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The mission of Three Rivers Park District is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system.

My father’s first gift to me was the clean tracks he set through deep snow. Even now, when I walk in the winter forest or slide into my skis, I find my eyes tilted down and only a few steps ahead, still searching for the path he blazed. Losing your father is hard at any age. You pick up his tracks here and there, but it’s never the same.

There is an opening on Lake of the Isles in Minneapolis where the downtown skyscrapers rise like glassy mountains just beyond the mixed canopy of trees and rooftops. On the right kind of winter night, you can see this vista as you ski past glowing ice fishing tents and glide toward laughter and slapping sticks on the skating rink.

Similar sights have stopped me in my tracks at a broomball rink in Northeast and a sledding hill in Powderhorn Park, the skyline never as clear as on a cold night. One of my most vivid childhood memories of my father is of a crisp night like that, when he suddenly froze his skis in the tracks ahead of me and said, “You know, kid, there is no other place in the world like this.”

He was right, of course. At the time, I knew he was right because I knew he only spoke plainly and truthfully. In time, I realized how blessed we were to feel rooted in Minneapolis and how much of our identity is connected to winter. I also realized his statement was only true if you also had a sense of wonder.

And now I listen to my 4-year-old son shuffling his tiny skis behind me, awkwardly but persistently. Recently, he asked if he could ski in front of me. It’s his world now, I suppose.

There are really two things I hope to pass on to him. The value of kindness and a sense of wonder. I believe these are natural instincts, but both must be constantly rekindled. We can impart kindness by broadening our sense of who belongs to our community; all types of people, as well as our shared natural environment and all of its creatures. As for a sense of wonder, clearly we are born curious and brave, but somewhere along the road to adulthood, we stop paying real attention. The world becomes too much and somehow not enough.

When this happens, I begin again by finding my sense of place, being still and remembering that “Kid, there is no other place in the world like this.”

I want my son to experience and to feel what is unique about our particular place on earth. I want him to feel rooted. I hope he explores our world and settles where his heart desires, but that he first develops a true awareness and sense of connection to home.

And when I think of home, I think of this beautiful city that experiences the full and dramatic depths of each season. And most often, I think of being outside in the winter, my senses clear and sharpened. I don’t know how to tell our story any other way. The trouble is, I don’t know that winter will be there for him. I don’t know how much longer he’ll find my tracks in the snow.

For all my father did to guide me, his last gift was a gentle push out of his tracks. To create my own path and to believe that I was enough. As our climate changes rapidly, I fear that my son will have to leave my own tracks sooner than I left my father’s. Winters won’t be the same. Our home is going to change, but he will be enough.

I hope that I have the courage to speak to him plainly and truthfully, to acknowledge our mistakes, and to be open to new traditions. Most important, I hope for the kindness to embrace new communities and the courage to keep finding wonder in a changing environment.

I hope that we all find the tracks ahead of us, and that we then step out of them.

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MAPLE SYRUP TIME!
GIFTS OF THE MAPLE

Ahhhhh, the smell of sweet sap boiling into syrup, the sound of crows and other birds flying overhead, the touch of soft green plants emerging and the flow of tree sap. Spring is coming! Help us with the age-old tradition of maple syruping at Richardson Nature Center and also at The Landing.

We need help with the following:
- Assist with interpretation of the history & process
- Collect, filter & boil sap
- Lead/assist in the sugar bush
- Tap a tree
- Keep the fire rolling
- Hand out syrup samples
- Help set up and clean up

AT RICHARDSON NATURE CENTER:
Training: Saturday, March 7
12:30-1:50p.m.
Saturdays, March 7, 1:30-4:00p.m. (program time is 2:00-3:30p.m.)
Staff Contact: Kimi Aisawa Romportl

AT THE LANDING IN SHAKOPEE:
School days: March 19 and 20, 9:00-3:00p.m.
Public Event–Maple Sugaring Through History Saturday, March 21
9:30a.m.-2:30p.m. (program time is 10:00a.m.-2:00p.m.)
Staff Contact: Adam Barnett

Egg Trail and Rabbit Habits
Friday, April 10 and Saturday, April 11
9:00a.m.-1:00p.m.
(program time is 9:30a.m.-12:30p.m.)
Enjoy the start of spring with this RNC tradition and popular event.

