



TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League
March 2025



www.breckenridgeikes.org

Coming Events

March 2025

- 11 Spring Cleaning 9 am
Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 25 **Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm**
Kathy Meinhardt:
Experiences as a Bluebird Recovery
Volunteer

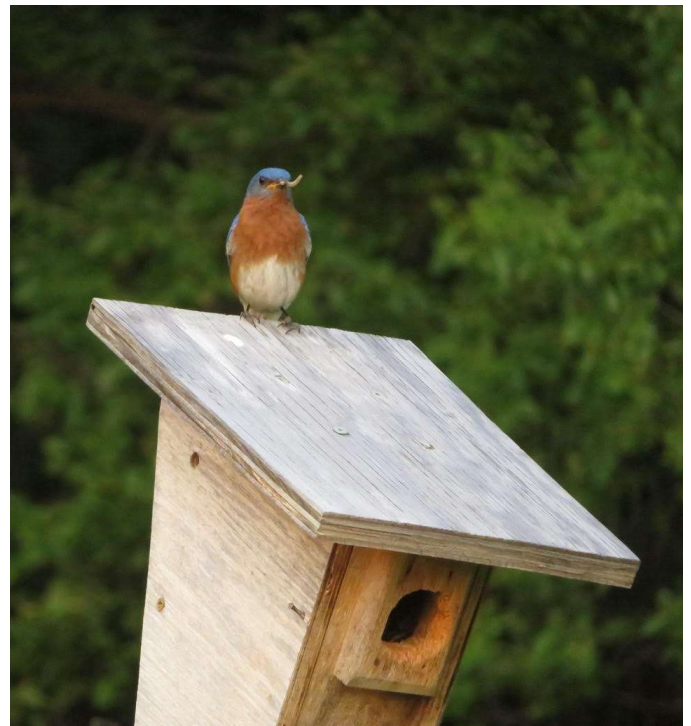
April 2025

- 8 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 22 **Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm**
Grace Loppnow, Ph.D. Invasive Fish
Coordinator,| Ecological and Water
Resources Division: Aquatic Invasive
Species

May 2025

- 1 Friends of the MN Scientific and Natural
Areas 10th Anniversary
- 4 Pancake Breakfast
- 13 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 27 **Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm**

Social Educational Meeting:
Tuesday, March 25 7:30 pm
Kathy Meinhardt:
Experiences as a Bluebird
Recovery Volunteer



Please Help!

Our beautiful chapter house is in need of a thorough cleaning. Please join us on Tuesday March 11 at 9 am for a few minutes or a few hours. We will have a list of big jobs and small jobs. Let Karen Ostenso know if you can assist. 612-522-2396 kostenso@hotmail.com



Did you know Minnesota has a recovery program focused on restoring and preserving the population of bluebirds? Hear how bird trail enthusiast Kathy Meinhardt became involved in the monitoring of a bluebird trail in Bloomington.

Kathy is a retired Federal employee and grandma who went looking for a birdhouse and is embarking on her 8th year of monitoring. She has photos of all phases of bluebird nesting and fledging with examples of nest boxes and her enthusiasm is catching.

Hope to see you there!

Lobbying for the Boundary Waters Wilderness

One of our own Chapter members, the late Darby Nelson, was an early Treasurer of Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. He was following in the footsteps of other Ikes like Sigurd Olson and Bud Heinselmann who worked to establish the BWCAW. The Friends' current Executive Officer, Chris Knopf, addressed us at the Chapter House in February as the organization approaches its 50th anniversary next year. Darby's wife, Geri Nelson, was present as Chris reiterated the conservationist's saying, "every victory is temporary and every defeat is permanent".

"So, our job is to protect the wilderness for the next generation" he added, "protecting the clean water, making conservation purchases of nearby properties in the Superior National Forest and setting up a BWCAW climate change data website with free access to all". Getting young people out into the Wilderness is also a Friends' goal seen as especially important knowing that less than half the children in Ely and Cook County public schools have ever visited this pristine area.



After the most recent election and the mass firings of Forest Service employees, the Friends see their task as especially urgent. 8th District Congressman, Pete Stauber, has introduced legislation that would overturn a 20-year moratorium on all mining in the Boundary Waters watershed implemented by the Department of the Interior last year, and reinstate



mineral rights and leases to foreign-mining conglomerates like Chilean-owned Antofagasta, which has proposed a sulfide copper mining project near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. This legislation would be a huge setback in the work to protect clean water and the Boundary Waters from dangerous sulfide copper mining in its watershed.

Because copper-sulfide mining requires huge tailings dumps (99.7% of the mined ore is waste) which produce sulfuric acid and release heavy metals like arsenic and mercury when in contact with water, the Friends group seeks to educate the public that this is totally different than the traditional iron mining that Minnesota has safely done for a century. You can safely swim in an abandoned iron ore pit but not so in one created in a copper mine. Further, the Friends seek legislation at the State level for three bills this session.

1. The proposed “**Prove-It-First**” law for Minnesota is straightforward and has common-sense appeal. The record of copper-sulfide mining is well known. The industry’s empty promises have been heard. Minnesota should not be a guinea pig. Before a shovel touches the ground, we need proof that it will not pollute.
2. The “**Taxpayer Protection Act**” would require nonferrous mining companies to fully fund any financial assurance package upfront and in cash. This would ensure Minnesota’s taxpayers are not left on the hook for potential multi-billion-dollar

clean-up costs from a devastating environmental catastrophe.

