



Sara Blood <hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org>

June Currents - News from MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge

1 message

MN Valley Refuge Friends <hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org>

Thu, Jun 10, 2021 at 7:55 AM

Reply-To: hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org

To: Sara Blood <hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org>



Eleven ducklings encircle a mother mallard at Old Cedar Avenue Bridge. Submit your photos and videos taken at the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge for possible publication to hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org. Photo / Diane Madsen



Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends Currents

Issue 11, Volume 2 | June 10, 2021

Executive Director's Note: *This month's letter is written by Richard Sanford. Richard began volunteering at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge about 10 years ago. He is a member of our board and has managed the Nature Store since 2014, roles he will step down from this fall. He plans to continue volunteering at the front*



Richard Sanford

desk when it reopens. Richard, thank you for all you do for the refuge!

Dear Friends,

Sometimes old things get new again.

In 1962, when I was 18, I had just completed my freshman year in college and needed something to do during the summer to help cover my costs for the next year. One of my friends suggested I should apply for a position on the trail crew in Glacier Park as they hired seasonal employees. They hired me sight unseen. I heard later someone didn't show up for work, and they also gave some preference to Montana residents.

I had a great time, learned a lot and discovered how much I loved the natural world. Also, the salary, which was generous for the time paid for much of my education. I worked four summers for the Park Service. Then I took almost 40 years off for my career as a dentist.

After retirement, I dabbled with a few volunteer things, but I knew I wanted to volunteer in a natural setting not too far from home. One day in 2011, I was at the Visitor Center, and the man working at the front desk said his wife was retiring and the two of them would be traveling. He gave me Sarah Inouye's card and said I should contact her. Shortly after interviewing her and Judy Geck, who worked directly with front desk volunteers, I started. I knew I was in the right place. I was very impressed with the expertise and professionalism of the Refuge staff and the other volunteers.

The first year it was not busy with visitors. The Center had been closed for much of 2010 for a major remodeling. I spent a lot of time repairing fishing poles but also got to know Steve Sutter. I found out how the Store was raising money so school children could be educated in the biological sciences and how the Blue Goose Bus Fund was getting them out to the Refuge to do hands-on studies. It seemed like a wonderful idea. Steve had a lot of things going on with Refuge Friends, which he had founded, so I offered to do a little ordering and filing sales tax—behind-the-scenes work. I know without Steve's excellent help, not much would have happened. After a couple of years, I realized our computer system needed updating, and the inventory program was obsolete. I also realized a new operations manual would be needed. Then I met Barb Corriveau, a volunteer who is also a Certified Public Accountant. I told her what needed to be done and that I had no experience with Excel and other things I would need to organize it all. She offered to take on this project.

Without Barb's help, I wouldn't have been able to accomplish any of this. As you can see, the Store has and is a joint effort of many people that have worked very well together and donated hundreds of hours of their time.

Now it is time to move forward again. Doris Ikier has agreed to take over many of my responsibilities. She has been one of our most dedicated volunteers. Barb has found a new updated retail system that should open new opportunities and increase sales.

Meeting visitors has always been the most fun for me. I want to continue to do that, and I will fill in often when someone is needed. I will also help the new manager in any way I can.

Many thanks to all of you.
Richard Sanford

Refuge happenings

Listed event take place at the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center, [3815 American Blvd. E, Bloomington, MN 55425](#). Exceptions will include location details.

Visitor centers update

Information tables will be staffed Fridays-Sundays at the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center, and Fridays and Saturdays at Rapid Lake Education and Visitor Center, from 12 to 4 p.m. We ask that you Recreate Responsibly while visiting. Consistent with CDC recommendations, people who are not fully vaccinated must continue to wear masks in crowded outdoor spaces. Please visit the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife [website](#) for the latest updates, including trail conditions.

Paddle with a Purpose

Date: June 26, 2021

Time: 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Location: Smith Park (SE parking lot) - 998 E 82nd St., Bloomington, MN 55420

Registration required: [link](#)

Join Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge staff for a FREE paddling event the Smith Park fishing pier (SE parking lot) in Bloomington. Participants will learn the basics of paddling while exploring our local waterways. After returning to shore, help give back to our parks by picking up trash and contributing to The Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Initiative community science efforts to reduce litter that travels from here down to the Gulf of Mexico. Socially distant practices will be in place. Please do what you can to keep yourself and others safe. All paddling and trash clean up equipment will be provided. All ages and ability levels are welcome. This event will be held entirely outdoors. Dress for the weather. Restrooms are available. Registered participants will be notified if the event is cancelled due to inclement weather. For more information, contact Christopher Dunham at christopher_dunham@fws.gov or (952) 858-0705.

