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Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center

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12805 St. Croix Trail South
Hastings, Minnesota 55033

Wisconsin Campus
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Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

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"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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Color sponsored by



Field Notes By Jen Vieth

As the summer winds to a close and we enjoy the autumn bounty of brisk mornings, crispy apples and fall colors, I would like to take a moment to appreciate all that Carpenter Nature Center means to me, and to countless others who have found a sense of belonging within the CNC community.

Tom and Edna Carpenter began our legacy of what is today 725 acres of protected habitat in the St. Croix River Valley, but **CNC has become something much more than land.** And although we've been providing impactful, high-quality environmental education since 1981, **Carpenter Nature Center is more than an outdoor classroom.** For many, **CNC brings a sense of meaning and connection to place.** Every day, CNC connects us and plays an integral role in our lives. **Connections are made between naturalists and students, volunteers and visitors, staff and interns, and more.**

This summer at the annual Volunteer and Friends of CNC Appreciation Picnic, Volunteer of the Year Awardee, Randy Newton, eloquently summed up what CNC means to him:

"One of my biggest fears when I retired was making new friends. After years of associating with people only because I worked with them or because they were parents of one of my children's teammates, finding a completely new set of people I enjoy being around who also would not reject me seemed like a huge challenge. What was more concerning was not just finding these "friends" but also feeling a sense of belonging—being seen, heard, and valued while advocating for an issue that was important to me. I didn't just want friends—I wanted to feel integrated into a bigger cause.

Raising my hand to cut woody invasives started me on that journey. I enjoyed the "cause" and I found I really enjoyed the people. So I volunteered to help with water quality field trips and found I really enjoyed discovering macroinvertebrates with 6th graders. I volunteered to pick up trash and to pick apples and to join the Bird Banding team—things I had never before attempted, and across all of these I found shared vision, inclusivity, and camaraderie-- all while making a difference for wildlife, for kids, and for Washington and St. Croix Counties.

If you are new to CNC, please consider volunteering with us. If you are a current volunteer, thank you. Your commitments are the multipliers that differentiates CNC from other nature centers. I believe trying and succeeding at new things is the essence of living. It brings purpose, excitement, surprises and personal satisfaction. Trying new things at CNC will do all of that and increase that multiplier. Please consider volunteering in one new way in the coming year. You will learn, laugh, contribute, and belong. At CNC, I found my community. Join us in growing this community in the coming year." - Randy Newton



Volunteers support CNC with their time and talent in a multitude of ways. Many find joy in helping at CNC events, including contributing to the annual bake sale at our Apple Festival (top). Another way volunteers help build connections at CNC is through the animal ambassador program. Facilitating positive interactions between children and animals can foster lifelong passion for conservation (bottom).



Upcoming Programs & Events

Minnesota Campus — 12805 St. Croix Trail South, Hastings, MN 55033
Wisconsin Campus—279 South Cove Road, Hudson, WI 54016



ALL PROGRAMS REQUIRE RESERVATIONS—Please call 651-437-4359

APPLE SHACK OPENS LABOR DAY WEEKEND

Open daily from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

*Proudly growing 19 varieties
of high-quality apples*



Also available: CNC—grown squash, gourds, and pumpkins
Apple Sauce | Apple Butter | Pies | Jams & Jellies
Maple Syrup | Honey | Salad Dressing | Salsa | And more!

For an up-to-date list of varieties in stock, please call
651-437-4359 ext. 115.

Autumn in the Valley Gala

Sept 7 • 4:00—8:00 pm

Join the friends and family of Carpenter Nature Center for an evening of fun for a good cause. It's a memorable dinner, raffle, silent and live auction, and is Carpenter's most important fundraiser of the year. \$110 per person.



Monthly Bird Hikes

Minnesota Campus Bird Hikes

Oct 4 • 8:00—10:00 am

Nov 1 & Dec 7 • 9:00—11:00 am

Wisconsin Campus Bird Hikes

Sept 13 • 8:00—10:00 am

Meet at 279 South Cove Road

Oct 11 • 8:00—10:00 am

Meet at 300 East Cove Road

Nov 8 • 9:00—11:00 am

Meet at 279 South Cove Road

Dec 13 • 9:00—11:00 am

Meet at 300 East Cove Road



Learn to identify birds with local experts. Binoculars and field guides available or bring your own.
Program Fee: \$5 per person or FREE for 'Friends of CNC,' SCVBC, and students.

