



1922

2022

A Century of Conservation Leadership

Timberlines

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League

June 2021

www.breckenridgeikes.org

Coming Events

June 2021

- 2 Rough Fish Conservation (Zoom)
Tyler Winter & Dr. Peter Sorensen:
7:30 pm
- 8 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm

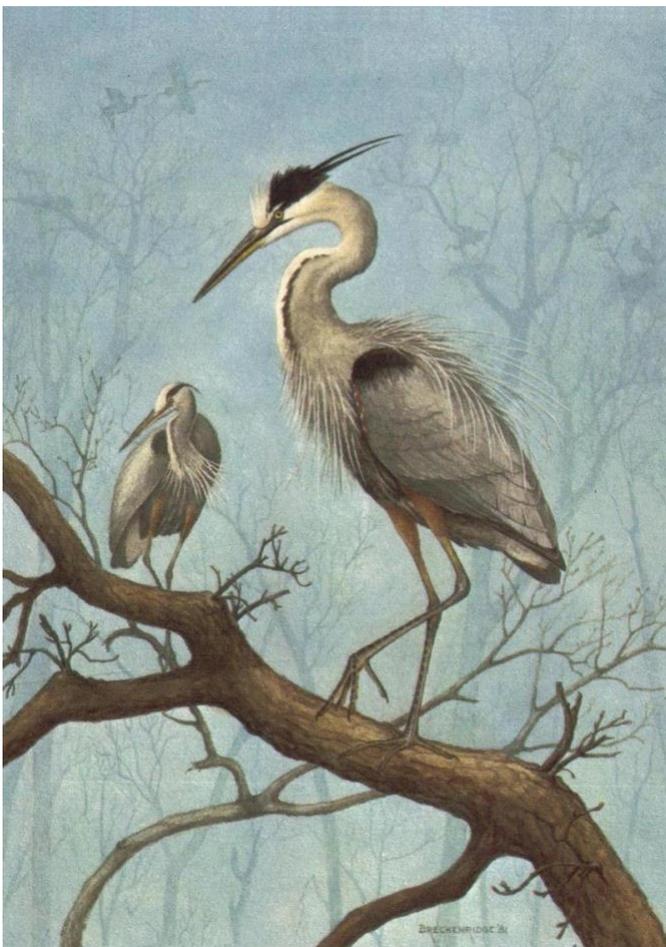
July 2021

- 14 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 27 *For Love of a River*
Darby and Geri Nelson 7:30 pm

Saving a Great Blue Heron Rookery

I'm amazed by birds that can swallow fish up to four times the diameter of their long, thin necks. Fortunately, the Great Blue Herons' colonies (rookeries) can be found all over Minnesota, some with more than 500 nests. Tall trees on islands are the usual places chosen by this largest North American heron. Along the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities there are several. They are abandoned and move from time to time as the forest overstory becomes burned out from the deposition of fecal material or, as happened in 2011, a tornado destroys the trees. Currently there are three active colonies I know of in this stretch of river, on Large Island just below the Coon Rapids Dam, a small island off Marshall Terrace Park in Minneapolis and [Pigs Eye Island Heron Rookery SNA](#) in St. Paul. I remember some nests being present forty years ago on Durnham Island immediately north of the I-694 bridge but that colony disappeared long ago.

Despite the usual transitory nature of these colonies, Carrol Henderson, our retired Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Program supervisor, has taken a keen interest in recent months in advocating for the protection of a colony of 30-40 nests threatened by development near Rochester. While federal law protects the birds themselves, it does not protect their nests once the chicks have fledged. [Local conservation minded citizens](#) have organized to protect this, up until now, hidden rookery and Henderson has suggested it might qualify as a new DNR Scientific and Natural area due to its unique establishment in an upland forest. In recent testimony in a hearing on protection of the colony, Henderson said "comments of the homeowners who had herons nesting on their



property stated that the herons had been nesting there as early as the 1950s, so the colony was likely active for 60 years or more. This is a very long time for a heron colony to sustain itself. It was also apparent that there had been no loss of trees in spite of the long life of the colony...The sloping topography of the colony site suggests that the acidity caused by the herons' excrement and the amount of rainfall in the area flushes the acidity from the site and prevents death of the nesting trees."

