



See video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBM77O816VI&t=6s>

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge staff members celebrate World Wildlife Day by telling us about their favorite plants and animals. Do you have a photo or video from the Refuge you'd like to submit for possible publication? Please send it to [hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org](mailto:hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org).

## Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends Currents

Issue 8, Volume 1 | March 12, 2020

Dear Friends:



Every year, we have celebrated World Wildlife Day, a day set aside by the United Nations to celebrate and raise awareness for the world's wild animals and plants.

What was the animal or plant that sparked your passion for wildlife? For me, it was the lightning bug or firefly that lighted my evening hours in Illinois as a kid. As the sun went down and the bugs warmed up their nightly blinking show, I loved knowing that a long summer's night of play was ahead of me. Nearly invisible in the twilight, I would catch them in jars or with my hands as they blinked, watching them crawl along my fingers.

Boy, was I disappointed when I learned after moving north that fireflies and boxelder bugs with their black and orange bodies were not one and the same! But the bug celebration continues with my kids during our summer visits down south. And I occasionally come across them during my twilight walks in the woods late summer near my home.

With this mild March, we hope you have a chance to enjoy all the wild things Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge has to offer, especially as birds make their migration north. While you're at it, consider taking a kid close to you on your wildlife spotting adventures. A night of stargazing or fishing or hiking in the woods may just spark their passion for nature, thanks to you.

We hope to see you soon at the Refuge!

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

---

## Meet a Refuge volunteer: Doris Ikier



Pictured above, Doris Ikier and her beloved bark ranger Koda. Bottom left, Puddles the National Wildlife Refuge blue goose mascot.

**How many years have you volunteered at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge?**

Six years.

**What do you do at the Refuge?**

Some of the volunteer opportunities that I do are: Bloomington Visitors Center front desk/Blufftop Nature Store; work on displaying inventory at the Nature Store; help with the EE (Environmental Education) program; volunteer trail ranger; Puddles, the NWR mascot; phenology trail monitoring; help with special events such as planting pollinator plants, Bat Day and Pollinator Day, and whatever.

**What's a commonly asked question about the Refuge?**

What trails are available at the Refuge and what are the trail conditions?

**What is your favorite thing to do at the Refuge?**

I love to hike or snowshoe the trails.

**Outside of the Refuge, what is another favorite outdoor spot?**

[Wild River State Park](#) and Dakota County Regional Parks, especially [Lebanon Hills](#) and [Whitetail Woods](#).



Friends. The Optimist Club is dedicated to "Bringing Out the Best in Kids," which is aligned with our organization's desire to provide youth with opportunities to engage with nature. Pictured from left: Robert "Randy" Petzel, board president, Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends; David Kriesel-Koll, president, Richfield Optimist Club; and Steve Sutter, founder and board member, Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends. Would you like Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends to come speak at your next event or meeting? Contact us at [hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org](mailto:hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org).



## Upcoming events at the Refuge

All events are free to the public but may be canceled due to inclement weather. Events are held at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge's Bloomington Education & Visitor Center unless otherwise noted. Parking is available but may be limited during high-demand events. The Refuge is easily accessible via the Metro Transit Blue Line at the American Blvd. stop. For more information, call 952-854-5900.

### Friday, March 13

#### Gallery exhibition extended through Friday

Don't miss the last day of "Migration and Motion," a series of paintings by Emily Donovan that captures ideas about the environment, seasonal change and bird migration in Minnesota. Each work is created with natural dyes and pigments from plant materials, a process that provides a rich connection to nature. Bird migration and plant growth work together to create healthy ecosystems as they support one another and signal the arrival and departure of seasons. Birds can predict when flowers bloom, bugs arrive, and the weather, and their resiliency or decline can mirror the health of our environment.

### Saturday, March 14

#### Workshop: Plein Air Painting

In the second of Outdoor Painters of Minnesota's 2020 members' workshops, Grand Marais, Minnesota painter Neil Sherman will give a presentation about his process of painting landscapes outdoors in all seasons. Meet in the auditorium, followed by a BYO picnic lunch and paint out in the Refuge. Free. Bring your own art supplies. 10 a.m. to noon.

### Saturday, March 28

#### Puppet Show Series: Journey Home

A child wanders lost and alone in a strange world. The Ancient Ones gently lead the young one on a journey back to their truth as they reconnect with the wild beauty within and without. A Little Coyote Puppet Theater production.

