



Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Nature Center News

August 31, 2015
Volume 34, Issue 2

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Staff:

Larry Dolphin
Director/Naturalist

Mike Goetz
Land Manager

Julie Champlin
Office Manager

Jill DeMoss
Custodian & Event Staff

Maria Anderson
Naturalist/Teacher

Tom Butusov
Naturalist Intern

WEBSITE:

www.hormelnaturecenter.org

Phone: 507-437-7519

Fax: 507-437-8246

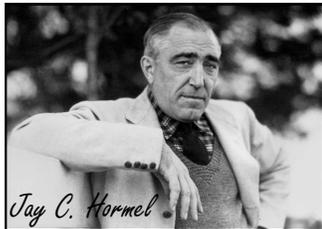
Email Address:

info@hormelnaturecenter.org



Inside Stories

U of MN Monarch program; Walking Meditation Class; Nature Center 8K Trail Run	2
Friends Fall Mushroom Class; Halloween Warm-Up	3
Beginning Birding Class; James Keelaghan Concert	4
Thanksgiving Feast Fundraiser	5
Christmas Crafts; Ken Lonnquist & Friends; Old Befana Musical	6
XC Skiing & Snowshoeing; Dammen Ski Race; Cross Country Ski Lessons	7
2016 Friends Annual Meeting; Friends President's Report; Membership Benefits	8
New Interpretive Center Report; Nature Center Desk	9
Mentorship Program; Volunteer Awards	10-11
Sola Fide Observatory Dates	12



Jay C. Hormel

Leave It Better than You Found It

A young man is walking along the ocean and sees a beach on which thousands and thousands of starfish have washed ashore. Further along he sees an old man, walking slowly and stooping often, picking up one starfish after another and tossing each one gently into the ocean.

"Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" he asks.

"Because the sun is up and the tide is going out and if I don't throw them further in they will die."

"But, old man, don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it! You can't possibly save them all, you can't even save one-tenth of them. In fact, even if you work all day, your efforts won't make any difference at all."

Very early on in my life, I was taught by many to do my part, to "leave it better than you found it." It didn't just happen. It evolved into a lifelong pursuit. I believe I can make a difference.

Recently, I was at the National Convention of the Izaak Walton League of America. A delegate from Wyoming stood up during a debate on a national resolution related to climate change and energy conservation. He called the problem "immense." He suggested that we couldn't solve it and therefore should direct the paid Izaak Walton League staff to "work on something more important." As you can imagine, I was shocked.

I found it totally unacceptable that an Izaak Walton League delegate would make that statement before 250 other delegates. Whether or not you believe in global climate change, we can strive to live more lightly on the planet and thus, make a difference. Some of us can...

- invest heavily in environmentally-responsible companies and stocks,
- buy an energy-efficient car,
- convert our homes to wind and solar energy and go "off the grid," or
- plant 1 or 2 thousand acres of land in prairie and native species.

But many—perhaps most—of us cannot make such major changes. Still, we can do our part. We can conserve energy. We can...

- switch to LED and other energy-efficient lighting in our homes,
- ride a bike to work or school, at least a couple days a week,
- hang laundry on the line instead of using the dryer,
- plant a small native wildflower garden or a rain garden to reduce runoff,
- plant a vegetable garden,
- pick up litter and recycle what we can,
- turn off the lights, and
- visit the Nature Center to educate ourselves and our children about conservation.

These are the principles by which I live and by which we teach at the Nature Center. Our new building will be a model for energy efficiency. We want all visitors, young and old, to understand that through our actions we can make a difference. All things may not be equal for the seven billion people living on this planet, but we will all share the effects of climate change, many of them negative. We also share a responsibility to provide a solution, no matter how insignificant our efforts may seem. We can make a difference. We can make the planet a better place in which to live. We can "leave it better than we found it," and we can do it through our individual actions.

The old man listened calmly and then bent down to pick up another starfish and threw it into the sea. "It made a difference to that one."

For the Wild Ones and the Little Ones,

— Larry Dolphin

Fall 2015 Special Events

Events in Ruby Rupner Auditorium unless otherwise noted.
RSVP by email (info@hormelnaturecenter.org), phone
(507-437-7519), or in person at the Interpretive Center.

Kelly Nail, University of Minnesota Monarch Lab — Monarchs in a Changing World: Conservation of an Iconic Insect Tuesday, September 15, 7:00 p.m.



Monarchs are one of the most recognized insects, both for their beautiful black and orange coloration, as well as for their incredible long-distance migration. They are also a valuable tool in education, conservation, and scientific research. Unfortunately, monarch population numbers have recently been declining. In this talk, Kelly will discuss the biology and natural history of monarchs, causes of the recent population decline, how climate change might be affecting monarchs, and importantly, what efforts we can all make to help conserve this iconic insect.

Kelly Nail has worked in the Monarch Lab at the University of Minnesota for five years, as she pursues her PhD in conservation biology. After graduating from St. Olaf College, she spent the next few years teaching high school biology in rural Mississippi. Since joining the monarch lab, Kelly has been extensively involved in both research and outreach.