Prominent members of the Izaak Walton League including our Division President John Rust of Brooklyn Park have taken an active part in supporting conservation of the colony (in some form, maybe as an SNA or WMA). Local Senator David H. Senjem (R) has expressed support for saving the rookery as well. [Friends of Minnesota SNAs](#), a non-profit organization, is also considering what it can do to encourage protection of the nesting site. [A summary of the background of this dispute](#) between conservationists and developers was published in April in the StarTribune. We will be following this conservation effort closely.

A few years ago, a local birder named [Ron Taube](#) wrote a [short article about the herons at the Coon Rapids Dam colony](#) that is still interesting reading. He passed away a few months ago but would undoubtedly have been interested in saving the Rochester heronry. Another [interesting article about our local herons](#) was written in 2010 by Stephanie Hemphill (The birdchick) and includes a photo of the colony as it existed on the island near Camden before the tornado hit.

The [DNR website](#) contains information about the history of the birds nesting in the Pigs Eye Island rookery which is interesting in showing that great egrets, black-crowned night herons, pelicans and double-crested cormorants all share the colony. Great horned owls, bald eagles (both primary predators), and red-tailed hawks sometimes use an old heron nest without causing their neighbors any apparent distress. It is thought that having one nest of highly territorial raptor in or near the colony might decrease predation by others.

Great Blue Herons were once hunted for the plumage trade and suffered decreased breeding productivity due to DDT in the environment. Now that those threats have been eliminated in our country, destruction of their breeding sites and foraging wetlands by humans is the main cause for concern. According to Carrol Henderson, a Minnesota Breeding Bird Survey that was sponsored by the US Fish and Wildlife Service has shown that Minnesota's great blue heron counts have shown a steady decline of -1.32% per year every year since 1967. During the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas project conducted from 2009 to 2013, 90 great blue heronries were identified compared to 151 identified in 1980 by Katherine (Hirsch) Haws and Carrol Henderson.

Reported by Tim Johnson

Woodpecker Cavity Cam Project

It's finally here! Visit the [Woodpecker Cavity Cam](#) project now **live** on Zooniverse! We have thousands of videos from the trail cameras we installed at Red-headed Woodpecker cavities—these video clips capture the behaviors and interactions of the community of animals that depend on these holes. Midnight sneak attacks by flying squirrels, foiled egg and bird predation attempts, parents bringing insects to baby birds and sharing childcare duties.....our cameras document it all! With your help classifying video clips, our team of scientists and community members will advance our understanding of Red-headed Woodpeckers and the role they play in their community.



Minutes - Breckenridge Chapter IWLA BOD meeting minutes April 14, 2021

In-person board meeting called to order. Members present: Steve Schaust, Larry Kennebeck, Dick Brown, Tim Johnson, Barb Franklin, Wendy Steele, Jerry Steele, Jim Arnold and new treasurer, Sue Schmidt.

Guest Tyler Winter was invited to defend the resolution on “rough” fish. The resolution to support the adoption of Minnesota fishing regulations to protect all native fish was passed unanimously. *See the resolution on page 5. See details of Tyler’s upcoming Zoom presentation on June 2.

Social/Education Meeting to resume in July with non-vaccinated attendees still requested to wear masks. July speakers will be Darby and Geri Nelson on their latest book, For the Love of a River: Minnesota. Tyler Winter has committed to being the speaker at August 24 Social/Education about Rough Fish Awareness.

Chapter plans: Pancake breakfast maybe in the fall. To be discussed again.

2021 Fall Deer hunt on Banfill Island, Steve will continue discussion with Jody Yungers for the future hunts. She would be happy to make a presentation to the board or the membership at a Social/Educational meeting re: data from hunts, etc.

A Lead Fishing tackle collection box will be ordered (free) and will be stationed at the Chapter House for dropping off lead tackle.

Spring Projects, hopefully getting general membership involved: Spring cleanup, Buckthorn removal, Garlic Mustard pulling.

Emerald Ash Borer status: One large ash tree north of entrance by the street is also dead from emerald ash borer and needs to be removed later this year. Thus far, we have done what needed to be done, but this will be an issue to be dealt with continuously. Dick thanked those who volunteered so far to remove the dozen or so trees near the street.

