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The St. Croix Current

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Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center

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www.CarpenterNatureCenter.org

"The mission of Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center is fostering a lifelong appreciation of the natural world through environmental education, habitat conservation, and outdoor experiences."

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Field Notes By Jen Vieth

"The secret to life is enjoying the passage of time." - James Taylor

That I chose that quote will date me, as will this next statement: I remember celebrating Carpenter Nature Center's 25th anniversary. I had recently joined the staff, and we marked the occasion with cart tours and cake. Thinking ahead to CNC's 40th anniversary, nobody would have predicted celebrating this milestone during a global pandemic. Looking back, it's been an amazing journey so far. Since the first programs held in August of 1981, you have helped CNC conserve 725-acres of diverse habitat in the St. Croix Valley, teach thousands of preK-12 environmental education programs, host hundreds of events including Apple Festivals and Raptor Releases, and provide public programs for visitors of all ages. Most of all, you helped make memories, change lives, and inspire others.

As we begin 2021, a new year with fresh hopes and dreams, we are celebrating a second major milestone that some worried might not occur during their lifetime. Thirty years ago, Dan & Jean Greenwald worked with Al & Laurie Hein and CNC's Board of Directors, to protect what would become the heart of CNC's Wisconsin Campus. Mayme Johnson, CNC's program director, remembers teaching the first programs in the old Hein garage shortly after the land was gifted to CNC. Through the years, the Wisconsin Campus grew to include a rustic and well-used trail system. Additional acreage was added to the property. Crop fields were replaced with prairies that now are home to nesting state-threatened bird species. Yet there was always the dream of adding some basic amenities for teachers and parents who wanted to share this beautiful natural area with youngsters. Simple needs: a warm teaching room, running water and flush toilets.

This spring, after decades of research, planning, and fundraising, CNC will break ground on this long-awaited project. The building will fulfill those basic visitor needs, but the project scope includes additional opportunities for visitors and nature enthusiasts to explore and appreciate Wisconsin's beautiful natural habitat. There will be council rings, trail system updates, Oak Savannah and Forest habitat restoration, and even a small picnic pavilion. The eco-friendly building will host a classroom, a family nature-watching space, interpretive exhibits, plus indoor and outdoor community gathering spaces. It will be a starting point for visitors as they access CNC's ten-mile nature trail. It will be the launching point for visitors, new to our region, as they embark on a nature-fueled journey through the beautiful Wild and Scenic St. Croix River Valley.

CNC's first 40 years were filled with adventures, special moments in time, and milestones.

I welcome you to join us as we embark on the next 40 years of CNC's history, connecting people of all ages to our amazing natural resources, inspiring conservation, and enjoying the passage of time.



Artistic rendering developed by project architects, Miller Dunwiddie (above).

For detailed information about the Wisconsin Campus Expansion Project and to donate, scan the QR code (right) or visit <https://carpenternaturecenter.org/learn-about-cnc/wisconsin/>





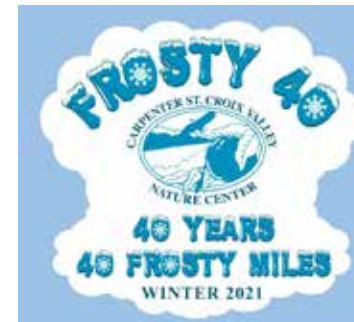
Top Left: “Grow. Share. Preserve.” Capital Campaign branding developed and donated by Christiansen Creative. **Middle Left:** Visitor Center designed by architects Miller Dunwiddie and built by local contractor Stotko Speedling. Building exterior will combine elements of natural wood, stone, and earth-toned steel. Andersen Windows and Doors will be another building partner. **Middle Right:** Interior spaces will include nature themed exhibits, a family room for gathering, a large community space, and a separate classroom. **Bottom Left:** The Visitor Center will be nestled in the remnants of the old pine plantation on the southernmost section of the property. Management of this previously unhealthy habitat has been an ongoing project. Site work began in October with services donated by SavATree and Zappa Construction, Inc. **Bottom Right:** Site will include paved driveway and parking, outdoor gathering spaces, wildlife viewing areas. Bailey Nurseries will be a partner in the native landscaping process. **Insert Bottom Left:** For detailed information about this project, scan the QR or visit <https://carpenternaturecenter.org/learn-about-cnc/wisconsin/>.

“After 2020, we all have realized how much we value time outdoors for our physical and mental health. CNC’s new facility will provide a much-needed starting point for visitors of all ages to explore our natural world for years to come. As always, while there is much to celebrate, there is still much work to do. We have raised 71% of the funds needed for the project through individual gifts, foundation and corporation grants, pledges, and in-kind donations. We still need to raise approximately \$1,000,000. If you want to be part of this project, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, or any of our Board Members. We’d be happy to help you be part of CNC’s next forty years of history making.” - CNC Executive Director Jennifer Vieth

Programs & Activities

At Carpenter Nature Center, the safety of our visitors is of the utmost importance. We are continuing to monitor the spread of COVID-19, and are making decisions about operations and programming based on recommendations from the CDC and MN and WI Departments of Health.