Show is from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Stay after the show to stage your own puppet show. Recommended for ages 3 and up.

### Wednesday, April 1

### **Preventing Bird Deaths through Building Design and Retrofit**

Building glass and lighting can be deadly hazards for birds. Hundreds of millions of build-related bird deaths in the U.S. each year are largely preventable through building design and retrofit. Michael Mesure, co-founder and executive director of the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Canada will share ways that people can reduce bird mortality through education, best practices and legislation. An interactive format will provide opportunities for people to discuss challenges and identify solutions to make buildings safer for our birds.

Presentation is from 6-8 p.m. Enter through administrative entrance. Free. Co-hosted by the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis.

### **Bird Walks at Bass Ponds & Rapids Lake**

Join Refuge volunteer naturalist Craig Mandel for a bird walk to learn about some of the 220 species that stop here during migration. Birders of all levels are welcome to join. Bring along binoculars and a field guide, if you have one. Please dress for the weather. Walks are held Sunday, March 22, and Saturday, April 4, from 8-10:30 a.m. Meet at the Bass Ponds Trails, 2501 86th St. E., Bloomington, MN 55425. A walk will also be held on Monday, March 30, and Monday, April 6, from 8-10:30 a.m., at the Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center, 15865 Rapids Lake Road, Carver, MN 55315.

### **Save the date**

Saturday, May 30  
EcoArts Fest

Saturday, June 6  
Old Cedar Bridge pedestrian and biking bridge grand reopening public celebration  
2-6 p.m.

Saturday, July 18  
Fiesta Mexicana

Sunday, Oct. 25  
Dia de Los Muertos and Family Art Day

Volunteer opportunities are available at all of these events. Please contact us at [hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org](mailto:hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org) if you'd like to learn more.

---

### **Wildlife watch: What's all that noise?!**

by Refuge Education Practicum Melissa Schneider

What's All That Noise?! Answer: Spring! March brings the start of spring and everything starts happening. It's time to expand your senses and take in everything nature is saying. Animals will begin mating: male red foxes can be heard barking at night, and if you seek out our "resident" tom turkeys, you may hear them gobbling and witness their beautiful tail feather displays. Migrating birds start returning: keep your eyes and ears alert for that first American robin, red-winged blackbird, great blue heron, or flock of Canada geese. And of course, with warming days and cool nights, the maple syrup has begun to flow. If you happen upon a tapped tree, listen closely for the faint drip...drip...drip of that deliciously sweet sap filling the bucket.

---

## Saturday, March 28

### Volunteer orientation & Nature's Notebook orientation

The refuge will be holding a Volunteer Orientation for new volunteers the morning of Saturday, March 28. We will go over background information, position descriptions, safety and sign forms.

A Nature's Notebook training will follow in the afternoon for those interested in this community science project tracking phenology through the seasons on the Refuge!

For questions or more information, please contact Sarah Inouye-Leas at [sarah\\_inouye@fws.gov](mailto:sarah_inouye@fws.gov) or 952-858-0724.

---



### What's new at the Nature Store!

We're getting ready for spring in the Nature Store!

New editions of Minnesota's best campsites and camper cabins have arrived, along with multiple new other new titles from Adventure Publications, and bicycle maps.

New plush items include finger puppets and new birds, frogs, coyotes with sound, as well as racoons and bats.

And please consider having a friend become a Minnesota Valley Refuge Friend member by purchasing a gift membership for just \$25.

The Nature Store is located inside the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center and is open 9 a.m.-4 p.m. seven days a week except for holidays and days when the center is closed to the public.

Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends members receive a 10% discount on select items. The store is operated by Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends volunteers, and profits support Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education programs connecting youth at all ages with nature.

---



Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends is a mostly volunteer-driven nonprofit organization that receives its operational funding from its members. Connecting children with nature can improve their mental, physical and emotional health and increase their success in school. Please donate what you can. Just \$15 will send one student to the Refuge three times during a school year. If we all pitch in a little, we can make a big difference.

**Our Contact Information**

Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends  
3815 American Blvd. E.  
Bloomington, MN 55425  
952-858-0737  
[www.mnvalleyrefugefriends.org](http://www.mnvalleyrefugefriends.org)

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage email preferences](#)