



TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League

August 2025

www.breckenridgeikes.org



Coming Events

August 2025

- 5 **National Night Out 5:30-8**
- 12 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 26 **Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm**
Environmentalist Ron Way: E15 ethanol
requirements and subsidies

September 2025

- 9 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 23 **Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm**
Ingrid Lyons (Save the Boundary Waters
Executive Director)

October 2025

- 14 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 28 **Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm**

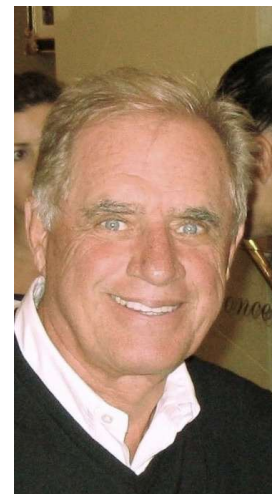
Social Educational Meeting:

Tuesday, August 26 7:30 pm

Environmentalist Ron Way:
E15 ethanol requirements and
subsidies

Retired now, Ron enjoys researching and writing *Strib* op-eds on a variety of issues. His experiences are wide ranging, from serving as a beat reporter covering the Reserve Mining controversy and the coming of nuclear power along with features on lakes and stream at the *Minneapolis Tribune*. There followed a stint as legislative assistant to Earth Day Founder WI Sen. Gaylord Nelson, covering agriculture and environmental legislation (pesticides). He then returned to MN to organize the

MN Environmental Quality Board before moving to MN PCA to serve Grant Merritt as assistant commissioner for public and legislative affairs. Back to D.C. in the Carter Admin with Interior Asst. Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, he worked on Alaska National Lands Act, the review of western water projects (including Garrison in ND), establishing five CA wild and scenic rivers, and on the Upper Miss, including the controversy over dredging a 12-foot channel.



Ron likes to talk on a broad variety of environmental topics. We have specifically asked him to include the ethanol in gasoline issue.

Stay after the talk for light refreshments and a social time with Ron and the audience members

Membership Volunteer

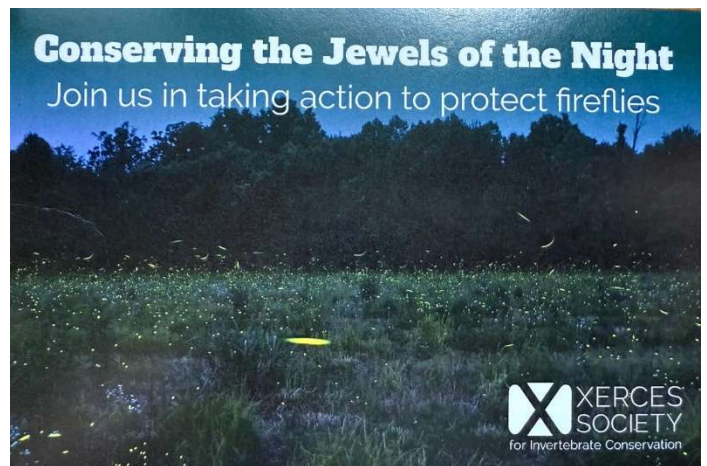
Many thanks to Savannah Steele, who has stepped up to assist with managing our membership duties. We are grateful for her tech services!

Conserving the Jewels of the Night

Diane Hirigoyen from the Xerces Society presented a well-received talk on fireflies and their conservation at our July meeting. We learned there are eighteen species of fireflies in Minnesota alone (all are beetles), twelve of them flash to attract mates. You can tell them apart by the color of the flash, the frequency and whether they are flying low or high. In their larval stage which can last two years, they feed on snails, slugs and earthworms. So much to know!

Several handouts were made available including this one below which explains what we as individuals can do to help them and many other invertebrates.

Reported by Tim Johnson



To President Steve Schaust and Breckenridge Chapter Board Members:

Dear members: I have been a Chapter member 43 years and have made many good friends and acquaintances here. I have also been a board member and office holder of the State Division for approximately 36 years and have made friends there. But I was so honored by the National Award presented to me by the efforts of the Chapter and Division. I thank everyone involved, and my only regret is that Vera was unable to be present. Vera was a very large part of what I did and I hope you all will remember that.

