

Jay C. Hormel

Nature Center News

Fall & Winter 2017-2018

Volume 36, Issue 2



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Director's Desk

Luke Reese, Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Director/Naturalist

This summer, a group of students and I scared up a doe and two fawns as we hiked up to the tower. It was majestic watching those fawns leap through the prairie trying to keep up with their mom. I loved that sight, yet I worried. This fall, we will be planting 50 oak trees on the north end. Based on experience planting trees here at the Nature Center, I know that deer can be very hard on newly planted trees.

As you may have heard, we at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, and elsewhere in the city of Austin, are holding a special deer hunt this fall (from November 1 through December 20). DNR biologists think that the deer population is too high in town and at the Nature Center. The purpose of the hunt is twofold: improve our ecosystem by reducing the deer herd's population so that it is closer to a sustainable carrying capacity, and balance our desire to see these animals with our understanding that too many deer can be quite destructive.

How do we know there is a problem? Historically, there were just not as many deer around as we see today. The problem is that deer are an edge species. Their preferred habitat is the boundary between a forest and field. Historically, the edges were limited because there were large contiguous blocks of forest or prairie on the landscape. These landscapes had smaller edges and plenty of food on the interiors of the forests or prairies. When European settlers arrived, they plowed the prairie and cut down much of the forest, chopping up our large forests and prairies into smaller and smaller chunks. This fragmented the landscape, which dramatically increased the amount of edge while reducing the areas for deer to find food. More deer + less food = deer eating stuff they shouldn't eat, like the trees, shrubs, and plants in our yards or gardens.

An additional problem that the Nature Center faces are deer that have figured out they can survive here during the winter. They crowd in and eat almost everything that pokes up through the snow (notable exceptions being the invasive plants that are taking over our woods, buckthorn and honeysuckle). This "refuge behavior" makes it difficult for us to accomplish any conservation tasks that involve planting many trees or shrubs.

We are solving these problems by holding a special bow hunt for deer. We first target females to control the population. Fewer deer on the land makes for better habitat and ultimately healthier deer. A hunt teaches deer to have a healthy fear of people. This makes them less likely to damage plants in busy areas.

In making the decision to hold a special deer hunt, we have to balance our desire to see these wild animals with an ecosystem's health and ability to support those animals. The deer will not go away, they will just be striking a better balance with nature.

President's Letter

Peter Mattson, President of the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center

Welcome to the fall and winter activities at your Nature Center! The new Interpretive Center is all we had hoped it would be. Visitor numbers are way up, and kids are having a good time. I'm sure Sha and Wiyaka, the red-tailed hawks, and Guka, the barred owl, have the best accommodations of any birds in the area. The high level of interest in the new building has led to increased use of the Nature Center overall. Come out any afternoon and evening and you'll see a lot of cars and bikes in the parking area. The classrooms, craft area, and conference/resource room work well. Our director, Luke Reese, reported that in July, the solar panels had made more power than the facility uses.

Luke and the Nature Center staff will continue to put together excellent programs for all ages in the Ruby Rupner building, the new Interpretive Center, and outdoors. Big annual events like the Halloween Warm-Up and Thanksgiving Feast are also coming up.

If you get out to the north end of the Nature Center, past the tower and over to the Big Bluestem Loop, you'll see the results of this year's restoration work, made possible by a Conservation Partners Legacy Grant from the state and contributions from Friends members. Fifty new acres of prairie have started, though patience is key, as it takes about three years for a newly-seeded prairie to really get established. The invasive woody plants are nearly gone from the woods up there, leaving a savannah-like environment similar to what would have been here before European settlement. We're applying for another grant for 2018 and following years to expand this work to the south, down to the top of the Wetwoods Trail along Dobbins Creek.

Luke and his staff are relying on volunteers to help cover public hours at the Interpretive Center. We thank the volunteers who have been so generous with their time, and I know we can always use more help to maintain the open hours within the center's staffing constraints. So if you'd be willing to help out, please give them a call at 507-437-7519, and they'll get you set up.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Nature Center. Be sure to get out and enjoy it.