Preschool Story Time

Minnesota Campus

Fridays • 10:00—11:00 am

Sept 19 • Oct 31 • Nov 14 • Dec 19

Wisconsin Campus

Wednesdays • 10:00 - 11:00 am

Oct 29 • Nov 12 • Dec 17

Children must be accompanied by an adult. Program Fee: \$6 per child or \$4 for 'Friends of CNC.' No charge for adults.

Topics
Sept—Orchard Fun
Oct—Costumes & Critters
Nov—Pigeon Party
Dec—Gifts for Wildlife

Minnesota Campus Public Bird Banding*

Fridays • 8:30 am—Noon

Sept 26 • Oct 24 • Nov 28 • Dec 26

See birds up-close and watch the experts band birds at CNC. Banding runs continuously, so come and go as you please. Donations of bird seed are appreciated in lieu of a program fee.

**All banding, marking, and sampling is being conducted under a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey's BBL.*

Raptor Release

Hosted at the CNC MN Campus in partnership with
The Raptor Center of the University of Minnesota

Sept 27 • 11:00 am—2:00 pm

Join Carpenter Nature Center and The Raptor Center of the University of Minnesota as they release rehabilitated bird of prey. Event includes hay wagon rides (weather permitting), kids activities, raptors on display, and a variety of education booths from area environmental organizations. This FREE event is enjoyed by all ages. Dogs are not allowed.



Raptor Count/Hawk Watch

Hosted at the CNC MN Campus in partnership with
the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

Sept 28 • 8:00 am—2:00 pm

Each fall, thousands of birds migrate south to their wintering grounds in the southern U.S. and beyond. Join our team of spotters to count birds including raptors, songbirds, gulls, and other species. Binoculars will be available upon request. Program Fee: FREE.



Upcoming Programs & Events

Minnesota Campus — 12805 St. Croix Trail South, Hastings, MN 55033
Wisconsin Campus—279 South Cove Road, Hudson, WI 54016



ALL PROGRAMS REQUIRE RESERVATIONS—Please call 651-437-4359

Apple Festival Hosted at the CNC MN Campus Orchard Home of the Apple Shack

Oct 11 & 12 • 10:00 am—5:00 pm

Visit CNC to celebrate the harvest with hay rides (weather permitting), live music, live animal programs, children's activities, apple brats, pumpkin decorating, bake sale, cider-making demonstrations, pick-your-own apples and more. This FREE event is fun for the whole family and will be held rain or shine!



Saw-whet Owl Banding*

Wisconsin Campus

TBD • 8:00—10:00 pm

Minnesota Campus

TBD • 8:00—10:00 pm

Learn about the migration patterns of Saw-whet Owls. Join our team as they venture out to band these mysterious birds. Program is weather-dependent. Program Fee: FREE. SPACE IS VERY LIMITED. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.

**All banding, marking, and sampling is being conducted under a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey's BBL.*

INLAND BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING OCT 24-26, 2025



Whether you're a trained bird bander or a curious layman, join fellow enthusiasts for banding demonstrations, guest speakers, scientific presentations, field trips, and more.

Fees: \$100 for IBBA members, \$120 for non-members, or \$70 for students. \$35 optional add-on for banquet dinner at the Hastings Arts Center on Saturday, Oct 25.

For registration, conference schedule, activity locations, and travel and accommodation information, scan the QR code or visit our website.



Wisconsin Campus Exotic Pet Surrender

Nov 15 • 12:00—3:00pm

In some areas, there are no rehoming options for exotic animals such as fish, birds, and reptiles. Some pet owners that are unable to care for their pet may think that releasing the animal is the right thing to do, however, releasing a pet is harmful for the animal and the environment. Organized by J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue, this event brings together a collection of area partners that provide rehoming services for exotic pet owners who are no longer able to care for their pets. Area organizations will be accepting fish, invertebrates, reptiles, pet birds, small mammals, and plants. Domestic pets, such as dogs, cats, rabbits, pigs, and chickens are not accepted.



All questions should be directed to John Moyles of J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue at adoptions@jraar.org.

Carpenter Nature Center is providing support as a host for this event, but is not involved with organizing, and will not be adopting any of the surrendered animals.

FROSTY 40



Registration opens December 1

Get outdoors this winter and walk, run, cross-country ski, or snowshoe 40 miles in 40 days. Choose your own 40-day schedule between January 1—March 20. Proceeds benefit environmental education and habitat conservation at CNC.

For more information and to register, scan the QR code or visit our website.

