Lecture & Hike

Taking photos in the winter can be a real challenge. Our cameras like to make the snow look a dingy grey, and all of the people in the shots come out very dark. Despite all of this, winter offers some amazing benefits to photographers. We can access areas that normally are inaccessible. In addition, with proper preparation we can capture some amazing images.

During this session, we will cover:

1. How to set your camera for winter shooting.
2. Winter shooting techniques.
3. Winter shooting locations.
4. How to stay warm.
5. How to protect your gear.

After the lecture, we will go out and practice along the trails at the refuge.

Don Tredinnick and Peter Berman,
Volunteer Refuge Naturalists

Bass Ponds:

2501 East 86th St,
Bloomington

Louisville Swamp:

3801 145th St W,
Shakopee

Wilkie Unit:

7701 County Road 101
E, Shakopee

Chaska Unit:

Riverside Park:
300 Main St. East,
Carver

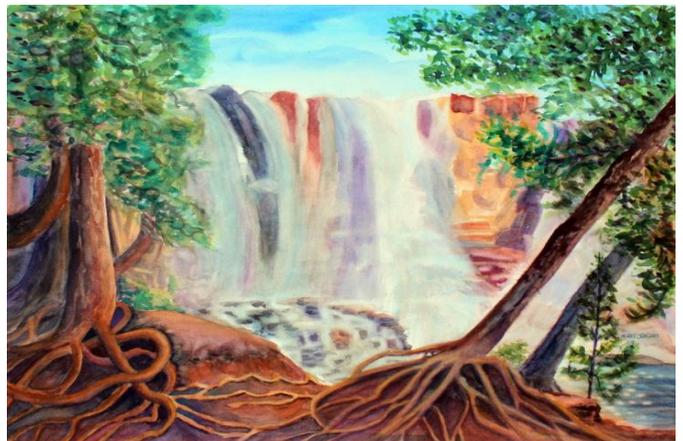


Now Showing in the Art Gallery

“Breath of the North Shore” by Mary Axelson opens November 10 and runs through December 31.

The power, beauty and enduring quality of the North Shore is very inspiring to Mary. Through many visits over the years and using different media, she has created artwork that describes different moods and elements of this diverse area. The media Mary chose to use for this exhibit include watercolor, photography and mixed media.

In Mary’s paintings light is captured and glows across the color spectrum as natural forms emerge from the paper fibers. Organic pigments reform to evoke pulsing emotions from cold fibers. She hungers to distill human emotions and experience and transport it across time and space onto paper through line, color and light. Mary’s destination is not always known until it has been reached in the completed painting.



Gooseberry Mist by Mary Axelson

Mary hopes you enjoy this visit to the beautiful and rugged North Shore through her artwork.

Partner Teachers, Save the Date!!!

Are you interested in becoming a Partner Teacher or continuing in the program for a new season? Would you like to be able to take your class on a **free** field trip to Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)? Imagine having your classroom set up for you in advance of your field trip. Interested? Here's how!

What is the Partner Teacher program?

This program is an integrative partnership between teachers and the MN Valley NWR where your class will come to the refuge for a field trip to learn through nature-based curriculum that meets MN State Standards of Education. Classes may come for up to 3 field trips throughout the fall, winter, and spring season. There are no student fees and bus invoices are paid for through Refuge Friends, Inc.

Saturday, January 10th: Winter Training

****RSVP no later than January 5th****

Saturday, March 7th: Spring Training

****RSVP no later than March 2nd****

11:00 am-12:00 pm: Orientation to the Refuge

This portion of training is for new Partner Teachers only. Become a Partner Teacher, learn about the resources available to your class (microscopes, binoculars, etc.) and explore our indoor and outdoor classrooms. Please bring a bagged lunch!

12:30 pm-3:30 pm: Winter Training / Spring Training

This training is for everyone! In this portion of the training, the Partner Teacher Coordinator will model three highlighted curricula for your future field trip. Snacks will be provided.



To **RSVP**, contact Chelsi Burns, the Partner Teacher Coordinator by the above RSVP dates:

☎ 952-361-4511

✉ chelsi_hornbaker@fws.gov

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor
Center

15865 Rapids Lake Road
Carver, MN 55315



Environmental Education Cohort

Sponsored by the Jeffers Foundation and
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



You are invited to join a dedicated group of educators focused on integrating and embedding Environmental Education and Outdoor Instruction into every day instruction.

Join us for one Saturday or for the entire series! Come prepared to spend a bit of time outdoors at each session, and be sure to bring your Jeffers journal each time! *Note: Those who attend at least 3 sessions are eligible to receive a classroom set of Jeffers Journals for your students.*

Saturday, Sept. 6, 2014*

*EE as part of the Responsive Classroom
(participants receive a set of EcoTime Cards
and CD)*

**A special Family Archery Program is
scheduled right after our EE Cohort session
from 12:30 – 2:30.*

Saturday, Oct. 4, 2014

*Teaching with Trees
(participants receive a dichotomous tree key, a
forest primer and tree poster)*

Saturday, Nov. 1, 2014

The Natural Connection of Art and Nature

Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014

Session Break – Happy Holidays!

Saturday, Jan. 10, 2014*

Reading your Winter Landscape

**Please bring an old white sheet to this session
for optional track printing for your classroom
after our meeting.)*

Session Topics to be determined by the EE Cohort for the following dates:

Saturdays: Feb. 7, March 7, April 4 and May 2, 2015

Teachers of I.S.D 112 are eligible to attend for pay through their school district.

CEU Credits available to all participants upon request.

All Sessions, unless noted otherwise, meet from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Please visit http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Minnesota_Valley/ for directions to the Visitor Center.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. To register, go to
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EECohort2014-15>.
Call Suzanne Trapp at (952) 361-4502 for more information.



MINNESOTA VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Your Outdoor Classroom!



Refuge Partner Teacher Program for the Bloomington Education & Visitor Center

- ▶ Integrative partnership between individual teachers and the Refuge
- ▶ Personalized field trip plans
- ▶ Up to 3 field trips per school year
- ▶ Training provided

Busing Scholarships

Outdoor Experiences

Standard Based Curriculum

All Seasons

Field Equipment

Multi-disciplinary



Requirements:

Attend at least one orientation session to participate in the **Program**. Next, attend a seasonal workshop to bring your class to the Refuge during that season. Offered 3 times each year, these workshops highlight curriculum, teaching materials and equipment for the season. After that, attend only one additional refuge training every 3 years to continue in the **Program**.

2014-2015 Workshops

- 9/16/14 4-5 pm Refuge Orientation
- 9/17/14 4-7 pm Fall Curriculum
- 1/13/15 4-5 pm Refuge Orientation
- 1/14/15 4-7 pm Winter Curriculum
- 4/6/15 4-5 pm Refuge Orientation
- 4/7/15 4-7 pm Spring Curriculum

Registration must be received 5 days prior to each workshop.

Register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2014-15PTBEVC> or Mara Koenig, mara_koenig@fws.gov 952/858-0710.





*Muskrat Snow Cones,
photo Scott Sharkey*

Minnesota Valley
National Wildlife Refuge
3815 American Blvd E
Bloomington, MN 55425