15th Annual Thanksgiving Feast Fundraiser

Holiday Inn Conference Center • November 18, 2017

On Earth Day, April 22, 2017, the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center opened a new, state-of-the-art interpretive building. Since the grand opening, literally thousands of people of all ages, from near and far, have stopped to visit, experience, and learn at Austin, Minnesota's newest environmental education facility. We're extremely thankful and fortunate to have an area dedicated to bountiful outdoor and educational opportunities to share with an ever-growing number of area students and visitors. Our mission statement applies to all ages: *to enhance and encourage environmental education, scientific opportunities, and the enjoyment of nature at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.*



Our programming, intern staffing, and mentorship program cannot happen without the support of the community. The Nature Center needs volunteers, resources, and financial assistance. **We need you!** Here's how you can help:

Attend the Thanksgiving Feast. For the price of a ticket—\$35.00 for Friends of the Nature Center members, \$40.00 for non-members—you will enjoy a delicious dinner, music, and entertainment, and have the opportunity to socialize, participate in raffles, and bid on many various auction items and services. Please call or email Rich and JoAnn Aho for tickets at 507-433-6928 or email finn44@charter.net.

Consider a donation of goods and/or services. We will offer these donations as part of our live auction or silent auction tables.

Make a monetary contribution allocated to the Thanksgiving Feast. Contributions large and small are equally valued and acknowledged.

Thank you in advance for supporting the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center. Your generosity will be recognized in the Thanksgiving Feast program (or you may choose to remain anonymous). Please contact the Nature Center staff at 507-437-7519 or info@hormelnaturecenter.org to make your generous gift or for more information.

Duane Champlin, Thanksgiving Feast Chair

Your donation is tax deductible (except for \$10.00 of the banquet ticket cost). The donor received no goods or services in exchange for the contribution. Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center—501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. MDR Certificate number: ES 36716. IRS Fed ID number: 41-1628298.

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

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

www.hormelnaturecenter.org/friends-of-the-hormel-nature-center

The Volunteer Page



Summer Mentees

Thank you to all of our mentees who helped over the action-packed summer months: Andrew Alberts; Isaac Blum; Natalie Haynes; Sarah and Hannah Hecimovich; Alec Ille; Adrianna, Kali, and Kaitlin Meiergerd; Zach Robinson; Katherine Schramek; Breanna Smith; Toria Strampe; Winston Walkup; and Ray Wicks. Without these participants in the Kevin Dammen Memorial Mentorship Program, the Nature Center wouldn't be able to offer all of its fantastic summer programming. All together, these mentees put in over 600 hours of work!

Thank you to all of our hardworking volunteers who have donated their time to help the Nature Center put on quality events and programs throughout the year!

Rich & JoAnn Aho*
 AHS Soccer Team
 Robin Airey
 Rhonda° & Andrew Alberts
 Chris Anderson*
 Janet Anderson
 Clint Asprey
 Eszter Baráti
 Haley Battin
 Terri Bergstrom
 Margo Bissen
 Lee Bjorndal°
 Will Bjorndal
 Mark Bliese

Julie Brunner*
 Quin Brunner
 Ann Bundy
 Phil Burkhardt*
 Jim Burroughs
 Duane Champlin*
 Ruth Collette
 Dave & Diane Dammen
 Evie Diekman
 Joe*° & Linda* Dolan
 Larry Dolphin
 Cheryl Dunlap
 John Duren
 Julie, Sarah, & Hannah Hecimovich
 Bill & Helen Holder
 Elden Huemann
 Jerry*° & Karen* Ibberson
 Darrell*° & Diane* Ingvaldson
 Phyllis Jorgensen
 Prashant Karki

Ed Koch
 Lorraine Krausert
 Gordy & Marsha Kuehne
 Greg Larson°
 Jody LeVasseur
 Miriam Luehmann
 Pete*° & Karen* Mattson
 Jill° & Joe Merten
 Kevin Murray
 June Nelson
 Caitlin Olson*
 Diane Petrik
 Leanne Poshusta
 Scott & Lynna Reese
 Zach Robinson
 Stacy Rowbal*
 Arlen Schamber*°
 John Schramek
 Dorothy Schulz
 Beth Schwab
 Diane Sheedy
 Mike Skiba

Dick Smaby
 Susan Strampe
 Terry & Sherry Taylor
 Tom & Alice*° Tylutki
 Dick Waldman
 Ron* & Darlene*° Walth
 Larry Watkins
 The Williams Family
 Kristine Wolner*
 Gary*° & Marjorie* Zimmerman

* Thanksgiving Feast Volunteer
 ° Friends of the Hormel Nature Center Board Member

Current Staff

Luke Reese, *Director/Naturalist*
 Mike Goetz, *Land Manager*
 Julie Champlin, *Office Manager*
 Maria Anderson, *Naturalist/Teacher*
 Jill DeMoss, *Custodian/Event Staff*
 Savanna Dahl, *Naturalist Intern*

Special Award Recipients 2016

These volunteers received their awards at the Volunteer Appreciation Night on March 28, 2017.