Currently, Kelly is looking at the eastern North American monarch population and how their migration might be affected by climate change and non-native milkweed. In addition to research, she has previously given talks at the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Zoo, and has led workshops on monarch conservation throughout the country.

This FREE program is open to the public and is sponsored by Austin Audubon and the Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center. Please RSVP by September 14.

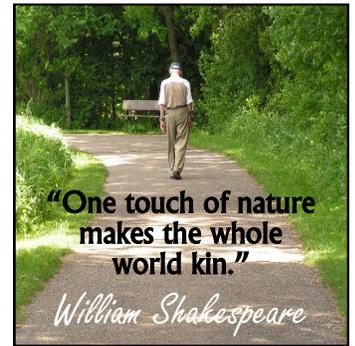


Walking Meditation Class with Chris Anderson Sunday, September 20, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

FREE class, held rain or shine, in the Ruby Rupner Auditorium and on the Nature Center trails.

Pre-registration is required by September 19.

The stillness found in sitting meditation, yoga, and other practices can quickly scatter when we reenter the “real world” and our attention is pulled in many different directions. Walking meditation practice can help us maintain our awareness of the present moment through our entire day. Together we will explore several methods of walking peacefully in nature.



11th Annual Hormel Nature Center 8K Trail Run & One-Mile Kids Run Saturday, September 26, 9:00 a.m.

Enjoy a scenic fall run with your friends and family on the Nature Center trails! All ages and abilities are invited to join us for this race benefitting the Nature Center, organized by Overby Orthodontics. Refreshments will be available to all runners before and after the race, with a water station midway through the course. Entrants will receive a Hormel Nature Center 8K t-shirt (first-come, first-served). Awards will be given out to all age divisions.

Pre-registration: \$18.00 for the 8K, \$5.00 for the One-Mile Kids Run (ages 12 and under). Parents/chaperones for the kids run are free. Race-day registration: \$25.00 for the 8K, \$7.00 for the One-Mile Kids Run.

Register with Dr. Eric Overby:
507-437-3269 • 700 1st Ave SW

Pre-register online or print forms at
www.hormelnaturecenter8k.org

Race-day registration begins at 8:00 a.m.



Friends-Only Fall Mushroom Class with Sammie Peterson

Saturday, October 3, 1:00-3:30 p.m.



Are you fascinated by mushrooms but feel a bit too unsure to delve into the world of fungal foraging? Join Quarry Hill Nature Center's Naturalist/Teacher Sammie Peterson (our former 2014 intern) for this opportunity to become acquainted with a largely unfamiliar world, or to brush up on your identification skills. Sammie is a certified edible mushroom identification expert, a former production manager for a mushroom farm, and has eight years of mushroom-specific foraging experience. We will begin the day with an hour-long presentation on basic mushroom biology, growth habits, safety and identification. Special attention will be paid to the fall mushrooms: puffballs, hen of the woods, and chicken of the woods. After the class, weather permitting, you will have the option to join in a short foray, searching the Nature Center for mushrooms to identify. If conditions are right, we may encounter a variety of tasty fall mushrooms that you would be permitted to take home and eat! (Outside of this class, foraging and collecting are not allowed within the Nature Center preserve.)



You must be a current Friends member to register for this FREE event. If you aren't a member, now is the time to join! Space is limited to 30 participants, and pre-registration is required by October 2.



32nd Annual Halloween Warm-Up Friday, October 9 & Saturday, October 10



Original artwork by Taylor Miland

For two magical nights, the Nature Center (with the help of Matchbox Children's Theatre) is under special enchantment! Take a 45-minute hike and enjoy **"SPOOKTACULAR"** Halloween and nature skits performed by creatures, critters, and spirits of the night. Then relax inside Ruby Rupner Auditorium with cider and treats! Especially designed to appeal to children ages 4-11 (accompanied by an adult), but all ages are welcome!

Every ten minutes, a group of 25 is led into the **"BOO'TIFUL"** forest to meet the assorted spirits that reside there. Select your time slot when you purchase your tickets.

First Hike: 6:50 p.m. • Last Hike: 9:10 p.m.

\$6.00 per person
(includes apple cider & a cookie)



Tickets available
September 9 through October 9.



TICKET LOCATION:
Super Fresh Produce,
Bakery & Garden Center

2104 4th St NW • 507-437-6554



Taylor Miland 2015

*Interested in playing a part in Halloween Warm-Up?
Auditions are held in September at the Paramount Theatre.
Call Matchbox Theatre at 507-437-9078 for more information.*



Fall 2015 Special Events



Beginning Birding Class with Austin Audubon

Part 1 (Classroom): Wednesday, October 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Part 2 (Field): Saturday, October 24, 8:00 a.m.

Bird-watching (birding) is one of the fastest-growing hobbies in this country and around the world, and you can get started right in your own backyard! This class is designed for beginners who want to learn how to attract and identify birds in our area. Topics covered will be types and proper use of binoculars, different feeders and types of seed to attract certain species or multiple species, and who you're likely to see in your backyard depending on your trees and plants and how close you live to water.