Self-guided Adventures



The Frosty 40

Get outdoors this winter to refresh your soul and join CNC in celebrating our 40th Anniversary by walking, running, cross-country skiing, or snowshoeing **40 miles in 40 days between January 1 and March 20**. Choose your own 40-day schedule. Days do not need to be consecutive, and activities can be done at any location.

Adult Participation Fee: \$40—Includes registration, a short sleeve t-shirt, and the option of becoming a “Friend of CNC” to receive free snowshoe rentals at CNC for the season. Substitute a long sleeve t-shirt for an additional \$5.

Student (K-12) Participation Fee: \$20. Substitute a long sleeve t-shirt for an additional \$5.

For more information and to register, visit www.carpenternaturecenter.org.



Snowshoe Rental

Available during regular business hours when there is six inches of adequate snow cover. Rentals are for a two-hour time period. Adult and youth sizes available. Call 651-437-4359 prior to your arrival to make an appointment. **Rental Fee: \$5 or FREE for ‘Friends of CNC,’ Frosty 40 Participants, and CNC volunteers.**



Camouflage Trail*

Life-like depictions of native animals are hidden along our Wetland Trail. Use your checklist to learn the natural history of each species as you try your best to spot them all! Pick up a paper copy at the Visitor Center or go paperless by scanning the QR code at the start of the trail.

Participation Fee: FREE.



Un-Natural Trail*

Test your observation skills by walking our Un-Natural Trail and looking for objects that don’t belong in the environment. Several human-made items have been placed along this short trail near our buildings, ranging from a light bulb to a purple crayon. Can you find them all? **Participation Fee: FREE.**

Geocaching

Want to go on a treasure hunt? There are several geocaches located on CNC property. Go to geocache.com or download the Geocache® app and get started on this fun and challenging adventure that you can do almost everywhere.



***These trails will also be developed and installed on the Wisconsin Campus in the coming months. Check our website for updates.**











Although Carpenter Nature Center is not holding in-person group programming when this issue is going to print, we have a variety of COVID-safe activities planned for when such gatherings are determined appropriate by public health officials. Below is a list of possible upcoming programming to anticipate. For up-to-date information about program opportunities, please visit www.carpenternaturecenter.org/events.

- **Preschool Story Times**
- **Family Ice Fishing on Lake Rebecca**
- **Owl Prowls**
- **Family Field Trips**
- **Full Moon Explorations**

- **Bird Hikes**
- **Making Maple Syrup**
- **Animal Meet & Greets**
- **Hastings Area Earth Day Bird Festival**
- **Summer Camps**

2021 Calendar of Events at Carpenter Nature Center

Phenology from 2020 (with additional entries from CNC's past phenology notes)

					January		1	2
3	Ring-necked Pheasant tracks near Cemetery	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	Scavengers feeding on deer carcass on river ice	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17		18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	Five White-tailed Deer in ravine ('95)	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31	Bald Eagle pair on nest	February 1	2	3	4	5	6	
7		8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21		22	23	24	25	26	27	
28		March 1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	Tapped Sugar Maple produced full bucket in < 24 hrs	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	Daylight Savings Time begins	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21		22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	Full Moon	29	30	31	April 1	2	3	
4	Easter – CNC Closed	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11		12	13	14	15	16	17	
18		19	20	21	22	23	24	
25		26	27	28	29	30		

People Profiles

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Carpenter Nature Center heavily relies on the support of dedicated volunteers, hardworking interns, a passionate board of directors, and generous donors. On behalf of the staff at CNC, we would like to take time to express our gratitude for the contributions of just a few of the individuals who help us serve the communities on both sides of the beautiful St. Croix River.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Marty Lynch
Alan Maloney
Clare Neenan
Sverre Sundgaard

Volunteer Spotlight

The Armbruster Family

This winter, we are happy to shine the volunteer spotlight on the Armbruster Family. Residents of the Cove Neighborhood, which borders CNC's Wisconsin Campus, the Armbrusters have been involved with CNC for years—helping to pick up trash around the Wisconsin Campus and assisting with events such as the Art Festival. They began officially volunteering doing animal care in 2019. They enjoy interacting with all the critters, especially the birds and turtles. Parents Ryan and Sarah actively share the animal care tasks with children, Afton and Evia. Kind, energetic, and bright, Afton and Evia diligently care for all the creatures with skill beyond their years. In addition to contributing to CNC by volunteering, Ryan and Sarah are also active “Friends of CNC,” and they have lent their professional expertise to help CNC develop COVID practices to help keep other volunteers, staff, and the animals safe. As a family, they enjoy hiking and exploring, skating, and spending time on the St. Croix River boating and fishing. Thank you Ryan, Sarah, Afton, and Evia for your dedication and your enthusiasm for protecting the natural world. We are deeply appreciative of all you do to support our mission!