2016 Nature Center Volunteers of the Year

Rich and JoAnn Aho: Rich and JoAnn have worked for years behind the scenes to help us organize the Thanksgiving Feast and with other thankless tasks. This year, we thanked them with a Volunteer of the Year Award.

Alice Tylutki: Alice has worked tirelessly as a member of the Friends board, Thanksgiving Feast committee, and the Interpretive Center dedication committee. She is a very deserving Volunteer of the Year recipient.



2016 Sigurd Olson Leadership Awards

Pete Mattson: Pete has been leading the way as the President of the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center and by jump-starting the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant to restore more prairie and eradicate invasive species.

Arlen Schamber: Arlen is a Friends board member who was an integral part of the team that completed the new Interpretive Center, using his engineering expertise to help us ensure a quality product that the Austin community and the Friends of the Nature Center can be proud of.





Fall & Winter Event Schedule 2017



Please RSVP for any event at least one full day ahead of the scheduled time.

September

4 (Mon)

INTERPRETIVE CENTER CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY

9 (Sat)

9:00 a.m. Tickets for Halloween Warm-Up go on sale at Super Fresh Produce.

Sola Fide Observatory: 9:00 p.m. Moon viewing, with other objects of astronomical interest

11 (Mon)

Laura Merten: 7:00 p.m. Join us to learn about the relationship between quality habitat and its importance to wildlife populations!

16 (Sat)

Annual Friends Member Bus Trip: 8:00 a.m. Day trip to the Minnesota Zoo. Price varies. Space is limited.

17 (Sun)

Walking Meditation Class with Chris Anderson: 2:00-4:00 p.m. Learn how to practice awareness of the present moment by exploring several methods of walking peacefully in nature.

19 (Tue)

Savanna Dahl: 7:00 p.m. Learn about the 15 species of cranes found around the world and the work being done to ensure their survival.

23 (Sat)

Nature Center 8k Trail Run: 8:00 a.m. In-person registration begins; **9:00 a.m.** 8k and Kids Race begin. Details can be found at: www.hormelnaturecenter8k.org



Last day of canoe and kayak rentals.

25 (Mon)

Nature Yoga with Kay Middlebrook: 6:30 p.m. Bring a mat and join for one session or all six! Free, but donations welcome. For ages 12+.

29 (Fri)

9:00 a.m. Registration for Christmas crafts opens.

30 (Sat)

Sola Fide Observatory: 9:00 p.m. Moon viewing, with other objects of astronomical interest

October

02 (Mon)

Nature Yoga with Kay Middlebrook: 6:30 p.m. See details on Sept. 25.

Programs are subject to change.

October (continued)

09 (Mon)

Nature Yoga with Kay Middlebrook: 6:30 p.m. See details on Sept. 25.

13 & 14 (Fri & Sat)

34th Annual Halloween Warm-Up: First Hike: 6:50 p.m. • Last Hike: 9:10 p.m. Every ten minutes, a group of 25 is led into the “boo”tiful forest to meet the spirits that reside there. Select a time slot when purchasing tickets. **\$8.00 per person** (includes refreshments). Tickets go on sale Friday, Sept. 9 at Super Fresh Produce—2101 4th St NW. Interested in playing a part in Halloween Warm-Up? Call Matchbox Theatre at 507-437-9078 for more information.

14 (Sat)

Sola Fide Observatory: 8:00 p.m. Astronomical viewing

16 (Mon)

Nature Yoga with Kay Middlebrook: 6:30 p.m. See details on Sept. 25.

17 (Tue)

Julie Westerlund: 7:00 p.m. Learn about our local water legacy.

23 (Mon)

Nature Yoga with Kay Middlebrook: 6:30 p.m. See details on Sept. 25.

28 (Sat)

Sola Fide Observatory: 8:00 p.m. Moon viewing, with other objects of astronomical interest

30 (Mon)

Nature Yoga with Kay Middlebrook: 6:30 p.m. See details on Sept. 25.

November

02 (Thu)

John Duren: 7:00 p.m. Join John as he shares the stories of his most recent photography adventures.