Wisconsin Campus Holiday Décor Making

Dec 6 • 1:00—2:30pm

Join CNC Director of Education and Visitor Services Sarah Germscheid to create a one-of-a-kind holiday home décor piece. Participants will be outside for a portion of the program collecting materials, please dress for the weather. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Program Fee: \$40 per person.



Wings and Things

At Carpenter Nature Center, we've always got birds on our brains. Whether it's banding songbirds, monitoring nestboxes, developing and implementing land management practices, or teaching school kids about our raptor ambassadors, there is always bird-related news to share.



Left: Banded and nanotagged Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*). Right: Vesper Sparrows (*Poocetes gramineus*) are one of the target study species of the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) research partnership between Dakota County Parks and Carpenter Nature Center.

Director's Update

By late July, when we are still enjoying the lazy, hazy summer days, some bird species are already beginning their journey towards their wintering grounds. That means there is little time left in the 2025 breeding season and CNC's field research team is busier than ever.

The Wood Thrush team is still gathering at dawn and dusk, putting the final hours into the two-year international research project. In 2024, CNC deployed 14 nanotags in Wisconsin. In this second (and final) year, the team is on track to deploy 25 tags across Minnesota and Wisconsin before our resident thrush head southwards. Thanks to a generous grant which enabled the team to buy a handheld receiver, the months of August and September will be busy with monitoring the tagged thrush. We will be watching to see when they leave their breeding territory to make their extended overnight flights, and hopefully see them get picked up on the Motus network.

While Wood Thrush research has been a great success, the first year of CNC's participation in the internal Northern Saw-whet Owl project was disappointing, as nesting Saw-whets weren't easy to find. Working with Professor Avara from U of IL, the team refined our tactics and are ready to try again in early 2026.

Summer 2025 is the fourth year of a five-year collaborative project with Dakota County Parks to study the impact of bison reintroduction on grassland nesting bird success. Avian field work intern, Shoshana, is analyzing the preliminary 4-year data set to see if there are trends emerging.

Fledged Friends

Birds of a feather flock together, but at CNC, we also enjoy watching members of our community stretch their wings and soar to new heights. Our graduated interns, research and education partners, former staff, and other talented colleagues are working in environmental education and conservation all over the world. Just as all things in nature are connected, so are all the people who have "nested" at Carpenter Nature Center. We love to hear their stories and share them with the community.

Kaia Hilgendorf-Roost is a CNC bird banding volunteer and was an extern at Carpenter Nature Center in 2023-2024. In April 2024, she successfully defended her undergraduate honors thesis titled *North American Breeding Bird Survey and Carpenter Nature Center Banding Station Correlational Analysis Capturing Sparrow Population Trends*. Utilizing CNC's bird banding data from the past 40 years, Kaia's study compared five species from the sparrow family (*Passerellidae*) banded at CNC and surveyed through the Bird Conservation Regions (BCR) within the BBS. The five species were the Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, and the Field Sparrow.

In a recent email correspondence with CNC Executive Director, Jen Vieth, Kaia talked about her professional life and reflected on the impact of her time at Carpenter Nature Center:

"I'm out in North Carolina absolutely loving songbird banding! Some highlight birds have been a Magnolia Warbler, a gorgeous male Scarlet Tanager, and male and female Blackburnian Warblers. It's been fun getting to handle lots of our focal species [including] Black-throated Blue Warblers, Hooded Warblers, and Canada Warblers! It's also been cool learning to do color banding, VHF [Very High Frequency radio telemetry] and Motus tagging birds, and we also do a ton of different bill measurements.

Thanks for always being willing to be a reference for me and being such an influential mentor for me all throughout college. I learned so much from you, whether it was bird safety, how to interpret banding data for my thesis, how to age a bird, or extract a tricky bird from a net. Everything you've taught me I still use in practice now! Carpenter was really such a huge help in getting my foot in the door and it feels so great that I'm getting all these cool opportunities now!"



Kaia with male Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*)

Decades of Data

The Carpenter Nature Center team has been banding and recapturing banded songbirds since 1981. This wild bird research provides a valuable resource to look at range expansion and contraction, site fidelity, wintering ground fidelity, lifespan, and more. The process of digitizing decades of data was time consuming, but the CNC team recently completed uploading this backlogged information.

Our Volunteer of the Year, Randy Newton, recently finished entering a staggering 9,000+ recapture records. With the assistance of Avian Field Research Intern, Annika, they have begun to analyze the data for long-term trends. Full analysis of the data will be time consuming, but initial study of Slate-colored Junco and Black-capped Chickadee data has revealed some interesting patterns and taught us valuable lessons.