Part 1 will be a fun and informative session at Ruby Rupner Auditorium where participants will get hands-on experience using binoculars, get a chance to thumb through several different bird field guides, and learn about the many different sizes and shapes of feeders and where to place them in your yard for the best results. There will be a slideshow for up-close-and-personal identification along with vocalizations for each bird featured.

Part 2 will be a morning bird walk at the Nature Center to see who's visiting the feeders and who's hanging out in the trees, ponds, and grasses along the trails.

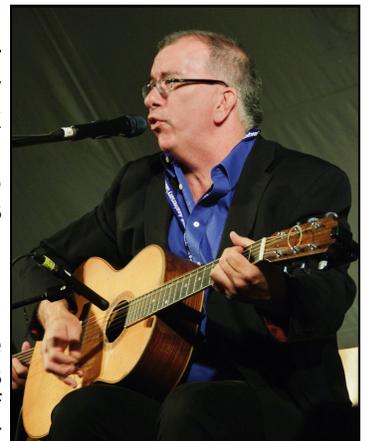
Registration: This class is offered through the Austin Community Learning Center—call 507-470-1700 to register, or contact Pete Mattson (507-567-2570) or Leslie Meyer (507-433-2615). Please check out the Austin Audubon Facebook page for details (and “Like” them while you're there)! **Cost: \$5.00.**

This class is designed for ages 16 and up and is limited to 20 participants, so sign up early!

James Keelaghan — Canadian folk singer-songwriter

Sunday, November 22, 7:00 p.m. • Ruby Rupner Auditorium

Called “Canada’s finest singer-songwriter” by respected American music critic and historian Dave Marsh, James Keelaghan is an artist who has proven to be a man for all seasons. As the calendar pages have turned, for almost a quarter of a century now, this poet laureate of the folk and roots music world has gone about his work with a combination of passion, curiosity, intent and intensity. His masterful storytelling has, over the course of nine recordings, been part of the bedrock of his success, earning Keelaghan nominations and awards—including a Juno (Canada’s Grammy) and acclaim from Australia to Scandinavia.



Possessed of an insatiable appetite for finding the next unique storyline, Keelaghan forges his pieces with brilliant craftsmanship and monogrammed artistic vision, making him one of the most distinctive and readily identifiable voices on both the Canadian and international singer-songwriter scenes. His journey has attracted fans of literate and layered songwriting to join him on his artistic expeditions, some of which weave their way through marvelously etched historical stories with underlying universal themes, others of which mine the depths of the soul and the emotional trails of human relations. His songbook has enlightened, enthralled, and been embraced by audiences around the world.

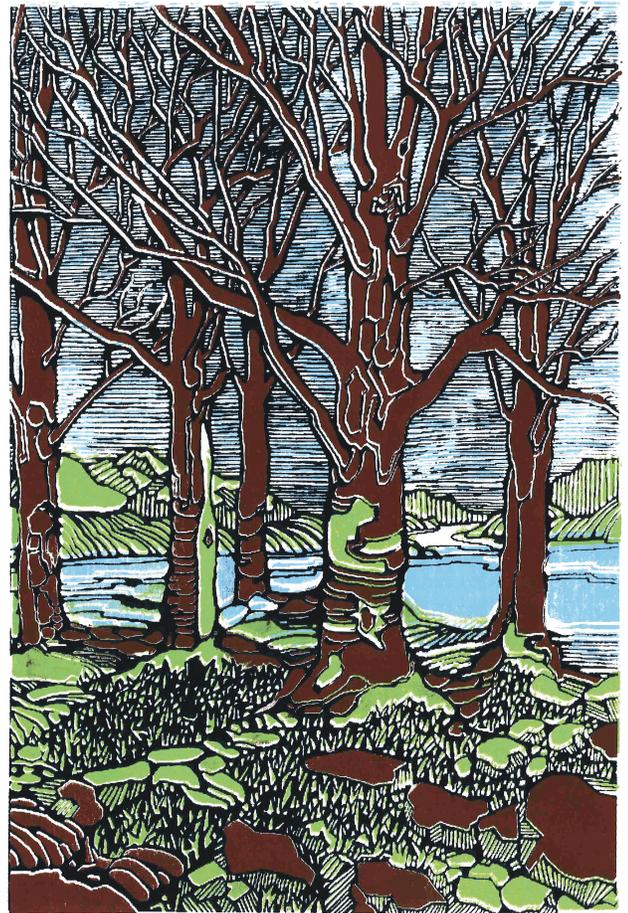
“I’ve always had the urge to write. Some things weren’t being said in the way I wanted to say them; some things were not being written about at all. That’s why I started to write the historical material. That led me to writing my own personal narratives as well,” says Keelaghan, who is always finding a balance between examining the lighter and heavier sides of life. He ties it all together with a powerful vocal delivery and a commanding stage presence.

Keelaghan is a disciplined visionary who loves language and history, a subject in which he earned a degree; he is a skilled thespian, which explains his ability to make an immediate connection with a live audience; and he has an ear for memorable melodies and harmonies that make those melodies glisten.