From Dusk to Dawn

When twilight turns to dusk
And we feel that sense of gloaming
We birds will settle down
And wait ‘til dawn for roaming.

We birds that come to the feeding stand
At the fading of evening light,
First the Oriole, then Catbird,
Then roosting for the night.

Now we birds are settled down
And resting with our brood
To disturb us at this time of night
Would be extremely rude.

At dawn we birds make our appearance
For seeds and fruit and bugs.
The first is gusty Cardinal
In his brightly colored duds.

All birds arrive; but one on one
Some come in shades of blue
With a little touch of grey
And other colors too.

Some get their meals from off the ground,
Some from in the air.
How e’er, we gain our sustenance
For us birds its normal fare.

*Author, Chief Tweety Bird,
while resting in the gloaming
(aka Dick Brown)*



Izaak Walton League of America

Rough Fish Conservation Tyler Winter & Dr. Peter Sorensen

Wednesday June 2, 7:00pm
Zoom Meeting ID: 880 3550 9194
Passcode: 916233

Link → <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88035509194?pwd=OVdTWVo3UIMyT3UzLzZ5REV0RUJaUT09> ← Link

"Rough fish conservation" is an oxymoron. But why is that? Native non-game fish play an important part in the ecosystem. Please join us for a presentation on Minnesota's native fish, their history and why they deserve protection.

Tyler Winter is an angler, conservationist, and environmental scientist. After getting a biology degree at University of Minnesota Duluth, I volunteered with the MN DNR to do fish surveys. Later I became an Environmental Scientist with the Metropolitan Council's Water Resources group. Now my day job is water quality monitoring of our region's large rivers. Someday he hopes to catch every fish species in Minnesota but has only caught 50 to date. He is constantly trying to raise awareness about native fish so everyone can enjoy them as much as he does.

Dr. Peter Sorensen is a world authority in fish biology (physiology and behavior) and conservation which he has been studying since the late 1970's. He earned a BA from Bates College in Maine, a PhD in biological oceanography from the University of Rhode Island and was an Alberta Heritage Medical Fellow in Canada before assuming a faculty position at the University of Minnesota in 1988. He identified the first pheromones in fish and while commonly recognized for his work on invasive fish (sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, Asian carp in the Mississippi River), he now focuses on fisheries conservation issues and views climate change as the biggest threat to our environment and how we live.



Izaak Walton League of America - Defenders of Soil, Air, Woods, Waters, and Wildlife

Resolution to support the adoption of Minnesota fishing regulations to protect all native fish, including fish that are legally designated as native “rough fish.”

WHEREAS, there are NO LIMITS to the harvest of bigmouth buffalo in Minnesota;
WHEREAS, the mission of the Izaak Walton League is to conserve, restore and promote the sustainable use of our natural resources;
WHEREAS, bigmouth buffalo (*Ictiobus cyprinellus*) in Minnesota can live at least 112 years and reproduce infrequently;
WHEREAS, there are at least 30 species of native fish managed as “rough fish” by the Minnesota DNR including widely divergent species such as bowfin (*Amia calva*), lake herring (*Coregonus artedii*) and the threatened black buffalo (*Ictiobus niger*);
WHEREAS, in the old food chain paradigm, fish production was a zero-sum game (the assumption being that if you removed one fish you would get more of another) leading to the widespread denigration of non-game native fish;
WHEREAS, the science of ecology now rejects simplistic food chains in favor of the more wholistic “food web”. We now understand that healthy intact ecosystems have many species, with many complex interactions. Removing any native species is much more likely to disrupt the ecosystem than increase the number of “game fish”;
WHEREAS, healthy, intact and species-rich ecosystems are less susceptible to invasive species. For example, many species of redhorse and bigmouth buffalo prey on zebra mussels. Bowfin and gar are effective predators on invasive common carp fingerlings. The same native species, which were maligned as “rough fish”, are in fact vital to a healthy and resilient ecosystem.
WHEREAS, the Minnesota DNR has extended bowfishing seasons and allowed the use of lights for shooting fish at night without reducing daily limits;

