



Sara Blood &lt;hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org&gt;

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## September Currents - News from MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge

1 message

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**MN Valley Refuge Friends** <hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org>

Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 11:27 AM

Reply-To: hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org

To: Sara Blood &lt;hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org&gt;



"New Old Cedar Ave Bridge" art by Eric Cornett.



## Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends Currents

Issue 2, Volume 3 | Sept. 16, 2021

**Dear Friends,**

You may have heard that the fall leaves may arrive early with muted hues due to the drought. What new ways can we observe fall both in our refuge and throughout the region?

**Look up.** As many of you know, one of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge highlights is the migratory activity. The refuge was established in 1976 to preserve wildlife resources threatened by commercial and industrial development, including a vital migratory corridor.

One of those special places is undoubtedly Old Cedar Avenue Bridge, where the Star Tribune reported just this week in [this article](#) that you can spot waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds, herons, and egrets. And if you want to spread your wings, check out [this article](#) on Explore Minnesota that lists the refuge and five other locations throughout the state — including our neighbors at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge — as state hot spots for watching the fall bird migration.

**Learn about the science behind nature's art.** The Minnesota DNR offered this fabulous [newsletter](#), explaining why certain trees turn yellow and others purple (credit the antioxidants). Scroll deeper, and you will learn how fall affects four of our states' biomes, from coniferous and deciduous forests to tallgrass aspen parklands and prairie grasslands.

**Stop and listen.** The drought did us one favor. The lack of water made a merciful dent in the mosquito population. As nights grow colder, we'll hear less of the constant droning of our state pest. Other favorite sounds of fall include the crunching of leaves underfoot, as well as the tinkling of glasslike ice as it forms along the shore.

**Learn from the experts.** Working with the Fish & Wildlife Service staff who manage the refuge, I am constantly reminded about what I know and have yet to learn about nature. I asked Cortney Solum, our refuge's assistant visitor services manager, about the less obvious signs of fall that you can observe at the refuge. She suggested the blooming of goldenrod, which changes to white puffs. Ducks on the wetlands, monarchs roosting in trees, and sandhill cranes migrating. The opening of milkweed pods, and the cool mornings and warm afternoons.

What are some of your favorite signs of fall? Send us a hi-res image or drop us a line at [hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org](mailto:hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org).

Wherever fall takes, we hope to see you soon at the refuge.

**Sara N. Blood**

Executive Director

Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends



Artwork by Naomi Hart. Hart's work will be featured at the refuge's Confluence Gallery through Nov. 5.

## Refuge happenings

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

### Visitor centers update

Outdoor information desks will continue to be staffed Fridays-Sundays at the Bloomington and Rapid Lake visitor centers, from 12 to 4 p.m. except on Federal Holidays. Please Recreate Responsibly while visiting, and follow current CDC recommendations for mask wearing. Visit the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife [website](#) for the latest updates, including trail conditions.

### Bird walk with Craig Mandel

Date: Sept. 26

Time: 8-10:30 a.m.

Location: [Bass Ponds, 2501 86th St E](#), Bloomington

Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching during the fall season. Walkers will spend time on these walks searching for birds only seen on the Refuge during migration. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars, a favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Led by Craig Mandel, a Volunteer Refuge Naturalist. Reservations are not required.

### Old Cedar Avenue Bridge celebration

Date: Sept. 27-Oct. 2

Week-long celebration with main event on Oct. 2 from 1-6 p.m.

Location: Old Cedar Avenue Bridge Trailhead, [9898 Old Cedar Avenue South, Bloomington](#)

Register for [free nature based programs](#) taking place September 27-October 1. Also, check out the augmented reality tour on the bridge from artists Adam Davis-McGee and Nancy Musininguzi, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge nature play area, and animal cutout-murals by artist Rock Martinez.

The main event on Oct. 2 will include free food, music and family-friendly activities at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge Trailhead. No parking will be available at the event location during the main event. Please plan to bike or walk to the event or park at the [Refuge Visitor Center](#) and take a free shuttle to the event (masks required). A limited number of accessible parking spaces will be reserved at the event location.

For more information about this event go to <https://www.bloomingtonmn.gov/bridgecelebration>.

### Painting in nature

Date: Sept. 29

Time: 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Location: Old Cedar Avenue Bridge Trailhead, [9898 Old Cedar Avenue South, Bloomington](#).

Online registration required: <https://signup.com/go/JZaVMoN>

Join Ranger Logan from Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge for a FREE painting event to celebrate Urban National Wildlife Refuge Day! Participants will be led step-by-step through a nature painting and will be provided all necessary materials. This event is for all ages and no experience with painting is required. Park in the lot at the bottom of the hill near the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge Trailhead and then walk behind the shelter towards the Nature Play Area.

### Now showing at the Confluence gallery

Date: Sept. 13-Nov. 5

The exhibit will be available for online viewing: <https://artistrymn.org/confluence-gallery>

"A Common Thread," a collection by artist Naomi Hart, will be on display virtually in the Confluence Gallery.

Hart tethers the natural world to her life story and pulls forth a source of strength, healing, and inspiration. She shares these stories — where memories and elusive interactions collide and meld, creating a dream-like "now"— through her ethereal artwork. Full of mystery, and surreal metamorphosis, Hart's etchings and drawings layered with beeswax infuse uniquely human attributes with symbols from the natural world, producing a common thread that connects us all.



A family visits the nature play area at Old Cedar Avenue Bridge. **Photo / Thia Xiong USFWS**

## Wildlife Watch: From summer to fall

by Cortney Solum  
Assistant Visitor Services Manager

What are your cues to start making pots of soup, visiting apple orchards and ordering pumpkin spice lattes? Is it the weather or shorter days? Then you have the same cues as monarchs and mallards.

Wildlife key into signals from the environment that it's time to move on for the season. Flowers begin to fade away leaving bursting seed pods on milkweed plants or tufts atop thistles, like beacons for finches to come gather seeds before they blow away in the wind.

Monarchs start searching for the last flowering plants to gather nectar before their journey to Mexico. At the wildlife refuge, you can see monarchs gathering in clusters on tree branches for the evening to stay warm. In the morning, watch for orange flashes on the forest edge as they stretch their wings before venturing out to patches of goldenrod outside the Bloomington Visitor Center.

Waterfowl are rather hearty and will hang around ponds of the refuge until ice begins to form and they can no longer reach their favorite snacks of wetland plant seeds and insects. Flock on down to the Bass Ponds for great views of waterfowl as they gather in Long Meadow Lake.

Find hikes by metro community on the refuge website at [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Minnesota\\_Valley/plan\\_your\\_hike.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Minnesota_Valley/plan_your_hike.html).

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## Before we go

Thanks to Disability Channel Minnesota for featuring Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends on your show last month!



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Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends works in partnership with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge to support a thriving urban refuge through education, conservation and nature-based activities.

Click on the "donate" button to make a financial gift to Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends. Whether you volunteer at the refuge, are a member, or leave a legacy through a planned gift, we truly appreciate your gifts of time, talent and treasure to support the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge!





**Our Contact Information**

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