I thank all of you responsible for my (our) award and I will cherish it. Keep on peggin' along! Mother Nature needs us now more than ever!!

Dick Brown
July 23, 2025



Dick Brown Receives Hall of Fame Award

By Tim Johnson

Dick grew up in the 1930's, the son of a charter member of the South Minneapolis Chapter of the IWLA. He tagged along with his father to meetings there, growing up hunting and angling with his family. A carpenter by trade, he joined the North Minneapolis Chapter (now Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter) in 1982 and has been an active member ever since, including holding the office of President for several years and being a board member continuously for the past 42 years. Not only was Dick active, he actually saved the Chapter from folding in the mid 1980s when its membership had dwindled. He convinced the remnant Board of Directors to vote (by only a majority of one) not to sell the Chapter House and divide the spoils. He argued for a plan of action which has continued to this day, having monthly social / educational meetings with conservation speakers. His plan also included having annual pancake breakfasts and that too has continued to this day. He led the Chapter in growing its membership from 18 to 125 in the next five years.

He led Chapter members to the State Capitol to lobby for conservation causes, even designing the "Save our Wetlands" signs they carried (see photo below).



In his local area, Dick fought developers successfully to save old growth oaks threatened by urban sprawl and highways. He organized a group to survey and identify one of the last remnants of oak savannah in the city limits and convinced the city to include it in their long-range plans for a city park.

Under his leadership the Chapter became one of the most issues-active in Minnesota. He was among those who facilitated the sale (price \$100) by the University of Minnesota of the 19-acre Banfill Island in the Mississippi River to the Breckenridge Ike's Chapter which it preserves as a wildlife sanctuary in perpetuity. The island is just across from the Chapter House.

Figure 1 Rally at the State Capitol with Dick's signs

Figure 2 Banfill Island, now a Wildlife Sanctuary





As a carpenter, Dick spent countless hours at the Chapter House working on various projects, including constructing stairway trails down the steep river bluff to the Mississippi River. He supervised and helped construct our out-building (see photo) while in his 80's after contributing to improving the Chapter House with log-cabin siding. He received the Tobin Award in 2013 for outstanding devotion and in recognition of his contributions in furthering the ideals of the League.

Figure 3 Chapter buildings Dick worked on

At the Minnesota Division level, Dick has served as Director at Large for many years, regional vice president several years and VP of the Conservation Issues committee for another few years. He is known to Ikes across the State for his dedication to the organization and admired for his many contributions over four decades. He and his wife Vera (who also served as an officer of the Chapter) received the Division Distinguished Service Award in 2007.

Dick served as Scoutmaster to a Boy Scout Troop in his younger years and that troop still holds its annual weekend gatherings in the Chapter House. He has been recognized by other conservation organizations over the years (see attachments).

Dicks says “my proudest achievement as an Ike was bringing about the designation of 38 acres of a defunct IWLA chapter on the Cannon River as a Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area to protect the endangered endemic dwarf trout lily” (SNA designation is the highest level of protection for Minnesota public lands).



Figure 4 Dwarf Trout Lily on bottom right compared to white trout lily on left

Book Review: *Dodge County, Incorporated*

By Karen Ostenso

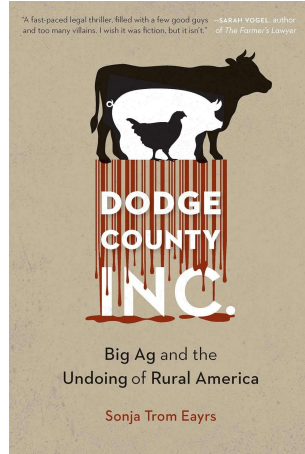
In 2024 Sonja Trom Eayrs published *Dodge County, Incorporated*, a memoir of growing up on a family farm in Blooming Prairie, Minnesota. It is both shocking and horrific. Her great grandfather settled there in 1892 as a recently arrived immigrant from Norway.