WHEREAS, the DNR gives inadequate protection for “endangered”, “threatened”, and “special concern” species, such as the “threatened” Black Buffalo (*Ictiobus niger*) or “special concern” species: Blue Sucker (*Cycleptus elongatus*) and Black Redhorse (*Moxostoma duquesnei*). The “limit” for ALL species of buffalo is “no limit”;
WHEREAS, people who harvest bigmouth buffalo and other native non-game fish are not even limited by the number of fish they can use. The harvested fish are routinely “disposed” of as fertilizer;
WHEREAS, despite the liberalized harvest methods and extended seasons, the Minnesota DNR has collected almost no data about non-game native fish harvest;
WHEREAS, in 2019, the DNR did collect data from two bowfishing tournaments and found 75% of the fish harvested were native species. Bowfishing teams averaged one fish every 2-3 minutes during the 10 hours of each tournament;
WHEREAS, anglers who “dispose” of native fish usually have misidentified the fish as a carp because they don’t know other native non-game fish exist. But once people are aware, they are usually able to appreciate and respectfully use the resource; and
WHEREAS, the adoption of reasonable regulations to conserve all native fish and their ecosystem is consistent with our mission;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Breckenridge Chapter of the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America supports the adoption of Minnesota fishing regulations that adequately protect **all** native fish, including fish that are legally designated as native “rough fish.” These regulations should address, but not be limited to, fishing limits, clarification of protection for “listed” species, education on identification of “rough fish” species, along with enforcement of wanton waste laws and other legal requirements.

Submitted by Tyler Winter and Tim Johnson



Welcome to new members
Tyler Winter
and
Isabel Istephanous

2021 - 22 Scholarship Recipients Selected

By Jim Arnold

The Breckenridge Chapter scholarship committee again was challenged to select a small group of students from several outstanding applicants. Because of the pandemic the committee did all of its work via computer and telephone.

Willa Nagel is completing her sophomore year at the University of Minnesota. She recently changed her major from Environmental Education to Plant Science in Acroecology with a minor in soil science. Her career goal is to work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service as a soil Conservationist.

Willa writes, "This year has opened my eyes to the importance of intersectionality within the environmental movement." Many people of color are significantly impacted by climate change and pollution but are unable to focus their energies on these issues. Intersectionality, she notes, is one of the weakest points of the environmental movement."

Recently Willa applied for an internship with the Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NCRS). The mission of NCRS is to "Help the people help the land." She will be shadowing many folks at the office in Conrad, Montana. After graduation Willa feels her internship will enable her to receive a job offer with the state. This summer she plans to spend many of her weekends hiking in nearby Glacier National Park.

Gabriel Drayton is completing his freshman year at Northwestern University where he is pursuing a chemical engineering degree at the McCormick School of Engineering.

Gabe writes, "I am most interested in scaling up the use of renewable energy, specifically in transportation and housing. I believe that this is a fundamental step towards a circular economy and is the steppingstone for all other environmental efforts, such as carbon-negative lifestyles, the reduction of plastic consumption, and more."

Currently Gabe is involved with Northwestern's Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, a group of individuals of Hispanic descent studying engineering. Frequently, topics of sustainability and energy are brought up, with regards to their impact in Latin American countries.

Gabe is also a member of Engineers for a Sustainable World, which is a student organization dedicated to mobilizing students through education and hands-on experience. Project focus ranges from clean drinking water to renewable energy.

Sierra Hinkel recently completed her freshman year at Stevens Point College where she is a forestry major and exploring minors within the college of natural resources. After college she expects to work with the DNR within the Midwest.

Sierra says that she has become even more aware of the climate crisis this year. She writes, "I have taken courses covering soils, the earth's waters, plants, and many other topics. In almost all topics within these many classes, climate is a major issue. Both the causes and effects of climate change are harming the environment, and often they work in a positive feedback loop, with the effects worsening the causes. Ocean acidification and greenhouse gasses are both being increased as we continue to urbanize areas, reduce habitat and vegetation, and unsustainably add waste to our environment. This is interesting to me because I am also learning about the management of all of these resources. The various ways you can affect a stand of trees or population of small mammals to impact it for the better is really inspiring to me."

Sierra is currently a member of the Society of American Foresters chapter at Stevens Point where they spend an hour on Thursdays discussing relevant forestry and environmental topics. She also has spent time volunteering pulling buckthorn and sweet fern, both of which were spreading invasively within Schmeckle Reserve on the UWSP Campus. Because of COVID many campus activities were limited this year, so she often spent time in the reserve hiking, hammocking, and enjoying the various organisms she could find. Sierra has also

enjoyed many of the parks in the areas around campus.