Masha Mose

Slate-colored Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*)

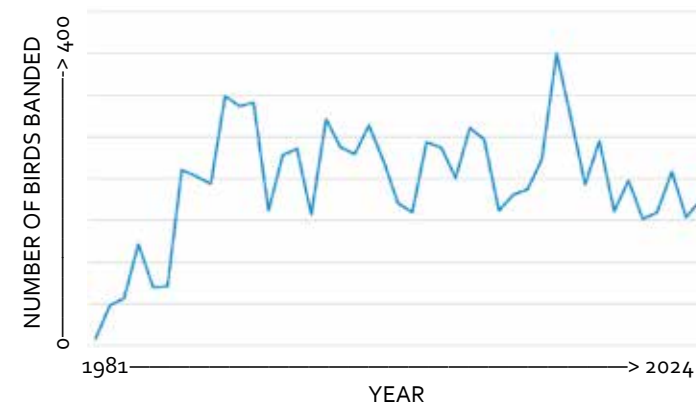
Since the 1970s, Slate-colored Juncos have been declining at a rate of 1.52% per year. North America has lost more than 175 million juncos, or close to 50% of the historic population.

Juncos do not nest in St. Croix or Washington County, so we only see them during the winter months, but CNC has banded more juncos than any

other species; an amazing 8,700+. With numbers like that, it would seem that we have not been experiencing a decline in their population.

"The data confirms that our trend in banding Juncos does not mirror the declines seen in this species throughout North America," Randy reported. "We have seen some decline in encounters but at a much lower rate than the continent overall. Understanding why our experience is different could be crucial to slowing or stopping the decline over the next 20 years. While one banding site's data is not enough to determine continent wide outcomes, this data provides critical insights and knowledge to researchers studying the impacts of climate change, habitat loss, and agricultural practices on bird populations."

NEW SLATE-COLORED JUNCO BANDS BY YEAR



Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*)

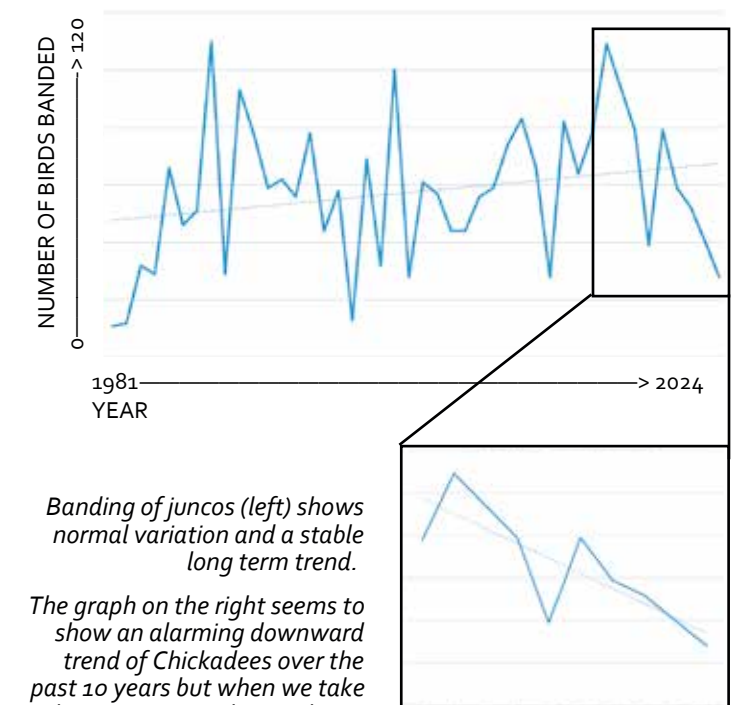
"Where have all our chickadees gone?" This question was recently posed by a friend of CNC. She had been seeing fewer chickadees the past few years and wanted to know if our banding data showed any concerning trends.

Initially, we looked at data from the past 10 years and we were alarmed by what we saw; a *clear downward trend* of more than 60%. We discussed these results with our colleague Lee Pfannmueller, one of the authors of *The Breeding Birds of Minnesota*. Surprisingly, Lee reported that the population of Black-capped Chickadees has actually been slowly *increasing* over time.

When we returned to the data, we looked further back in the records and found that our data did, in fact, support Lee's report. Although the short-term trend in the data showed a decrease over time, analysis of long-term trends shows a population increase.