Pollinator Palooza

Title: Pollinator Palooza

Date: Saturday, June 26, 2021

Time: 1pm- 4pm

Registration required: [link](#)

Celebrate national pollinator week with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Enjoy fun activities for the whole family and anyone interested in learning more about pollinators found on your urban wildlife refuge. Visit the Pollinator Art Shanty for a scavenger hunt, observe *wild* pollinators and construct a community-created bee house, create a unique pollinator craft hosted by Latinx artists, and go home with your own native wildflower seeds to plant! All event activities will be outdoors, rain or shine, and are hosted in partnership with ArtStart and MN Valley Refuge Friends. Dress for the weather. Outdoor restrooms available on-site.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to this event for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning or other accommodation needs to Kara Zwickey at kara_zwickey@fws.gov by the close of business on June 18.



Swoop - There it is!

Online artist exhibition & artist talk

Now-July 2

Swoop - There it is!, an online art exhibition featuring the work of Amy Rice, will be featured now through July 2 at Confluence Gallery at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Learn more about the Confluence Gallery at the Bloomington Education & Visitor Center and our partnership with Artistry by visiting [this link](#) on the refuge website.

Art by Amy Rice

Volunteer alert

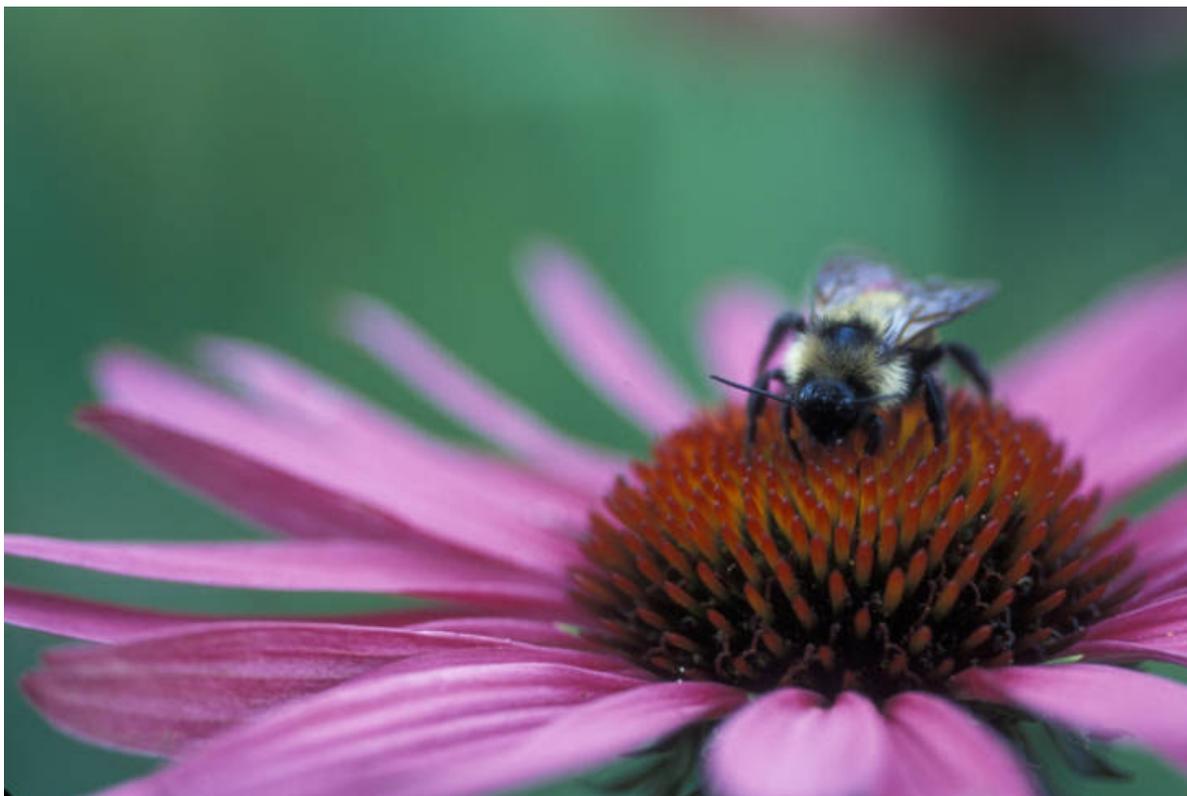
Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends is looking for volunteers to serve as table hosts at the Bloomington Education & Visitor Center on Saturday, June 26, at Pollinator Palooza. Volunteers will sign up for 1.5-hour shifts from 1-4 p.m., share information about the Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends, and hand out free pollinator seed packets to visitors. The table will be outside with a sunshade and seating, and COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place. Please visit our [registration page](#) to learn more and sign up for a shift. Thank you!