James has graced our stage four times since 1996, and we look forward to his return. Please RSVP by Friday, November 20, by calling 507-437-7519 or emailing info@hormelnaturecenter.org.

Take a Walk on the Wild Side

Join us at our new location!
Holiday Inn Conference Center
1701 4th St NW • Austin, MN



3/4 'Walk on the Wild Side' Brown Theme by Jay C. Hormel 2015

13th Annual Thanksgiving Feast

Saturday, November 14, 2015

- 5:00 p.m.: Holiday Inn Conference Center doors open
Social hour, silent auctions, & raffles
Music by Peter Jacobs, Adam Stange, & Brenda Radloff
- 6:30 p.m.: Dinner is served — Hormel pork loin, sides, & dessert
Vegetarian and gluten-free meals are available upon request.
- 7:30 p.m.: Short program & live auction
Auctioneer: Al Smith
Master of Ceremonies: Chris Anderson, Friends of the J.C. Hormel Nature Center Board President
Silent auction tables close & raffle winners are drawn throughout the live auction.

Tickets are on sale now (\$35.00 per person for Friends of the Nature Center; \$40.00 for non-members).
Please call the Nature Center at 507-437-7519, or contact Rich & JoAnn Aho,
Thanksgiving Feast Ticket Committee Chairs, at 507-433-6928 or Finn44@charter.net.

Feast Sponsors: Thrivent, Ruth Wunderlich, Hormel Foods,
Hy-Vee, and the Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center

Even if you are unable to attend this year's fundraiser, please consider a donation of goods and/or services to our auction, or make a monetary contribution allocated to the Thanksgiving Feast. Your generosity will be recognized in the program, or you may choose to remain anonymous. Thank you!

All proceeds will go to the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Operations Fund.

Winter 2015-2016 Special Events

Christmas Crafts — Two Classes:

December 3, 6:00-9:00 p.m. - or - December 5, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Join us as we begin preparing for the Christmas holiday season with the traditional crafts of wreath-making and candle-dipping! The wreaths will be made of spruce, cedar, red pine, and white pine; the candles will be made from beeswax. New this year—decorating the candles!

Due to limited space and high demand, pre-registration and pre-payment are required. The minimum age is 12, accompanied by a parent. **Classes do fill up quickly!**



Registration begins on September 30 at 8:00 a.m.

No early signups.

Fee: \$35.00 (includes materials & refreshments)

Refunds will not be offered.

Sign up to attend one of the two sessions:
Session 1: Thursday, December 3, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Session 2: Saturday, December 5, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon
Class size is limited to 16 per session.

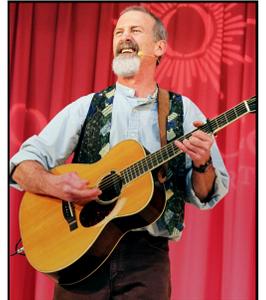


We welcome Ken Lonquist back to the Ruby Rupner Auditorium for the following **free** programs! **RSVP by Thursday, December 3 to attend either program** (507-437-7519, info@hormelnaturecenter.org).

Ken Lonquist, Tom Pease & Friends in Concert Friday, December 4, 7:00 p.m.



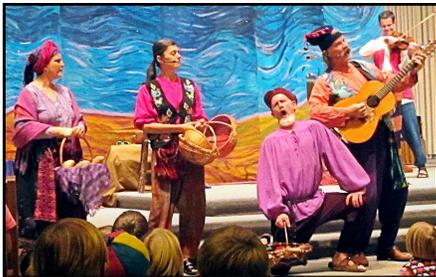
Ken Lonquist is a songwriter from Madison, Wisconsin. A full-time performer for over a quarter century, he has toured widely through the U.S. and Canada at clubs, festivals, and schools. His original repertoire is vast, encompassing songs about nature, love, and environmental and political issues. Come hear old favorites and some new songs from Ken and pianist Dave Adler's latest CDs—*Living In A Circle*, about the things that matter to all people, everywhere, and *The Newsical Muse*, a collection of recent topically humorous songs. And, like Nature Center favorite Tom Pease, Ken is also known for amazing songs for children and families. Almost any song Ken has written or learned along the way might surface in a concert, thanks to Ken and his musical friends' improvisational style. Ken says, "We splash around together, discovering with our audiences which song, rhythm or mood might bubble up next. Jump on in! The water's fine!"



"The most astounding thing to happen to kids and family music since...forever!" — Minnesota Parent Magazine

Ken Lonquist, Tom Pease & Friends in *Old Befana* —

Two Musical Theater Performances: Saturday, December 5, 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.



A special child is coming...but is it rich or poor, black or white, a boy or a girl? Don't miss this original musical and heartwarming holiday tale of an old woman, a bright shining star, and a very special child, with an ensemble cast of some of the Midwest's finest performers! "Anyone could be the one to make a better world," Befana sings. "It could even be...you!"

Old Befana is based on an ancient holiday story, with roots pre-dating Christianity. Befana, with her message of hope and goodwill, is the beloved Santa figure in Italy and eastern Europe, deeply woven into their Yuletide holiday traditions. Ken Lonquist's musical retelling began in 1987 and has delighted audiences of all ages every year since!