3. The “**Bad Actor Bill**” would prevent Minnesota from issuing nonferrous mining permits to “bad actors,” corporations that have violated certain international laws including corruption, bribery, or natural resources destruction.

Chris passed out model letters to send in particular to our Governor, Tim Walz and to Minnesota legislative leaders Sen. Erin Murphy and Rep. Melissa Hortman (our Chapter’s representative) encouraging them to give these bills a hearing. Another model letter was to be directed to Sen. Tina Smith, asking her to become a more visible leader in opposing Stauber’s bill and supporting Rep. McCollum’s Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection and Pollution Prevention bill. Asked about lobbying Sen. Klobuchar to do the same, Chris said that would be good too but that many had been disappointed in the past with her lack of leadership on the issue. If you want to send an electronic message to these political leaders you can do so by visiting the Friends’ website <https://www.friends-bwca.org/get-involved/take-legislative-action/>

The Breckenridge board of directors voted unanimously to make a donation to the Friends group of \$1,000 to support their excellent work.

Reported by Tim Johnson



Century Old Bur Oaks



As noted in the February issue the Breckenridge Chapter is currently advocating to save a stand of these incredible trees along Jefferson Hwy in Brooklyn Park where the City is in the process of planning for development. Much effort has gone into convincing the city that this grove should be saved. Here Dick Brown provides a history of this effort.

Breckenridge Chapter History of the Oak Woods Savanna on Jefferson Highway between 109th Avenue and 101st Avenue, Brooklyn Park

About 15 years ago, while searching for the oldest tree in Champlin, I noticed some old oaks at this site while driving to Osseo. I thought there were only about a dozen which would qualify the site as an ancient Oak Savannah, a very scarce natural ecosystem.

Organizing a group from the Chapter, including Darby Nelson former state representative, Lee Frelich, Director of the Center for Forest Ecology at University of Minnesota, Jim Arnold, John Rust and Steve Schaust, we walked the circumference of the property and made a determination: for historic and

environmental reasons this 5 or 6 acres should be preserved!

About 3 of us went to a Hennepin County Park board meeting and made our case:

1. There is already a paved park trail going right past the property. It leads from Elm Creek Park Reserve, down 109th Avenue to Jefferson Highway. Thence south on Jefferson to almost 101st Avenue; right past this particular parcel, thence east to Coon Rapids Dam Park.
2. Being part way between Elm Creek Park Reserve and the Mississippi Park, it is ideal for a rest stop for bikers and hikers under the shade of 100-120 year old historic and endemic bur oak trees.
3. This area is part of the Anoka Sand Plain that the glaciers brought across the Mississippi River before the river's course was firmly established by nature. Dr. Breckenridge illustrated this evolutionary fact to our Chapter in the 1990's.

At the County Park Board meeting the board decided the place was too isolated from the main parks to be incorporated as part of Hennepin County Parks, even though a Park trail goes right adjacent to it!

Steve and I went to Brooklyn Park's Park Superintendent and pled our case. Being a Brooklyn Park Resident Steve did most of the talking. The superintendent told us they would keep us informed when development plans came near. Steve, John Rust and others have kept in touch with the City on this subject.

About 3 or 4 years ago Larry Kennebeck and I went there and walked the perimeter on the edge of the surrounding corn field, and as the western sun became ready to set, we could see the tops of many more oaks than I had originally thought. Perhaps this is an old second growth woods which grew in a farmer's pasture area!

Dick Brown

Here are some comments by Prof. Lee Frelich

"All remnants of native trees that predate the era of major development in any city in the Twin Cities Metro area should be preserved.

1. The bur oaks (*Quercus macrocarpa*) on the Jefferson Highway site are a living ecological legacy of bur oak that grew on the savanna areas of the Metro region over the last 7,000 years.
2. They carry the genetic legacy of adaptation to the climate and soils of this area that goes back thousands of years. Most of the settled areas

on the Twin Cities Metro now have nursery-grown cultivars of native species and non-native trees that, to a large degree, lack this legacy.

3. Furthermore, bur oak is not planted very much in the Metro Area because swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) looks similar and is easier to grow in the nursery, and grows to a useful size as a shade tree faster than bur oak.
4. The trees are big and sequester a lot of carbon. Replacement of such trees with newly planted ones leads to a large reduction in carbon that won't be compensated for by planting new trees for decades. In an 80-year-old aerial photo the bur oaks are likely already 20-40 years old, so the largest among them are 100-120 years old now."

Scholarship Applications

The Breckenridge Chapter is now accepting applications for the twenty-seventh year of its Defenders of Soil, Air, Woods, Waters and Wildlife Scholarship. Applications are available at local high schools and community colleges as well as on the Breckenridge Chapter website. The \$1,200 scholarships can be renewed up to four years. Applications must be received by April 12, 2025.



W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
 Izaak Walton League of America
 8816 West River Road
 Brooklyn Park MN 55444



**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.

Refreshments for Monthly Meetings

If you can provide treats for the following dates please call, text or email:
 Barb Franklin 763-242-0432
bbfrankli@gmail.com

MONTH	REFRESHMENTS	PROGRAM
FEB 25	Diane Sannes	Friends of the Boundary Waters
MAR 25		Bluebird Trails
APR 22		Aquatic Invasive Species
MAY 27		
JUN 24		
JUL 22		
AUG 26		
SEP 23		
OCT 21		
NOV 25		