"This exercise was a reminder that data is powerful, and things are not always as they initially appear," Randy summarized. "Hasty conclusions and generalizing from small samples can lead to inaccurate conclusions and the spread of misinformation. Applying rigorous data analysis techniques is necessary for real objectivity. Taking a longer view reduces the anxiety of the current short-term trend and compels us to rigorously apply statistical methods to thoroughly test our hypotheses."

NEW BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE BANDS BY YEAR



Banding of juncos (left) shows normal variation and a stable long term trend.




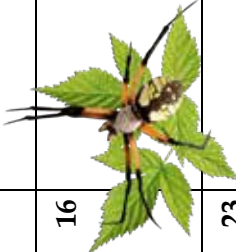



























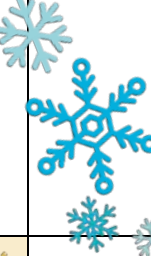
The graph on the right seems to show an alarming downward trend of Chickadees over the past 10 years but when we take a longer view, as shown above, it appears the recent variation is normal.



Lizzy Danich

2025 Calendar of Events at Carpenter Nature Center

Phenology from 2024 (with additional entries from CNC's past phenology notes)

September		1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Full Moon (Corn Moon)			24th day ≥90°F ('05)				WI Campus Bird Hike
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	Red-headed Woodpeckers sighted	Garden spiders on raspberry plants			MN Campus Preschool Story Time		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
	Autumn Equinox 	20 hawks migrating over prairie	Dak-eyed Juncos arrived ('06)		MN Campus Bird Banding	MN Campus Raptor Release	
28	29	30	1	2	3	4	
MN Campus Hawk Watch	Showy Goldenrod blooming ('08)	First frost of season ('09)	October 	Pandora Sphinx Moth Caterpillar active 		MN Campus Bird Hike	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	Full Moon (Hunter Moon) 		Tree Sparrow by bird bath ('96)	Apples froze overnight ('00) 	Hen of the Woods Mushrooms found ('10)	MN Campus Apple Festival	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
MN Campus Apple Festival			Banded five Saw-whet Owls ('14) 	Morning frost 		Leaves falling 	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Squirrels burying acorns	Happy Diwali 				MN Campus Bird Banding		
26	27	28	29	30	31	IBBA Conference	
IBBA Conference	Pileated Woodpeckers in ravine ('07)		WI Campus Preschool Story Time		MN Campus Preschool Story Time 	November 1 MN Campus Bird Hike	
Golden Eagle sighted 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	Honeybees active ('03) 		Super Full Moon (Beaver Moon) 	Belted Kingfisher in Wetland ('11) 		WI Campus Bird Hike	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker sighted		VETERANS DAY 	WI Campus Preschool Story Time	Red-tailed Hawk in oak savanna ('02)	MN Campus Preschool Story Time	WI Campus Exotic Pet Surrender	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
Garter Snake on trail ('23)	Red Admiral and Sulfur Butterflies sighted ('02)		Raccoon scat on sidewalk ('96)		Eastern Bluebirds singing in parking lot ('01)	Dandelions blooming ('06)	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
	American Kestrel chasing Gold Finches ('02)		Ice layer forming on Wetland	Thanksgiving (CNC Closed) 	MN Campus Bird Banding		
30	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Brewers Blackbird at feeders ('06)	December Frosty 40 registration opens	Great Horned Owl near Farmhouse ('16)	Super Full Moon (Cold Moon) 		Opossum behind raptor enclosures ('18)	WI Campus Holiday Décor program	
MN Campus Bird Hike		9	10	11	12	13	
	River iced over ('08)	Cedar Waxwing flock near Interpretive Center		Pileated Woodpecker at feeders ('13)	Sundogs ('03)	WI Campus Bird Hike	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	Ice anglers on St. Croix ('95)		WI Campus Preschool Story Time		MN Campus Preschool Story Time		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
Winter Solstice 	13-lined Ground Squirrel at feeders ('97)		13 Grey Squirrels at feeder ('97)	MERRY CHRISTMAS (CNC Closed) 	MN Campus Bird Banding 	Northern Shrike by feeders ('96)	
28	29	30	31				
	Black-capped Chickadees signing "Fee bee"	8hrs 50mins daylight	New Year Eve				

People Profiles

Carpenter Nature Center offers internships for college students or recent graduates to gain hands-on job experience. As integral members of our team, they learn skills that carry into their future careers and benefit the community.

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Jessie Eckroad | Communications
Mary Jane Jallen | Accounting
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Meet our Summer Interns

Annika Hellerud

Avian Field Research

Annika is from St. Paul, MN. She's recently graduated with a degree in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota. So far, her favorite experiences at Carpenter include banding a Brown Thrasher and taking part in the excitement of Carpenter's Big Day hike!