2015-2016 Cross Country Ski & Snowshoe Rental

Let it snow! Skiing and snowshoeing are wonderful ways to experience the snow during the winter season and get the benefits of fresh air and exercise! Enjoy the Nature Center's groomed trails, then relax with hot chocolate, tea, or coffee (available for a 50¢ donation) inside the Interpretive Center.

THANK YOU to Belita Schindler for the generous donation, in memory of Dr. Richard Schindler, of \$5.00 for each child's rental during this winter ski season, which reduces the rental fee for children to \$1.00 each.

We will again be offering **FREE** cross country ski and snowshoe rental for adults and children on Thursday afternoons from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., starting January 7, 2016, and continuing into March if snow conditions allow. The Jay C. Hormel Nature Center does NOT REQUIRE the Minnesota Ski Pass on our trails.



Photo by Leah Ferch

Daily Fees (per-person for 3 hours):

Adults

Cross Country Ski Rental: \$6.00

Snowshoe Rental: \$5.00

Children 18 & Under

Cross Country Ski or Snowshoe Rental: \$1.00!



Dammen Nordic Cross Country Ski Race 8K Classical, 13K Freestyle, & One-Mile Beginners/Kids Race Saturday, January 16, 2016



L to R: Race founders Kyle & Kevin Dammen (Photo by Eric Johnson)

Challenge yourself with an exciting race on the Nature Center's scenic, beautifully-groomed trails! Pre-registration by January 8, 2016, is \$15 for adults and \$5 for kids (ages 13 and under). After January 8, registration is \$18 for adults and \$8 for kids. **Only \$5 extra to do both the Classical and Freestyle races!** Skis are available to rent for any participant who needs them.

Each pre-registrant will receive a fleece headband (while supplies last)! Refreshments will be available to all participants in the basement of the Interpretive Center. *Registration forms and more information are available online at www.hormelnaturecenter.org/ski-race, or contact the Nature Center.*

The profits from this event go directly to the Kevin Dammen Memorial Mentorship Fund. Nature Play days and our Summer Adventure Programs benefit directly from this mentorship program. The recipients for 2015 are Quin Brunner, Nathan Drees, Elijah Hirst, Alec Ille, Wyatt DeWild, and Sarah Hecimovich (read more about the program and this year's participants on pages 10 and 11). *In the event of race cancellation due to poor conditions, entry fees will NOT be refunded.*

Event Schedule

8:00 a.m.: Race-day registration and packet pick-up begins

9:00 a.m.: One-Mile Beginners/Kids Race Start

10:00 a.m.: 8K Classical Race Start

11:00 a.m.: 13K Freestyle Race Start



Photo by Michelle Johannsen

Cross Country Ski Lessons Saturday, February 6, 2016, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Classical ski lessons will include instructions for beginners as well as tips for intermediate skiers. Lesson cost is \$6.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children (accompanied by an adult), which includes poles, boots, & skis.

Pre-registration is required (507-437-7519, info@hormelnaturecenter.org).

Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Annual Meeting Saturday, February 6, 2016, 2:00 p.m.

Save the Date!

Mark your 2016 calendar for the Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center annual meeting on Saturday, February 6! Join the Friends for fun, family entertainment, food and refreshments. An invitation will be sent in early January with more information.

What's Happening with Friends



There is a lot of new happening at the Nature Center. A new building. A new venue for the Thanksgiving Feast. New Friends members.

Many of our new members came from our gift memberships, a benefit of membership we will offer again into 2016. If you're a guest member, thank you for coming along with us this year.

We hope you have enjoyed the benefits of membership and some of the many programs we offer. Check the schedule for the events we have planned through the fall and winter, and think about taking advantage of discounted admission to the Thanksgiving Feast coming up in November. And of course we hope you think about renewing your membership, maybe giving a gift membership of your own...

If you gave a gift membership, check in with your member, see how they're liking it. Invite them to Kelly Nail's monarch program, Old Befana, or the Thanksgiving Feast. I hear the Walking Meditation class is pretty good*!

*See page 2. I'm biased.

We're very excited to present the Thanksgiving Feast in our new location, the Holiday Inn Conference Center. Many parts of the event will look familiar from the Feasts of the past, but it's also a great chance to check it out again if you haven't made it the last few years. We are hopeful we will sell out again this year, so don't wait to get your tickets. Funds raised from the Thanksgiving Feast are used for the educational programs the Nature Center offers, including the intern position and many of our guest educators.

The generosity of The Hormel Foundation has made the new building possible. Already the landscape is changing in preparation for groundbreaking next year. Guka the Barred Owl has moved to his new home until the aviary is complete. Designers are working with the Nature Center staff to create one-of-a-kind educational displays that will serve our community for years. The Nature Center has sparked wonder in the people who visit, and our new building will enhance our ability to educate and inspire nature lovers of all ages.

It is our job to make the educational portion of this building a reality. Many people have already given generously, and we have made great progress toward our goal. We still have a lot of work to do, so please consider how you can contribute to this project.