We need help with the following:
- Greet and check-in participants
- Engage families in outdoor games
- Interpret live reptiles and amphibians
- Handle live rabbits
- Serve refreshments
- Interpret bird nests and eggs
- Dress up as a rabbit and pass out treats
- Interpret raptors (current raptor care volunteers only)
- Assist with craft activities
- Set up and clean up

We will need many volunteers to make this annual event a success. Snacks will be provided.

Staff Contact: Monica Rauchwarter

Silly Science & Crafts
Saturday, March 28, 1:00-4:00p.m. (Program time is 2:00pm-3:30pm)

We need 5-6 people to help engage families with fun science projects and crafts, as they rotate between stations. Also help with program set up and clean up.

SUMMER DAY CAMPS
Weekdays, June 9-August 27

Welcome and engage 4-13 year olds in fun, nature-based activities, indoors and outside.

Preschool camps are 9:30a.m.–noon. Older children (6-8 years and 9-13 years) camps are 9:00a.m.-3:00p.m. Volunteer shifts run 3 or more hours.

June 9-12 Ranger Survival School Camp
June 16-19 Little Minnesotan Camp*
June 23-26 Forts, Fires, and Fishing Camp
June 30-July 2 Marvelous Mammals Camp*
July 7-9 The Art of Nature Camp
July 14-17 Sun + Rain = Rainbows Camp*
July 21-22 Curious Nature Collectors Camp
July 23-24 Slimy and Grimy Camp
July 28–30 Muddy and Messy Camp*
August 3-6 Raptors: Hunters of the Sky Camp (2 age groups)
August 11-13 Mysteries of the Monarch Camp*
August 18-21 Junior Minnesotan Camp (2 age groups)
August 25-27 Balance, Jump and Climb Camp*

*These are preschool-aged camps

SUNDAY FREE FAMILY FUN DAYS
Most Sundays, 2:30-4:15p.m.
(Program time is 3:00-4:00p.m.)

We offer a free family program on most Sundays throughout the year. It is getting very popular with families. Depending on the topic, we may need help with equipment, assisting families with nature discovery, and more. Please call for topics and topics.

ADULT/CHILD PROGRAMS
Thursday, March 5 — Animal Babies
Wednesday, April 1 — April Showers
Friday, May 1 — May Flowers
9:45-11:45am (program time 10:00-11:30am)

Do you enjoy working with curious 2-5 year olds? If so, we would appreciate your help! Assist with arrival activities, hike, and more.
Meet volunteer, Benjamin Odegaard

What do you like to do in the spring?
Spring is my favorite time of year! I like to get out and go exploring nature before the mosquitoes get going. I really enjoy looking for the pops of color from our wildflowers and watching all the migrating birds come back to the area.

What is something new you are learning?
I’m currently finishing up my masters degree in environmental education so I would say that there are a lot of new things I’m learning. However, one of the biggest things I’ve learned and continue to experience is just how much Richardson Nature Center is utilized by the public. This gives me hope that more and more people will continue to connect with nature.

What is something about you that people might not know?
I’m a big bird watcher! My life list is 89 birds. Most of them have been found just in my backyard or out and about when visiting different areas. I’m hoping to someday go out on a specific birding trip.

Nature Musings
By Pauline Bold, Interpretive Naturalist

Spirals
Have you ever felt like your life was spiraling? Was it a spiral that lifted you up, or drew you down? Spirals can radiate outward and simultaneously draw in at the same time. Many North American Indian cultures associate counterclockwise spirals (starting from the center) with the concept of rising, and the clockwise spiral with the concept of descending.