Ella Mahnke

Communications and Event Planning

Ella is from River Falls, WI. She's studying Integrated Strategic Communications at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. Ella enjoys combining her creativity with her love for nature, and has a special fondness for Sapa the bunny!

Jayson Peyerl Orchard and Land Management

Jayson grew up in Redwood Falls, MN. He attended the University of Minnesota Duluth, where he majored in Environmental & Outdoor Education. He has enjoyed learning how to foster a healthy and productive orchard, and has also has the opportunity to tour other orchards in the area. After his internship, he hopes to establish his own orchard with the experience he gained at CNC.

Elsa Reilly Environmental Education

Elsa is a senior at the University of Minnesota studying Animal Science and Wildlife Conservation. As an aspiring conservation dog handler, her favorite part of the internship has been learning all about the animals and working hands on with them. Kevin the Common Raven is her favorite animal ambassador. Elsa loves the community and values fostered by CNC.

Shoshana Schmit Avian Field Research Level 2

This is Shoshana's second summer as an intern at CNC. Originally from Minneapolis, MN, she is a senior at Lawrence University with majors in Biology and Environmental Studies. Her favorite part of her internship so far has been participating in the MAPS grassland bird study in Spring Lake Park in Dakota County.

Grayson Tix Environmental Education

Grayson is originally from Hastings, MN. He's studying Biology at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA, with hopes of blending his passions for nursing and conservation. Grayson loves sharing fun nature facts and spending time with his favorite animal ambassador, Sapa the bunny!

Bekkah Vaneperen Environmental Education

Bekkah is from Wabeno, WI, studying Biology with a Psychology minor at UW-River Falls, where she hopes to graduate this fall. She's especially excited to be learning more about animal care and the raptors at CNC. While she loves all the animals, her favorite ambassador is Kevin the Common Raven.



Back row from left: Jayson Peyerl, Annika Hellerud, Grayson Tix, and Ella Mahnke.
Front row from left: Shoshana Schmit, Elsa Reilly, and Bekkah Vaneperen

People Profiles

Our Volunteer Board of Directors consists of passionate, dedicated individuals who help the CNC staff serve communities on both sides of the beautiful St. Croix River. We would like to take a moment to welcome our new members and express our gratitude for their contributions.

Meet our Incoming Board President



Rob McKim

Rob McKim joined the CNC Board of Directors in 2017 and served as the Secretary for six years. After taking a two-year sabbatical, he returned and served as Vice President before becoming President of the Board. Rob worked for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) since 1989. He directed the Delaware Chapter before moving with his family to Minnesota where he began his tenure as Great Plains Program Director. As part of TNC's Midwest Regional Office, Rob initiated a multi-state fundraising effort and served as interim State Director in Missouri until 1997, when he was hired as State Director for the Minnesota Chapter. In 1998, Rob was also appointed Vice President of the Great Plains Division, which encompassed 18 states, the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes. Before working with TNC, Rob was a legislative aide for energy, agriculture and the environment for U.S. Senator Roth (R-Del), and Director of Abbotts Mill Nature Center, an education center which is part of the Delaware Nature Society. Rob received his MBA from Wilmington College and a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Delaware. He and his family live in Stillwater where he enjoys paddling the St. Croix, hiking, skiing, and gardening.

Meet New Members of our Board of Directors

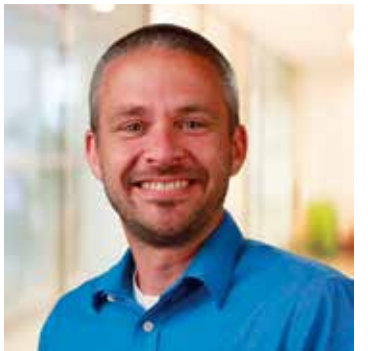
Peggy Ladner

Peggy Ladner and her husband, Clif Brittain, are long-time residents of St. Paul's Macalester-Groveland neighborhood and enjoy their seasonal cabin on Burntside Lake north of Ely. Peggy enjoys biking, fishing and paddling in the summer as well as pickle ball and cross-country skiing in the winter. She also sings in a community chorale and volunteers for a few organizations. Most recently she played a volunteer leadership role in the successful ballot campaign to reauthorize lottery proceeds for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. Peggy retired three years ago from The Nature Conservancy where she served in various leadership positions, including more than 14 years as director of the Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota chapter. She has served on the boards of St. John's University, Conservation Minnesota, and the Midway YMCA.