Annika Hall recently graduated from Andover High School. This fall she plans to attend the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She has enrolled in the College of Letters and Science with a major in Environmental Studies and a minor in public policy. Annika says, “Beyond general environmental studies, I am also interested in learning more about sustainable agriculture or food systems, community planning, as well as renewable energy technology in my college career.”

Annika provides much credit to her many science and environmental classes for her interest in her future studies and in changes she has made in her daily life: Diet, family garden, road clean ups, outdoor activities, etc.

Other activities that influenced her interest in the environment have included Girl Scouts, and STEM Science Fairs. In 2018 she won 2018 Naval Science Academy Award of excellence. She has held leadership roles in in the National Honors Society and Student Council, participated in choir and theater programs, theater and debate teams and volunteered at the Anoka County Historical Society.

Nicholas Mertens recently graduated from Osseo High School and plans to attend St. Benedict’s/St. John’s University (CSB/SJU) next fall. He will major in Environmental Science with a minor in Latin American Studies. Nick intends to study environmental outreach and water toxicology. He wants to be part of the effort to combat climate change -- especially in Latin America. He is anxious to immerse himself in another culture and involve himself in the CSB/SJU study abroad program where students explore sustainable practices in developing countries. He is also interested in the many apolitical sustainability oriented opportunities offered by CSB/SJU. He hopes to participate in the Minnesota legislative system to help pass bills that make for a safer environment. A long term goal of Nick’s may be doing field work for a government body.

The list of extracurricular and volunteer activities Nick is involved with is very impressive. He is a junior Rotarian with the Maple Grove rotary where

he has helped set up sustainable initiatives within the organization and the community. Working with the National Honor Society they have adopted a park and cleaned it multiple times. Nick also participated in many music programs and plans to pursue that interest in college.

The Breckenridge Chapter has now awarded 100 scholarships totaling \$51,100 in the twenty-three years of the program. As in years past, recipients can reapply for the scholarship for up to four years of their undergraduate careers. The main source of funding for these scholarships is an endowment fund established through the generosity of members. The endowment began with an initial donation from the estate of Irene Swanson in the summer of 1999, followed shortly thereafter by sizeable donations from Cynthia Haugland and Walter and Dorothy Breckenridge. The endowment continues to grow, thanks primarily to generous donations each year from Larry Swanson, Tom and Marilyn Breckenridge, John Breckenridge and Mary Ellen Vetter. When earnings from the endowment are not sufficient to cover the scholarships costs, fund raisers (like the annual silent auction) and special donations from other members have been used. Thanks to all those members who have made it possible to support local young people as they study for their environmental careers. If you have questions about the Breckenridge Chapter scholarship program please contact one of the committee members: Jim Arnold, Judy Arnold, Melissa Sonnenberg or Mary Ellen Vetter.

Chapter House Rental Rates

Non-Members:
(damage deposit: \$300.00; \$200 for previous renters)
Monday through Thursday \$275.00
Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays \$350.00

Members:(damage deposit \$100.00)
Monday through Thursday\$125.00
Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays \$175.00

Boy Scouts:(damage deposit \$50.00)
Overnights.....\$50.00*

Rates and terms subject to change without notice;
please contact the Chapter for special circumstances.

Rental Chairperson: Tim Johnson
(Leave messages at 763-561-5364)

**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 last 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.

Greater Yellow Lady Slippers.

Thanks to Larry Kennebeck for sharing his beautiful photos on Facebook.

This is the most common wild orchid in the U.S. and is found in almost every state. There are 3 accepted varieties of Yellow Lady's Slipper, 2 of which are found in Minnesota: Greater Yellow Lady's Slipper and Small Yellow Lady's Slipper. The flower pouch of Small is only up to about 1 inch long, the petals are usually darker in color and more twisted than the Greater variety, but the Greater variety can be variable in these things depending on environmental conditions.

According to Welby Smith's book "Native Orchids of Minnesota", the hybrids can be baffling, most with intermediate characteristics in flower size and color, but some with different traits of each parent. In each case, the flower color may be white, creamy or yellow.