Thank you.

— Chris Anderson, President

Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Mission Statement:

To enhance and encourage environmental education, scientific opportunities, and the enjoyment of nature at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.

Membership Benefits:

An opportunity to support and promote environmental education programming.

The satisfaction of knowing you are helping to preserve the incredible Jay C. Hormel Nature Center for future generations.

A subscription to *Nature Center News*, a semiannual publication of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, delivered to your home or in electronic format to your inbox.

An invitation to the Friends Annual Meeting.

\$5.00 off each child's fee for all Summer Adventure Programs (parent must be a member).

\$5.00 off tickets to the Thanksgiving Feast fundraiser (non-member price: \$40.00).

Members-only bus tour field trip. Cost of bus paid by Friends, participants take care of their own admission fees (when applicable) and food.

Members-only events and classes for youth and families at the Nature Center.

An opportunity to give a one-year gift membership to a non-member. *Information will be included in the membership renewal mailing around Thanksgiving, to be applied in 2016.*

Membership Levels:

Supporter: \$25-\$39

Contributor: \$40-\$64

Advocate: \$65-\$99

Steward: \$100-\$149

Patron: \$150-\$249

Founder: \$250-\$499

Lifetime Member: \$500 & up

Please send membership fee to:

Ron Walth, Treasurer

Friends of the Hormel Nature Center (FHNC)

P.O. BOX 83

Austin, MN 55912

Progress Report: New Interpretive Center & Exhibits

We truly are excited about the changes that the next two years will bring. Construction of the new building will begin in the spring of 2016. We've all been busy planning the new exhibits and displays with the Split Rock Studios design team. After generous contributions from the Hormel Foundation and the City of Austin's capital improvement program, we have been working on raising the final \$1.5 million needed for our new Interpretive Center and its educational exhibits. It's not too late to donate; we are still accepting donations for the remaining \$600,000 needed for this project. You can spread out your giving over the next two years, or if you prefer, the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center also accepts stock transfers. Please consider making a donation at one of the levels below, which will be displayed on our donor wall:

Black-capped Chickadee	\$100-\$999
Cedar Waxwing.....	\$1,000-\$4,999
"Timberdoodler" (Woodcock)	\$5,000-\$9,999
"Grumpy" the Great Horned Owl	\$10,000-\$14,999
Ruffed Grouse	\$15,000-\$24,999
Prairie Chicken	\$25,000-\$49,999
"Guka" the Barred Owl	\$50,000-\$99,999
"Red" the Red-tailed Hawk.....	\$100,000-\$149,999
Loon, Minnesota's state bird	\$150,000-\$249,999
Bald Eagle.....	\$250,000-\$499,999
Founders.....	\$500,000-\$999,999
Hormel Foundation	\$5 million (Thank you, Hormel Foundation!)

Right: Split Rock Studios' drawing of a proposed historical diorama for our new lobby—Jay C. Hormel planting one of many trees in what would become the Nature Center.



Once you decide to give and choose your level, please write out your check to Friends of the Hormel Nature Center (FHNC). If your donation is between \$1.00 and \$99.00, please know that all donors will be recognized in a donor album which will be on display along with the donor wall. We will recognize and appreciate all donors at whatever level you may choose to give. Our address is:

Friends of the Hormel Nature Center
PO Box 83
Austin, MN 55912



Right: I+S Group's architectural rendering of the proposed exterior design for our new Interpretive Center.

2015 Scholarship Donors

- Austin Audubon
Austin Izaak Walton League
Mable Hjelman
Elaine Little
Beverly Smith
Zonta Club of Austin
Friends of the
Jay C. Hormel Nature Center
In honor of: George Hartson
Memorials from family and friends of:
Irene Harms
Ruth Rasmussen
Dr. Richard Schindler
Robert Ackerwold
Jillian Flink
Helen Johnson
Ruth Ann Schulz
Robert Boomgard
Thank you, donors!

From the Nature Center Desk

There is still plenty of warm sun ahead, but it won't be long until the breezes begin to cool and the leaves begin to change color. As we reflect over the summer programs, we are happy to report that all our classes were well attended, and a few even had waiting lists! The "Nature Play" days' attendance was significantly higher this summer, with patrons enjoying our new kayaks, archery, dragonfly hunting, crayfish hunting, pond scooping, monarch tagging, canoeing, and more! We gave out 62 summer adventure scholarships to area youth, thanks to 22 generous individual donors and organizations.

Please consider purchasing tickets to the Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Thanksgiving Feast, our 13th annual banquet and fundraiser, on Saturday, November 14, at a new location—the Holiday Inn Conference Center. We do sell out every year.

We invite you to come out and explore the Nature Center this fall and winter. We have a wide variety of programs for you to take part in. You are always welcome here at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.

— Julie Champlin

Wilson Cobb, age 11, won the Friends of the JCHNC 2014 Photography Contest at last year's Thanksgiving Feast. Patrons who attend vote on their favorite photo.