Donor Spotlight

Gordie & Jo Bailey

The Bailey name carries with it a reputation for excellence, leadership, and generosity, and Gordie and Jo most certainly exemplify these qualities. The grandson of Bailey Nurseries founder, Gordie has been involved with shaping the course of the CNC journey since the beginning. As a nurseryman and plant-lover, his passion for conservation led Gordie to join the CNC Board of Directors in 1996 where he served for 18 years. Today, Gordie continues to serve as an Honorary Board member, and Gordie and Jo support Carpenter Nature Center in many ways. They enjoy walking the trails and attending programs such as

Masters of the Sky. Jo serves on the volunteer team for the Autumn in the Valley Gala; the family members are dedicated “Friends of CNC,” and they have made significant contributions to the building of the visitor center on the Wisconsin Campus.

The Baileys first became involved with the Wisconsin Campus Expansion Project when Gordie was a Board member, and they see the need for a visitor center now more than ever. “It is interesting to see during this pandemic that people are discovering how important nature is in our lives. It is in our DNA,” Gordie says. “Those of us who have been involved with CNC have known this for a long time, but it is exciting to see so many more [people] are learning what we knew long ago... This visitor center will enable us to reach many more kids and families with our educational programs and bring nature to many more people.”

Gordie and Jo have lived on the same street in the city of Newport for the entirety of their 60-year marriage. They have raised seven children, 17 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren. Their passions include spending time with family, gardening, fishing and hunting, and volunteering for many organizations including the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Museum of American Art, and The Nature Conservancy. To say that Gordie and Jo are a treasure and an inspiration would be an understatement. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for all you have done, and continue to do, to support CNC.

Help Support CNC

During these turbulent times, CNC is in need of your help more than ever. Outlined below are a variety of ways that you can support our mission. Your contributions help keep our trails open and available to the public, allow us to continue our education and habitat work, and support the physical and mental health of the community.

Volunteer Corner

Want to volunteer in some capacity? While we are reducing our use of volunteers during the pandemic for health and safety reasons, there are some limited opportunities. If you want to become a CNC volunteer and get on the volunteer email list, please email the Volunteer Coordinator at alan@carpenternaturecenter.org and we will put you on that list. You'll get announcements about up-coming volunteer opportunities on the MN and WI campuses as they become available.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities



Collect Maple Sap – During the month of March we will be tapping maple trees and making delicious maple syrup. If the sap runs a lot, we will need help with this process – you'll be hauling sap and helping to boil it down to syrup. Look for an email in March for this task.

Adopt-A-Highway spring cleanup will take place on Earth Day April 22 starting at 5:30pm. Please call 651-437-4359 and let us know you'll be joining us.

We'll supply safety vests and garbage bags, you supply enthusiasm for helping clean up the earth as we pick up litter along the highway near CNC.

CNC Wishlist Items

Donating Wishlist Items to CNC is now easier than ever! Visit our Amazon page; purchase with the click of a button, and your donation is shipped directly to CNC. Here are a few of the items available for purchase:

- **Hand sanitizer and disposable face masks** for keeping CNC staff, volunteers, and visitors safe
- **Full-spectrum UVA/UVB and basking lightbulbs** for our reptile and amphibian animal ambassadors
- **Work gloves and chainsaw** for habitat restoration work, managing the orchard, and general maintenance of CNC grounds
- **Label maker, Sharpie markers, and printer paper** for administrative operations



To view the full Wish List, scan this QR code or visit www.carpenternaturecenter.org/wishlist/

Memorials & Honorariums

We wish to express our appreciation for the following gifts:

In Honor of

Liam Henry from Kathy Widin

Joe Meyers from Bob & Kathy Setzer

Jennifer Vieth from Martin & Katherine Brown

In Memory of

Sherry Akins from Bruce Akins, Jody Brooker, Joe & Elizabeth Drexler, Robert & Lauri Durow, Kent & Jacqueline Ellis, Dave & Diane Filkins, Jerome & Julie Joswiak, Michael & Andrea Lenhart, Gary & Alice McDougal, Bryan Nyblom, Erin Rother, Kathleen Shellito, Larry & Evonne Shellito, Kim Shellito Barker, Donita Soucek, Keith & Rosie Sorenson, Ron & Linda Stancer, Daniel & Jennie Thomas, Jennifer Vieth, and David & Dawn Wigness

Stan Allison from Leila Allison

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Buzz & Mary Marzolf from Mary Beth Kissling

Loretta Sieben from Todd & Julie Sieben



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Location and Hours

Carpenter Nature Center is a 501(c)(3) private, non-profit organization with property on both the Minnesota and Wisconsin sides of the scenic St. Croix River.

For more information about our properties, please visit www.carpenternaturecenter.org.



Minnesota Campus

12805 St. Croix Trail S.
Hastings, MN 55033
(651) 437-4359

Hours: 8:00am – 4:30pm daily

**Trails, buildings, parking lots, and front gates
close daily at 4:30pm**

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Day,
New Year's Day, and Easter.



Wisconsin Campus

300 East Cove Road
Hudson, WI 54016
(651) 437-4359

Hours: Open year-round from sunrise to sunset