Brett Sitter

Brett has a long history of driving sustainability in the workplace and spending as much time outside as he can. He currently works at Andersen Windows on the sustainability team, where he focuses on decarbonization and reducing waste to landfill. He lives in Marine on St. Croix with his extraordinary wife and sassy 4-year-old daughter. Brett loves to be outside enjoying nature. Some favorite activities include nature photography, fishing, turning wood bowls and restoring his land to native prairie. Restoring land to native prairie has been one of the most rewarding projects he has worked on. The biggest learning from the project has been that if you give mother nature a chance, she will respond and far exceed your expectations. He is excited to align his passion of the outdoors, his expertise in sustainability with the educational mission of the Carpenter Nature Center.



Leanna Van Allen

Leanne Van Allen brings a strong background in education, leadership, and community engagement through her role as Director of Graduate Programs in the College of Education, Business and Allied Health at UW-River Falls, where she supports MBA and Master of Science in Business Analytics, Master of Science in Healthcare Analytics students and teaches undergrad business courses focused on student success and career development. Her professional experience also includes over 20 years in executive leadership roles in the staffing and consulting industry. A dedicated community member, Leanne has served on numerous local boards and committees and was recently named the 2024 Chamber Member of the Year by the Hudson Area Chamber of Commerce. Leanne shares, "I'm honored to join the Carpenter Nature Center Board and excited to support its mission of environmental education and conservation. As someone who values both nature and community, I look forward to contributing to this meaningful work and helping expand CNC's impact across the region."



Volunteer at Carpenter Nature Center

Pursuing our mission would not be possible without the dedication of hardworking volunteers. Contact Alan Maloney at 651-437-4359 ext. 104 or alan@carpenternaturecenter.org to join our team.



Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteer of the Year | Randy Newton

Randy started volunteering at CNC in the fall of 2023, helping remove Buckthorn at the WI campus and has since branched out to other areas amassing over 500 hours of volunteer time. In addition to removing invasive species such as Buckthorn and Garlic Mustard, Randy has helped plant native trees and bushes to improve the habitat. He has helped in the apple orchard at the MN site, picking dozens of bushels of apples a day. He has delivered the CNC newsletter to various locations around the area, helped with our Adopt-A-Highway cleanup, and has helped teach Water Quality classes to local middle school groups.

In 2024 Randy took the WI Master Naturalist Training Course and then volunteered to help with the WI Master Naturalist Course in 2025. He is also helping CNC prepare to co-host the WI Master Naturalist Summit in October of 2026.

In late 2024 he joined the Avian Field Research Team (better known as “the bird banders”), Jen initially recruited him to help search for a missing Wood Thrush nano tag in Kinnickinnic State Park. Then, he took on the enormous task of entering the 40-year backlog of same-site recapture data (imagine records dating back to 1982 on

recaptured banded birds that needed to be manually deciphered and entered into a database). What he estimated would take him, with help from former intern Lauren Smith, until August of 2025, he was able to complete by the spring of 2025 – entering over 9000 records.

Randy, we can’t say thank you enough for all you do for CNC. Your kindness, energy, and curiosity is an inspiration and we are honored that you have chosen to join our Volunteer Family.

Volunteer Corner

The **Apple Shack** will be open Labor Day weekend, and we need your help with the 2025 harvest! Spend time outdoors enjoying the autumn weather apple picking and gardening, or help indoors with apple grading, bagging, and stocking.

Our **Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup** for St. Croix Trail South will take place on Tuesday September 23 starting at 5:30 pm. Trash bags and flashy safety vests will be available. If you are able to help, bring your gloves and your favorite litter-grabbing tool. This usually takes about 1 ½ - 2 hours depending on the number of volunteers available. Please contact Alan at the number or email below if you are coming to help with this task.

The Fall **Raptor Release** is back. This year the event will be on Saturday, September 27 from 9 am—3 pm and we will need lots of volunteers to help pull this off. A partial list of duties includes: parking, information, and helping in the Apple Shack. More details will be coming via email when the date gets closer.

Apple Fest takes place on October 11 - 12 and is an event where we need lots of volunteers. This is a fun, family-oriented event and volunteers help ensure everyone enjoys their visit. Duties include pumpkin painting, kid’s crafts, bake sale, and everything that goes with a great time in the orchard. Call the number below to get on the email list for more info about how you can help.

If you are interested in helping with any of these events, please call 651-437-4359 ext. 104 for Alan, the Volunteer Coordinator; or email alan@carpenternaturecenter.org.

Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program and 2026 Summit

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension, the Master Naturalist program provides training in stewardship, citizen science, and environmental education for those dedicated to volunteering in their communities.

In partnership with Friends of Willow River & Kinnickinnic State Parks, CNC has hosted an annual training course, and we are pleased to announce that we will be hosting another training course in 2026. Additionally, we will also be hosting the **Wisconsin Summit for Natural Resources Volunteers, October 1—3, 2026.**

Whether you’re a Wisconsin Master Naturalist graduate, curious layman, or you represent an entity interested in partnership opportunities, mark your calendars and visit our website for event information as the date gets closer.



Donate to Carpenter Nature Center

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Carpenter Nature Center heavily relies on the support of generous donors. Your contribution in any amount benefits environmental education and conservation for our community. Contact Erika Jensen at 651-437-4359 ext. 101 or erika@carpenternaturecenter.org for more information.



“Winter Wings” Year-end Giving Campaign

November 1—December 31

Contribute to CNC and help us **unlock matching funds** pledged by the Board of Directors and other generous CNC donors! Donations made as part of Give to the Max and Giving Tuesday count toward our fundraising goal for this campaign.

Give to the Max is a giving holiday created to connect donors with Minnesota non-profits. Early giving begins November 1st and culminates with **Give to the Max Day on November 21.**

December 3rd is Giving Tuesday—a global giving holiday designed to elevate organizations working toward making the world a better place. For Giving Tuesday, consider supporting CNC with a **donated item from our wish list.**

To share our excitement and gratitude for your generosity, the CNC staff post frequent updates on our website and social media, including engaging in silly activities when we reach important benchmarks.

Visit carpenternaturecenter.org/donate for more information about each of these opportunities.



Ways to Give

Year-round gifts as well as contributions to the Winter Wings Campaign can be made in many ways:

- ★ Checks, credit/debit, and cash
- ★ IRA charitable rollovers
- ★ Donor advised funds
- ★ Workplace matching programs
- ★ Stock contributions
- ★ Bonds, treasury notes, mutual funds, and more!

Contact Erika Jensen at 651-437-4359 ext. 101 or erika@carpenternaturecenter.org for more information, and consult with your tax professional about which giving option is best for your financial future.

Legacy Giving

*“Give the ones you love
wings to fly,
roots to come back,
and reasons to stay.”
- The Dalai Lama -*



Thanks to Tom & Edna Carpenter, Al & Laurie Hein, and countless others contributors, CNC has strong roots. For 44 years, CNC staff and volunteers have created a home for wildlife, plants, and people. And your Legacy Gift to CNC will give future generations of the community their wings.

Contact Development Coordinator Erika Jensen to discuss your legacy: Call (651) 437-4359 ext. 101 or email erika@carpenternaturecenter.org.

Memorials & Honorariums

We wish to express our appreciation for the following gifts:

In Honor of

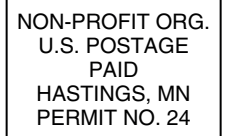
*Jen Fox from DawnMarie Vihrachoff
Ellen Vander Linden from the IABC US Region Board*

In Memory of

*Charlotte Burt from Alex Elizabeth and Jared VanderHook
Tom Gregory from the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Dale Mitsch from Mary Mitsch, Murray & Shirley Doeden,
Sue & John Kresbach & Joy Robinson
Sandra Pletcher from Tanya Manatt
Lorraine & Bill Schneberger from Steve & Sharon Runtsch*

Dates to Remember in 2026

Masters of the Sky | February 28 & March 1
Hastings Earth Day Birding Festival | April 25
Wings of Spring Migration Celebration | May 9
St. Croix Valley Scramble Golf Tournament | July 20
Carpenter Art Festival | TBD
Autumn in the Valley Gala | September 13
Raptor Release | September 26
Hawk Watch | September 27
Apple Festival | October 10 & 11



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www.CarpenterNatureCenter.org



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*Carpenter St. Croix Valley
Nature Center®*

*Proudly serving the Twin Cities Metro, St. Croix Valley, and
Western Wisconsin communities since 1981*

Locations and Hours

Carpenter Nature Center is a 501(c)(3) 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 South
Hastings, MN 55033
(651) 437-4359



Wisconsin Campus
279 South Cove Road
Hudson, WI 54016
(651) 437—4359 ext. 114



Trails, grounds, buildings, parking lots,
and front gates open daily* from 8:00am—4:30pm.
Front gates close at 4:30pm.

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