Our photo cards from last year's youth Nature Photography classes sold out fast this year! Cards from this summer's classes will be available starting November 14 at the Thanksgiving Feast. Sets of five cards are sold for \$15.00. Proceeds go to the Friends.



Wilson Cobb

The Kevin Dammen Memorial Mentorship Program



Kevin Dammen loved the great outdoors and readily shared this passion with others, encouraging them to get outside and appreciate nature. He had an adventurous spirit and enjoyed running, skiing, unicycling, storm chasing, kayaking, slacklining, hiking, and camping. In 2009, Kevin co-founded the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Cross Country Ski Race with his brother, Kyle, returning all proceeds to the Nature Center. "He and his brother were just great about getting other young people outdoors, doing stuff in the winter," said Nature Center director Larry Dolphin.

In 2011, Kevin passed away while kayaking on Lake Superior. The Kevin Dammen Memorial Mentorship Program was created in 2012 for junior high, high school, and college students to experience the outdoors as assistants to the Nature Center staff. The mentees receive a small stipend from the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center at the end of the summer, based on hours worked. The youth gain valuable work experience while providing the Nature Center with essential additional staff members to handle the very busy Nature Play days and Summer Adventure classes. Over 1500 individuals participated in these summer programs in 2015!

Past participants in the program include: William Bjorndal, Matthew Tylutki, Kendra Goetz, Mason Wollersheim, Jacob Mueller, Tyler Bundy, Quin Brunner, Paiton Schwab, and Wyatt DeWild. Our summer 2015 mentees were Sarah Hecimovich, Quin Brunner, Alec Ille, Elijah Hirst, Wyatt DeWild, and Nathan Drees. (Read about their experiences below!) By helping the Nature Center provide summer programming, these young people are truly assets to our community. *Thank you all for your many hours of work for the Nature Center!*

- Julie, Larry, Maria, Tom, & Taylor

Mentorship Program Participants

Wyatt DeWild

"I originally took part in the mentorship program as part of my internship to graduate from college. I never could've dreamed of the life-changing impact it would have on me and the skills and relationships I would derive from it.

"For someone who likes to stay active and involved, this was a great fit for me. Between Nature Play each week, to helping with the summer classes, to the Water Festival, and finally the Fair, there is never a dull moment when you're in the mentorship program. You are constantly learning new things. I never knew all the Nature Center had to offer, and this program showed me firsthand the vast array of programs and activities that go on out here.

"One of the biggest rewards I gained from the program was seeing how much the kids enjoyed themselves out here and the sense of pride I felt knowing I was a part of that experience. Some of my favorite memories were helping with the Nature Photography classes and seeing how talented kids were with cameras, helping prepare for and work during the Water Festival, and the Eagle Bluff Canoe Trip.

"Not only do you learn valuable skills in the program, but you also gain valuable friendships that, for me personally, I will cherish and maintain in the years to come. The mentorship program was truly an eye-opening and rewarding experience for me, and I feel extremely grateful and privileged to have had the opportunity to take part in it."



Sarah Hecimovich

"I have really enjoyed getting to work at the Nature Center this summer. I have had so many great experiences and have learned a ton! I enjoyed getting to know more about dragonflies, damselflies, and pond creatures, and helping teach classes. Getting to know new people is always another awesome thing. There is something special about being at the Nature Center when the sun is shining, there is a slight breeze, and you are scooping the pond, kayaking, or tagging monarch butterflies. When you are in the Nature Center's mentorship program, you will be working, but it is educational and fun! You will usually find yourself smiling while you are driving one of the trail access vehicles (a golf cart) to clean up after Nature Play, putting away kayaks, or even making Guka the Barred Owl's meal. I have enjoyed working this summer at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, and I hope to be back next year."

Alec Ille

"I was interested in the mentorship because I wanted to spend more time at the Nature Center. I have always liked coming here to run on the trails, and I thought this experience would get me closer to that; plus, I remember coming out to cross country ski last winter and meeting Quin, who seemed to be having fun working here. It has been a good experience! I have made some new friends, helped with Nature Play and classes, and was able to run more out here on the trails. One memory that stands out in my mind was when Quin brought a hammock, and we decided to hook it up during a slow time and used it to 'chill out' and observe nature."



Mentorship Program Participants

Elijah Hirst

"I had a lot of fun participating in the Nature Center's mentorship program this summer, and this was a great experience. Being able to help out with canoeing and kayaking, pond scooping, and the survival game was really enjoyable, and to see kids having fun doing it made it even better. One of my favorite things I helped with was when we made paper in the Junior Ranger Rick class. The food processor kept shooting paper all over Tom. It was messy, but we eventually cleaned it up. This mentorship program was an awesome way to spend my summer, and I hope to be back."



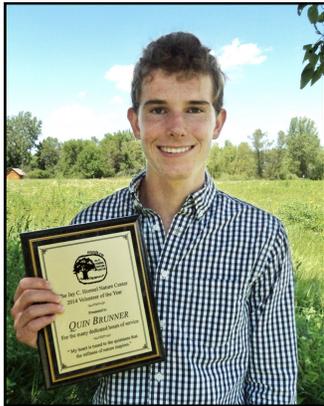
Nathan Drees

"My experience with the Nature Center's mentorship program was nothing but fun and a learning experience. I learned more about nature and having a job. It was fun being able to work with kids and help them learn about the beautiful world around them. I am glad I was able to be a part of this great program, and I would do it again."