The world is full of spirals. And, they are nothing new. Spirals date back to the Neolithic period. Ancient cultures painted them on cave walls, or carved them into stone all over the world. All this with no communication between the different groups of people. What did the spiral mean to these ancient civilizations? Were they symbols of a greater universe? Did they represent water? Were they a form of meditation? That is a question we can never answer, only speculate. We can’t go back and ask them, so we can only guess the importance of the spirals.

Good – or – Bad? They can be both. Spirals are nature’s favorite form of transferring energy. Tornados, cyclones, hurricanes, or the spin in a fire’s flame. These are spirals that can cause devastation to the land, people, and animals alike.

Take a look at nature and see the good in spirals. Snail shells, chambered nautilus, flowers, the stars spinning around the North Star or in a distant galaxy, water spiraling down a drain, a fern unfurling in the spring.

Nature works in circles, and spirals are a big part of those circles. Spirals have become a powerful symbol for creation and growth. They can be found in many ancient cultures and religious traditions.

It’s all in the way you look at a spiral. Does it start from a central point and grow outward and larger? Or does it start from a force that pulls it down as it spins toward a point and disappears?

Look for the spirals in nature, or in your life. See if you can discover the secret of their meanings.
Spring Raptor Care Meeting for current raptor care volunteers. Pizza and salad will be provided.

**Climate Conversations**

Saturday, March 28, 2020
1:00-4:00p.m. Eastman Nature Center FREE

**Changing Seasons, Woodlands, and Traditions**
Maple syruping is a tradition of hope and fellowship that ushers Minnesota from winter to spring. Explore how a changing climate is affecting our seasons and the traditions that connect us to our natural world. Connect with solutions-based organizations in your community and gain perspective from different community voices. Discover science in the sugarbush, talk with experts and wander the woodlands with walking waffles and a maple syrup flight. Visit ThreeRiversParks.org/climate or climategen.org for more information. In partnership with Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy. Reservations required. Ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

**Earth Day Birding Festival**

Saturday April 18
8:00 am – 4:00p.m.

Carpenter Nature Center in Hastings, MN is looking for teams of youth (age 18 and under) to celebrate the many birds of Minnesota at the Hastings area Earth Day Birding Festival. This is the sixth year the Hastings Environmental Protectors has teamed up with CNC for the Birding Festival. This year, Carpenter Nature Center is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day by recruiting 50 youth birding teams to participate.

Program fee is $5 per person or $15 per person including a box lunch. RSVPs Are Required. Please call 651-437-4359 to reserve your spot.

You can check out their website: https://carpenternaturecenter.org/plan-your-visit/annual-events/earth-day-birding-festival/

If you would like further information, email Dwight Smith: danddsmith123@gmail.com or call/text: 651.983.1799

**WELCOME INTERMITTENT NATURALIST, ANDREW LARSON!**

**Volunteer Corner**

Please RSVP by calling 763.694.7676 or emailing RichardsonNC@threeriversparks.org

**SPRING VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION POTLUCK**

**Wednesday, March 4**
6:30-8:30p.m.

Spring Raptor Meeting for current raptor care volunteers. Pizza and salad will be provided.

**Thursday, March 26**
5:30-8:00p.m.
5:30 Arrival and socializing
6:00 Dinner
6:45 Announcements, Awards, Speakers

Join us for socializing, good food, and celebrating spring. Speaker, Laura Horner, City of Bloomington, will talk about recycling in the city.

We will provide beverages, chocolate desserts, and guest speaker. Please RSVP and let us know what dish you can bring to share.

**SAVE THE DATE**

- **Monday, June 8, 12:00-4:00p.m.**
  Eastman Nature Center, Minnesota Naturalist Association workshop: Reptiles and Amphibians of MN
- **Friday, October 9 and Saturday, October 10**
  Chair Lift Rides, HHSA
- **Wednesday, October 28**
  Fall Raptor Care Meeting
- **Wednesday, November 11**
  Fall Volunteer Recognition Dinner

**WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS**

- Eleta Donaldson—programs
- Chris Gams—programs

[Image of Raptor Meeting]

[Image of Earth Day Birding Festival]

[Image of Volunteer Corner]

[Image of Climate Conversations]