



Wild plums at the Bloomington Education & Visitor Center. Photo by Sara N. Blood. Submit your photos and videos taken at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge for possible publication to hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org.



Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends Currents

Issue 2, Volume 2 | Sep. 10, 2020

Dear Friends:

"Our weather just went from 80 to 55 like it saw a state trooper."

This was from a popular meme posted on social media when we returned from the Labor Day weekend with layers. And socks. Debates on whether it was time to turn off the A/C and to switch on the furnace emanated from households.

The good news is if we wait around long enough, we'll find that September in Minnesota has something in store for everyone. A little bit of rain, a pop of color overhead, and a crunch underfoot. And, what's that I see on my weather app? A potential return to 80 degrees next week.

Whatever the weather, we hope you squeeze in as much fun as you can in the great outdoors this month. While we're in the era of social distancing, we can still drive to take in the fall colors, view the outdoor art at such places like the [Franconia Sculpture Park](#), or take a bite out of a delicious Honeycrisp at one of our state's many [apple orchards](#).

Saturday, Sept. 26, is also National Public Lands and Urban Wildlife Day.

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Did you know that four out of five Americans live in urban areas? Urban national wildlife refuges, which are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "provide vital access to nature and outdoor recreation, boosting both our physical and psychological well-being."

There are over 100 urban refuges that offer many opportunities for us to explore the Great Outdoors. The Twin Cities are unique in that we're one of a handful of communities with a population of more than 250,000 that is within 25 miles of a refuge.

When this pandemic is over, we hope that you'll have the opportunity to explore the urban refuges in Philadelphia and near Albuquerque, Denver, and Detroit. Drop us a line and tell us which one is your favorite.

We hope to see you soon at an urban refuge!

Sara N. Blood
Interim Executive Director
[Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends](#)

Online events & resources

Wednesday, Sept. 23

6:45 p.m.

Capturing Nature With Your Phone webinar

Capture the buzz, the flutter, and the grandeur of nature. Join the Refuge for a live presentation with the Master Gardeners of Scott and Carver County as they discuss photography using your smartphone. Explore simple techniques for capturing nature with the camera you carry in your pocket. Whether you are in the field or at home, seeing things in a new way helps you discover exciting photo opportunities all around you. Please have your cell phone available during the presentation.

This event is free. Registration is required [here](#) to receive a link and password to the presentation.

Sunday, Sept. 27-Saturday, Oct. 3

Urban National Wildlife Refuge Day Celebrations

This year, Urban National Wildlife Refuge Day at Minnesota Valley NWR is going virtual! Help us celebrate all week long, Sept. 27 - Oct. 3, as we unveil the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge Nature Play Area. Follow along on the [Refuge Facebook page](#) for highlights throughout the week, and be sure to follow hashtags #CommunityintheWild and #YouBelongHere to join the celebrations nationally.

Refuge supporter and founding Refuge Friends Inc. board member Kathleen Clarke Anderson dies



Kathleen Clarke Anderson, a longtime Minneapolis resident, a passionate advocate, and a primary driver for federal funding for projects at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge passed away peacefully on Jan. 8, 2020.

She served for many years alongside U.S. Rep Martin Sabo, "first at the state capitol and then as manager of his 5th district congressional office, retiring only when Martin did," according to her obituary, which was published Aug. 30 in the Star Tribune.

"As the local legislative aide for U.S. Rep. Martin Sabo, Kathleen was a primary reason \$6 million was appropriated for the Refuge's Bloomington Education & Visitor Center," wrote Ed Crozier, the Refuge's first manager in an email. "She was a very good friend of the Refuge and its people."

Clarke Anderson was also one of the founding board members of Refuge Friends Inc. (now Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends), serving 10 years as a director and an active supporter of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

"Kathleen was truly wonderful. I first knew her when I was a young staffer at the Citizens League in the '80s, where she was (no surprise) also involved. Our paths would cross periodically over the years, including at the Refuge through the Friends, and she was always so warm and generous," wrote Deb Loon, executive director, Minnesota Valley Trust, in an email.

According to her [obituary](#), a Celebration of Life planned for last spring was canceled due to the pandemic. Friends and family are invited to visit rememberingKCA.com for more information and to share memories.

MN Valley Refuge Friends kicks off youth mentoring program with Urban Bird Collective



BOSCH

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**URBAN BIRD
COLLECTIVE**

With a grant from the Bosch Community Fund, Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends is working with staff from the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge to develop a new small-group mentoring program. This program introduces area youth to such outdoor activities as birding, hiking, photography, fishing, and, of course, get them to the Refuge!

We have signed on our first mentoring partner for the program, Urban Bird Collective, which specializes in birding activities for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and the LGBTQ community.

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We are thrilled to be working with the Urban Bird Collective to introduce area youth to the great outdoors and to start a lifelong passion for birding and the Refuge.