Volunteer Award Recipients: Quin Brunner & Colleen Weimer

The efforts of the Friends and volunteers help us strive for the best in all we do. We succeed because of the volunteer commitment to the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center. These two special volunteers are being recognized for dedicating their time and efforts to fulfilling the needs of the Nature Center.

2014 Volunteer of the Year: Quin Brunner



This is only the second time we have given the JCHNC Volunteer of the Year Award to a high school student. We are impressed with the quality of our youth who are supporting our efforts at the Nature Center. Quin's attitude is refreshing, and he is very enthusiastic about sharing his passion for nature, whether it's cross country skiing in the winter, kayaking, Nature Play activities, or working as a Sunday volunteer in the Interpretive Center. Quin positively connects with our youth and people of all ages. *We appreciate your caring attitude, Quin!*

Why does Quin volunteer?

"I volunteer because I believe in what we're working for. I enjoy getting to know people in the community who are passionate about and appreciate what we do. I continue to learn many skills and find new passions. These experiences have helped me develop as a person, and I am glad to have the opportunity to be a part of such a good organization."

2014 Sigurd Olson Leadership Award: Colleen Weimer

Colleen Weimer has been an exemplary board member of the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center for six years, and her keen sense and expertise in financial investments have been strong assets. In fact, her financial advice has been invaluable to the board. She has also been an active member by serving on the Thanksgiving Feast committee and volunteering in our programs for many years. Colleen's leadership has always had a vision, and she knows how to share this and inspire others to accomplish their goals. The Sigurd Olson Leadership Award is named after an icon in Minnesota who fought hard for us to be able to live a sustainable, quality life on this planet. Colleen has worked diligently for the Nature Center and Minnesota. *We can't thank you enough for your strong spirit and generosity, Colleen!*

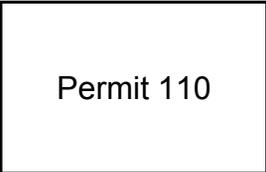
Why does Colleen volunteer?

"When I was asked to be on the Friends board, I wasn't sure about doing that. Other boards that I had been on were kind of boring, and I felt that their mission statements were just that, in phrase only. The idea was always to raise money, *always* that, but then once that was achieved, we had better keep it for a rainy day, or at least not really give it out or put it to the work it was intended for...drove me nuts! There always seemed to be a certain group that wanted to keep the funds, just in case. In case of what!?"

"But when it came to the Nature Center, I found that, no, that was not the case. Every penny we raised went to benefit the people of Austin and the surrounding communities. Through the many speakers, singers, and teachers, both young and old benefit from what goes on at the Nature Center. It is truly a jewel for our community. Mission statement fulfilled!"

"Another thing I liked was that Larry—from the get-go—said that we have a working board. And that is what happened. Every person on the board did something, contributed in their own way; it was great—a true privilege of being a part of the Nature Center. Thank you!"





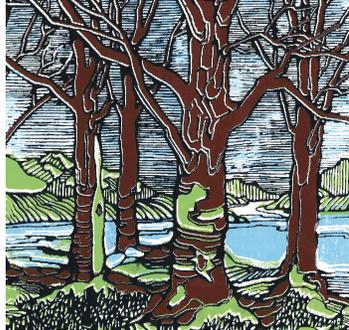
Don't wait to get tickets for this year's

Thanksgiving Feast

Saturday, November 14

at the Holiday Inn Conference Center

Join us for social hour, music & entertainment, raffles, silent & live auctions, and a delicious meal!



Details on page 5.

Take a Walk on the Wild Side

Astronomical Viewing: Sola Fide Observatory

Sola Fide Observatory is open to the public on specified Saturdays throughout the year. On these select evenings, Keith Snyder and other enthusiastic volunteers staff the observatory to assist the public in viewing the heavenly bodies. Come out and discover fascinating facts about the night sky from our resident experts as they host free public programs for our community!

DIRECTIONS

- From Interstate 90, take Highway 218 south 2.5 miles to County Road 28.
- Turn right (west) one mile to stop sign.
- Turn left (south) on County Road 29 for 1.5 miles to 180th Street.
- Turn right and go west for 1/4 mile. The driveway is on the right.

GPS COORDINATES

N43° 37.000', W092° 58.550'

For more information, call the Nature Center at 507-437-7519, or call volunteers Keith Snyder (507-440-1244) or Yosselin Xicara (507-460-2575).

Viewing Schedule

September 12	9:00 p.m.	
September 19	9:00 p.m.	Moon
October 10	8:00 p.m.	
October 24	8:00 p.m.	Moon
November 7	8:00 p.m.	Moon
November 14	8:00 p.m.	
December 5	8:00 p.m.	
January	No program	
February	No program	
March 12	8:00 p.m.	
March 19	8:00 p.m.	Moon



Please recycle this newsletter!