11 (Sat)

Sola Fide Observatory: 8:00 p.m. Astronomical viewing

18 (Sat)

Thanksgiving Feast Fundraiser: SEE PAGE 3 for more information.

23-24 (Thu-Fri)

INTERPRETIVE CENTER CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING

25 (Sat)

Sola Fide Observatory: 8:00 p.m. Moon viewing, with other objects of astronomical interest

For more information, visit our website at www.hormelnaturecenter.org, contact the Nature Center directly by phone (507-437-7519), email (info@hormelnaturecenter.org), or stop by in person.



Winter Event Schedule 2017-2018

Please RSVP for any event at least one full day ahead of the scheduled time.

November (continued)

28 (Tue)

Austin Utilities: 7:00 p.m. Learn how to participate in the Austin Utilities community solar project.

30 (Thu)

Christmas Crafts: Session 1—6:00-9:00 p.m. See details on December 2.

December

Cross country ski and snowshoe rental begins (dependent on snow conditions). Visit our website or check with staff for trail conditions and more information.

02 (Sat)

Christmas Crafts: Session 2—8:30-11:30 a.m. • Session 3—1:30-4:30 p.m. Fee: \$35.00 (includes materials & refreshments). For ages 12+. *Refunds will not be offered.* Registration must be in-person and opens September 29 at 9:00 a.m.

09 (Sat)

Sola Fide Observatory: 8:00 p.m. Astronomical viewing

12 (Tue)

Kevin Strauss: 7:00 p.m. Enjoy family fun with holiday tales from around the world.

19 (Tue)

The Association Jazz Combo: 7:00 p.m. Enjoy an evening of holiday and nature-themed jazz featuring guest saxophonist, Brian Koser, and Nature Center summer intern, Jacob Burkhardt.

24-25 (Sun-Mon)

INTERPRETIVE CENTER CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS

January

1 (Mon)

INTERPRETIVE CENTER CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

06 (Sat)

Dammen Cross Country Ski Race Fundraiser See details on page 7.

15 (Mon)

INTERPRETIVE CENTER CLOSED FOR MLK DAY

Check our website for more upcoming events:
www.hormelnaturecenter.org/programs--events

January (continued)

20 (Sat)

Ski Lessons: 8:30 a.m. Want to learn how to cross-country ski? Lesson cost of \$6.00 for adults and \$1.00 for kids includes equipment rental. Space is limited.

Friends Annual Meeting: 12:30 p.m. Stop in for a bowl of hearty chili, a presentation on prairie and forest restoration by Paul Bockenstedt, and a brief annual meeting for the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center.

February

08 (Thu)

Alex Watson: 7:00 p.m. "The Birds from the Bookshelf"

19 (Mon)

INTERPRETIVE CENTER CLOSED FOR PRESIDENT'S DAY

22 (Thu)

Tom Pease: 10:00 a.m. Senior Program; **7:00 p.m.** Family Program

March

10 (Sat)

Family Maple Syrup Class—Friends only: 2:00-4:00 p.m. Join Nature Center staff to learn about the maple syrup process and get a chance to taste some freshly made syrup!

Sola Fide Observatory: 8:00 p.m. Astronomical viewing

24 (Sat)

Sola Fide Observatory: 9:00 p.m. Moon viewing, with other objects of astronomical interest

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Sola Fide Observatory

Open to the public on specified Saturdays throughout the year (see schedule on pages 5 & 6). 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 the 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 will be on your right. (*GPS Coordinates: N43° 37.000', W092° 58.550'*)

For more information, call the Nature Center (507-437-7519) or volunteer Keith Snyder (507-440-1244).

For more information, visit our website at www.hormelnaturecenter.org, contact the Nature Center directly by phone (507-437-7519), email (info@hormelnaturecenter.org), or stop by in person.

Become a Friends Member

If you love the Nature Center, help sustain all the programs you enjoy with a Friends of the Hormel Nature Center Membership! Becoming a Friends Member is a great way to support and promote environmental education programming in our community. Become a member for a full year for a contribution of \$25 or higher.

Individual & Family Membership Benefits

- **\$5.00 off** each child's fee for all Summer Adventure Programs (parent must be a member)
- **\$5.00 off** tickets to the annual Thanksgiving Feast fundraiser
- **Access** to members-only events and programs for youth and families
- **An invitation** to the annual members-only bus day trip
- **An invitation** to the Friends Annual Meeting
- **An opportunity** to give a one-year gift membership to a non-member
- **A subscription** to *Nature Center News*, to stay up-to-date on all that's going on at the Nature Center, with special events, nature facts, and more! This publication will be delivered by post or email.