We are also currently working with Refuge staff to identify additional mentoring partners as well as secure additional funding.

A big thank you to Bosch and the Urban Bird Collective as well as Refuge staff for helping Refuge Friends kick off this exciting new program!



What you see on the surface is just the tip of the iceberg for mushrooms, which can extend for miles beneath the soil. Photo of student holding tiny mushroom with mycelium by Mel Schneider/USFWS

Wildlife watch: Marvelous mushrooms

by Mel Schneider
Refuge Environmental Educator

Although spring is famous for morels, late summer and fall are known to be the most abundant time for mushrooms in our northern climate. There are the edible mushrooms that foragers prize: chanterelle, chicken of the woods, hen of the woods (maitake), oyster, lobster, and the bulbous puffball. But foragers needn't be the only ones to take delight in autumn mushrooms.

Mushrooms, edible or not, can be beautiful and fascinating. There are strikingly blue indigo milk caps, brightly-colored fly agarics, bird nest fungi that resemble tiny egg-filled nests, coral fungi that look like they belong in the ocean, artist's conk, which can be transformed into art, and the list goes on. Few people are aware that the mushroom's cap is just the very beginning of a larger organism lurking beneath the soil, which can extend for miles. Mushrooms, while often thought of as plants, are not part of the plant kingdom.

Mushrooms are part of their own kingdom—fungi. What we see as mushrooms are the fruiting body of a much larger organism, like apples on an apple tree. However, unlike a tree which grows above ground, the majority of a fungus remains underground or under tree bark, and is

called mycelium. Beneath a single footprint lies up to 300 miles of mycelium! Mycelium is a net-like structure of fine threads called hyphae and is responsible for taking in nutrients.

Fungi get its nutrients in three different ways. Some fungi are parasites, feeding off of a living host. Many fungi are saprophytes, living off dead or decaying organic material. And many fungi maintain a mutualistic or symbiotic relationship, getting nutrition from the roots of plants, and in return, helping the plant absorb minerals and water. These are called mycorrhizal fungi, and over 90% of plants rely on these fungi to survive! Mushrooms may seem small among towering trees, but fungi are invaluable parts of a forest's ecology.

With over 5,000 species of mushrooms estimated in Minnesota and fruit that can appear overnight after a good rain, there is always something new to discover. And the more you learn about mushrooms and the mycelium beneath your feet, the more fascinating those discoveries will be, the more questions you will ask, and the more you will continue to discover what lies under the surface.

A Note on Foraging

Foraging mushrooms is allowed on refuge land with a one gallon per person per day limit. Remember to follow ethical foraging practices: never take more than half, try to take mushrooms that have already spread their spores, and carry them in a basket or porous cloth bag to allow spores to spread. And of course, always be sure you know a mushroom's identity before harvesting or eating it. There are several varieties of mushrooms, including look-a-likes that are toxic. If you are not 100% sure, don't eat it and don't feed it to anyone else. For more information about foraging on refuge lands, visit this [link](#).

Cargill awards Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends with \$20,000 grant

[Cargill](#) awarded Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends with two \$10,000 grants to help fund projects at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

The Wayzata-based company has awarded \$10,000 toward the purchase of new classroom equipment at the Refuge's Education & Visitor Centers in Bloomington and Carver, a Cargill employee volunteer project, and for Refuge Friends to help manage the projects. Cargill Salt has provided an additional \$10,000 toward the purchase of equipment for a longer-term study on chloride at Ike's Creek in the Long Meadow Lake Unit.

"We are thrilled to be embarking on this new partnership with Cargill, which will support Refuge wildlife and habitat as well as upgrade equipment for area children to study nature in nature," said Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends President Randy Petzel.

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Cargill is a neighbor of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and is nearby lands managed by the Refuge along the Minnesota River and Highway 169.

"Cargill's goals in giving and partnerships – Nourishing the World and Protecting the Planet – are in line with the Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends' efforts to connect people and communities with nature found at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge," said Cargill North American Director of Corporate Responsibility, Pete Stoddart. "Not only is Cargill next door to Refuge land, but we are also aligned in many areas, including ways to protect and revitalize watersheds and wetlands."

Thank you, Cargill, for supporting Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge!

Like the Refuge? Let's be friends.



If you enjoy this newsletter written by our staff and Refuge employees, [please consider joining or renewing your membership with Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends for \\$25](#). If we all pitch in a little, we can make a big difference in supporting the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Sign up to receive this newsletter every month in your email box at <https://www.mnvalleyrefugefriends.org/newsletter>.

Thank you!

Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends
Engaging people with Nature.

Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Visit the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Bloomington Education & Visitor Center

3815 American Blvd E
Bloomington MN 55425

Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center

15865 Rapids Lake Rd
Carver, MN 55315

Both buildings are currently closed due to COVID-19. Trails are open from sunrise to sunset 365 days a year.