Mark Jensen joins MN Valley Refuge Friends board of directors



Dr. Mark Jensen was born and raised in St Louis Park. He practiced general dentistry in Chicago for several years before completing his residency in Endodontics at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Following private specialty practice in Illinois, Dr. Jensen returned to Minneapolis in 1992 to open Endodontic Professionals. Dr. Jensen is excited to be joining the MN Valley Refuge Friends board and to begin volunteering. Dr. Jensen enjoys Gopher football, the Twins, and spending time with his family.

Mark Jensen



A bee rests atop a purple Echinacea flower. **Photo / Ryan Haggerty, USFWS**

Wildlife watch: Celebrate pollinators

by Vincent Altobell-Velasco
2021 Hispanic Access Foundation Intern

During the final week of June, many conservationists and wildlife enthusiasts worldwide will celebrate Pollinator Week, an annual event that promotes the health of pollinators. For more information on Pollinator Week 2021, click [here](#).

Bees and butterflies play a significant role in cross-pollinating the plants they visit, giving them the nickname “pollinators.” Pollinators inadvertently fertilize plants by traveling from flower to flower in search of nectar and pollen that are integral food sources. Our dinner tables are dependent on these important insects that cross-pollinate crops such as broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber, watermelon, apples, and pears. These fruits and vegetables would not be available at the grocery store without bees, butterflies, birds, and even beetles to pollinate them!

While Minnesota is home to thousands of pollinator species, an alarming number of them have experienced declines in both population and distribution due to a combination of habitat loss, climate change, pesticide use, and loss of floral resources. You can create an oasis for insects and birds in your yard and community by choosing native, pollinator-attracting plants and reducing pesticide use. For more information on pollinators, wildlife-friendly plants, gardening, and other pollinator-related topics, visit the Minnesota DNR’s [Pollinator Resources Website](#).

Meet the FWS summer '21 interns

My name is Vincent, and I will be working with Minnesota Valley



Vincent Altobell-Velasco

NWR through the summer as the Hispanic Access Foundation (HAF) intern. Prior to starting this position, I designed and led virtual lessons for local elementary students as one of the refuge's Environmental Education Teaching Interns for the 2020-2021 school year. While it was fulfilling to be able to provide youth with environmental education opportunities in a year where we were unable to host them at the refuge, I am looking forward to getting some face time with the public in my new role. This summer, my time will be spent supporting both the Visitor Services and Outreach teams by engaging in tasks such as occupying the general information table at either of our Visitor Centers, providing interpretive walks at some of our premier sites, hosting walk-up fishing events at various locations throughout the Twin Cities, and participating in trainings to equip myself with skills and knowledge that will allow me to more effectively assist MVNWR in its efforts to manage habitat and connect communities with nature.



Adrianna Llanas

Hello, I'm Adriana and I am working for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge this summer as a Visitor Services and Outreach intern. My appreciation for the environment came as a young adult while navigating my way through college where I learned how critical conservation efforts are for future generations. I spent my undergrad in environmental interdisciplinary studies like Ecology and Natural Resources Management trying to understand some of the pressing issues faced by both society and the environment. Right now, I am a graduate student at Texas Tech University studying Environmental Sustainability where I can dive deeper into the solutions for these rising issues and controversies. I would say sustainability is my passion as it entails all the objectives necessary to find a balance through social, environmental, and economic considerations. I am so glad to be part of this team and learn in this unique Refuge, where we defy the idea that we must be far from society to enjoy the natural world.



Blake Matti

Hi, y'all! My name is Blake and I'm a student trainee at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge for the summer of 2021. I'm a rising senior at the University of St. Thomas, where I'm studying geology and sustainability. I'm from Andover and have spent my whole life studying and enjoying the outdoors. Places like the Boundary Water Canoe Area and the Black Hills in South Dakota further developed my love for nature. Some of my passions include hiking, fishing, and studying the environment! I'm particularly excited to be involved with Minnesota Valley, due to their gorgeous natural features and close proximity to a huge urban population. I hope to see you soon at the refuge!



Before you go

MN Valley Refuge Friends hosted a Zoom discussion in April 2021 with two monarch butterfly experts with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): AnnMarie Krmpotich, National Coordinator-Pollinator Conservation, Science Applications, and Lori Nordstrom, Ecological Services Assistant Regional Director. During this hour, you will learn about monarch butterfly biology, the recent Endangered Species Act decision, and how the USFWS is working to conserve this species. Plus, learn how you and urban refuges like the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge play a crucial role in protecting pollinators. Monarch Hour with the USFWS was made possible thanks to the members of the MN Valley Refuge Friends, the mostly volunteer and citizen support group of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Donate to MN Valley Refuge Friends



Our Contact Information

Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends
3815 American Blvd. E.
Bloomington, MN 55425
952-858-0737
<http://www.mnvalleyrefugefriends.org>

Engaging People with Nature.

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