New this year! Our resident bees have been working hard, and we now have honey available for purchase! Each one-pound bottle of raw honey is \$12.00.

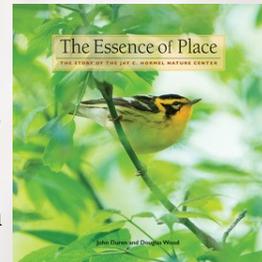


The Essence of Place: The Story of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center

Written by Douglas Wood,
Photography by John Duren

ALL profits go to the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center, whose support preserves the Nature Center for the future.

The book is available in the Interpretive Center, as well as these Austin locations:



Sweet Reads:

407 North Main Street

Super Fresh Produce:

2101 4th St NW

DAMMEN NORDIC SKI RACE

Saturday, January 6, 2018

- **8:00 a.m.:** Packet pick-up begins
- **9:00 a.m.:** One-Mile Beginners/Kids Race
- **10:00 a.m.:** 8k Classical Race
- **11:00 a.m.:** 13k Freestyle Race

All proceeds go to the Kevin Dammen Memorial Scholarship Fund for the summer mentorship program.

Register by December 29 for a discounted entry fee.

Details: www.hormelnaturecenter.org/ski-race

Ski & Snowshoe Rental— Daily Fees (For 3 hours):

Adults

Cross Country Ski Rental: \$6.00
Snowshoe Rental: \$5.00

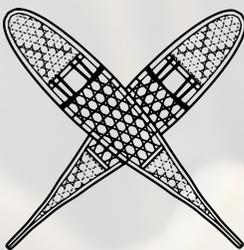
Children 18 & Under

Ski or Snowshoe Rental: \$1.00!

Coffee, Tea, or Hot Chocolate
\$0.50 Donation

Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

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 inside the Interpretive Center.



We offer FREE cross country ski and snowshoe rental on Thursday afternoons from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., starting January 4, 2018, and continuing into March if snow conditions allow.

Never skied before? Learn-to-Ski will take place on Saturday, January 20, 2018, at 8:30 a.m.

The Nature Center does not require a Minnesota Ski Pass.

Trail condition updates are regularly posted on skinnyski.com, with links on our website and Facebook.

Hours:

- Monday-Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.*
- Thursday: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.*
- Sunday: 1:00-5:00 p.m.*

*Skis need to be returned 15 minutes before closing time.

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





Jay C. Hormel Nature Center
PO Box 673
1304 21st St NE
Austin, MN 55912
507.437.7519
www.hormelnaturecenter.org

Follow, Like, Review



Ruby Rupner Auditorium Rental

If you are looking for a place to hold a special occasion (graduation, wedding, holiday or birthday party, conference, reunion, anniversary, prom dinner, or memorial), consider renting the Ruby Rupner Auditorium! The fees for rental of the auditorium until December 31, 2017, are \$41.00 an hour with a \$100.00 deposit. Your rental includes free use of our sound system, but there is an additional fee for the use of our projector system (\$25.00).

Beginning in 2018, the rental fee is \$52.00 per hour with a \$100.00 deposit. Also beginning in 2018, there is an additional fee if food or beverages are being served (\$20.00). (Additional fee for use of the projector system remains the same.)

Interpretive Building Rentals

Interested in renting a room or two in the new building? The Gordon Lonning Resource Room can seat up to 20 people and is perfect for hosting a small meeting or conference. The rental fee is \$20.00 per hour with a \$50.00 deposit. The classrooms are also available for rent, on a limited basis, at a rate of \$30.00 per hour with a \$100.00 deposit. A security person is required with all rentals at an additional rate of \$12.00 per hour. The use of technology in the resource room or classrooms requires an additional \$40.00 fee, and if food or beverages are being served, an additional \$20.00. If the rental occurs during business hours, the restrooms will be shared with public visitors. Rentals occurring after business hours will only have access to the rental space and restrooms.

Deposits are non-refundable on all rental spaces. Smoking and alcohol are not permitted. The log cabin is also available for your use with rental of the auditorium, classrooms, and Gordon Lonning Resource Room. For more information regarding rentals, please call Julie or Nature Center staff at 507-437-7519, Monday through Saturday, or visit our website for more information at www.hormelnaturecenter.org. Non-profit organizations will receive ½ off the rentals fees except for the security fee. We schedule events one year in advance.