Sonja became a lawyer and married a man from a nearby farm. She frequently returned to rural Minnesota throughout her life.

Beginning in the early 1990s, big changes came to central Minnesota and other areas. The primary impetus was the establishment of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). The transition from smaller farms with some crops and small herds of hogs, cattle, and chickens had begun.

The decrease in the number of small farmers was rapid. In 1992 the average pig farm held 945 animals. By 2004, it was 4,646!! A CAFO is considered 'large' when it has 2500 hogs. Regulations regarding size and manure management are designed primarily by county commissioners. Over the years, CAFO owners have increasingly become commissioners. The deck is stacked.

I was surprised to read that the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBA) has played an outsized role in enabling the expansion of CAFO. As a kid growing up on a small farm in far western Minnesota, I often heard of the Farm Bureau. I don't remember specifically what was said about it, but I do remember people casting it in a positive light. Now it is one of the biggest lobbying groups in Washington, DC, and it promotes corporate agribusiness and insurance companies.



As CAFOs expanded in number and in size, meatpacking giants built a network that now includes contractors raising the animals, transporting them, providing animal feed, and slaughtering them. This is referred to as production from “squeal to meal.” Four meatpacking companies control about 67% of the hog market; Hormel, JBS (a Brazilian company), Tyson, and Smithfield.

Owners of these companies do not live or work where the animals live and are processed. All labor is contracted. A big portion of the workers are immigrants.

The conversion to ‘big agriculture’ has occurred not only in Minnesota, nor only in the Midwest. In addition to Iowa, Missouri, Illinois and Nebraska, North Carolina has been overtaken by CAFOs.

Among the many problems caused by CAFOs is stench from the huge quantities of manure. In some parts of the state, it is unavoidable. A lot of it is distributed on acreage near the huge barns, in coordination with the owners of the acreage.

At times the chemicals emitted into the air by such huge amounts of animal refuse are bad enough to cause nausea and vomiting. Many residents have moved out of the area to avoid the odors.

Small towns have been community-minded for years, and small “main street” businesses have been successful. The onset of CAFOs has significantly eroded the small town atmosphere. A part of that change is because CAFO owners and workers are not interested in the town. Many incidences of harassment by big producers have been reported, including the dumping of manure on driveways of small farms. Families and neighbors who used to be cordial and friendly with each other now are hostile.

The book covers extensively political, social, economic, and environmental issues in depth. It is available through the usual vendors and is clear and readable.

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
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If you would like to submit an article for the Timberlines, please send it to
Barbara Franklin at: bbfrankli@gmail.com
Deadline is the First Day of each month.

All articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Breckenridge Board of Directors. The Editor reserves the right to edit material as necessary.

How You Can Help Fireflies

- **Turn off or limit lights at night.** The light signals of species that are active at dusk and after dark can be drowned out by artificial light.
- **Plant native vegetation with a diversity of heights and structures.** This provides shelter and perches for fireflies and their prey, helps retain soil moisture, and can even block out light pollution.
- **Limit mowing, digging, and trampling in habitats** to avoid harming firefly eggs, larvae, and adults.
- **Leave fallen leaves and other safe places for fireflies to overwinter**—including rotting logs and small animals burrows.
- **Eliminate nonessential uses of pesticides.** Pesticides can directly kill fireflies and their prey or alter their habitat.
- **Ensure larval food sources can thrive.** These include soft-bodied invertebrates, such as snails, slugs, and earthworms.
- **Help scientists track and map firefly populations** by participating in the Xerces Society's **Firefly Atlas** community science program.

Learn more: xerces.org/fireflies or fireflyatlas.org



The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation is a donor-supported international nonprofit organization that protects the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. Learn more at xerces.org.

Cover Image: Fireflies in Indiana. (Photo: Xerces Society / Richard Joyce).

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Female big dipper firefly
Photinus pyralis signaling.
(Photo: Rachel Schreier,
fireflyatlas.org)

Participate



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