



# TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter  
Izaak Walton League  
December 2025/January 2026

[www.breckenridgeikes.org](http://www.breckenridgeikes.org)



## Coming Events

### January 2026

- 13 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 18 **Holiday Party Carrol Henderson:**  
*A National Legacy*

### February 2026

- 10 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 24 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm

### March 2026

- 10 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 24 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm  
**Bruce Anderson, DNR**  
**The Loss of Wildlands in the Lower 48 and**  
**Minnesota Since European Settlement**

## Silent Auction Raises Scholarship Funds

The silent auction has become an important fundraiser for our Chapter's Scholarship Fund. At this year's Holiday Party, January 18th, we will again have many unique items donated by our members as well as a number of products, services and gift certificates donated by local merchants. Be sure to arrive early to get a good look at all the items. Bidding will start at 4pm and continue until 6pm

If you would like to donate an item, or if you know of a nearby business that would be willing to make a donation, contact Jim or Judy Arnold (763 560 8972 or [jjarnold@myctl.net](mailto:jjarnold@myctl.net)). Items can be brought to the Chapter House on Saturday morning January 17 during set up or by 4 pm on January 18.

## Social Educational Meeting: Sunday, January 18 Carrol Henderson: *A National Legacy*

Carrol Henderson's new book, *A National Legacy: Fifty Years of Nongame Wildlife Conservation in Minnesota*, covers over fifty years of Minnesota conservation efforts on behalf of wildlife ranging from bald eagles, peregrine falcons, loons, sandhill cranes, and trumpeter swans to bluebirds, hummingbirds, river otters, Canada lynx, wood turtles, and timber rattlesnakes.

However, this book is not just about historical wildlife conservation accounts. It includes a vision for future conservation projects. There are "life lessons," or strategies, that he learned from his 44-year employment with the DNR and in working with our many Minnesota conservation partners incorporated those strategies into planning and implementing those wildlife conservation efforts.

Carrol will be our featured speaker at our Annual Holiday Party at the Chapter House on Sunday, January 18 and he will have copies of his new book for sale.



# Dispose of Holiday Greens and Christmas Trees Correctly to Protect Minnesota's Trees and Forests

Invasive pests can hide on festive foliage. Holiday greenery and Christmas trees bring joy throughout the season, but they can also hide dangerous pests. Diseases and invasive species can make their way into our landscapes on trees and boughs brought into Minnesota from other states.

To protect our environment, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture is asking residents to take these steps to properly dispose of greenery and trees after the holiday season:

The best option is to use a curbside tree collection or bring trees to a designated drop-off site. Check with your waste hauler, city, or county to see what services are offered in your area. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has a map of yard waste compost locations; contact locations directly to see if they accept trees and greenery.

Don't toss trees and greenery into your backyard woods or residential compost pile, which can spread the invasive species or disease.

Wreaths and other decorative greens can be disposed of in trash cans.

If your city or county does not have an organized pick-up or drop-off, the last resort is to burn the greens. Always check fire danger conditions and burning restrictions before burning and follow local ordinances.

Pests of concern include elongate hemlock scale, a small insect established in the eastern United States where many Fraser firs are grown. Damage caused by this invasive insect can cause the needles of

hemlocks, firs, and spruces to yellow and prematurely drop. Also, boxwood blight, a fungal disease, and round leaf bittersweet, an invasive noxious weed, are sometimes found on wreaths and centerpieces and can endanger native trees.

If you suspect your greenery or tree may be infested with an invasive insect or disease, contact the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Report a Pest line at 1-888-545-6684, [reportapest@state.mn.us](mailto:reportapest@state.mn.us), or through the online reporting form.

## Holiday Menu

Since Carol Knutson of Spectacular Catering has retired, we're trying We Cater to You for the Holiday Party. They offer us stuffed chicken breast with wild rice pilaf, rosemary baby red potatoes, salad, rolls and butter, as well as a vegetarian lasagna option of spinach, ricotta & fresh mushrooms with white sauce, salad and garlic bread.

## Highlights from the Board Meetings

The IWLA Board welcomes **John Rust** as a Board Member. His term will run 2026-2029.

**Dick Brown** was also accepted as a Director Emeritus member for life. Both motions were unanimously voted on and accepted.



# WLA Breckenridge Chapter Holiday Party

Sunday, January 18, 2026

\$25 suggested donation

Proceeds go to the Breckenridge Chapter's Scholarship Fund

4 p.m. – Social Hour

Silent Auction

Hors d'oeuvres



5 p.m. – Dinner

Catered by

We Cater to You

Bring desserts to share!

6 p.m. – Program

Carrol Henderson

*A National Legacy*

Please RSVP to  
Barbara Franklin (bbfrankli@gmail.com)  
Call or text  
763-242-0432

*Everyone Welcome*



**Thanks to the volunteers...**  
who decorated our Chapter House for the holidays.  
And to Karen and Tim for the photos.





# Three Rivers Parks District History

## with a focus on Crow-Hassan Park Reserve

Our longtime Chapter member, John Moriarty, stepped up to fill in for a last-minute speaker cancellation in November. Many of you know him well from his former role at Three Rivers Parks District's (TRPD) Senior Manager of Wildlife. He has written a brief historical summary titled [“Crow-Hassan Prairie: 50 years in the Making”](#) which you can read on the Three Rivers website. As one of those who never tires of yet another visit to the amazing Crow-Hassan Park Reserve, I'll list some interesting facts I heard during his presentation.

- Only 3% of the natural habitat shown on the Marschner Map (of pre-European settlement vegetation) remains in Hennepin County, mostly along the rivers.
- Crow-Hassan Park Reserve is on the Crow River Sand Plain. It was maple basswood forest before European colonization.
- After taking the land from the indigenous people, the Europeans cleared the sandy but “free” land for dairy farms (when 30-bushel corn was acceptable). Hennepin County acquired the sandy depleted land in the 1950s.
- Tax support for TRPD is from suburban Hennepin County, not Minneapolis which supports its own city parks.
- TRPD has a stricter 8-20 policy (no more than 20% of **upland** can be developed). Met Council's policy is only 80-20 of whole park, including wetlands.
- The first prairie restoration (10 acres in a former corn field) at Crow-Hassan was in 1969, the first in Minnesota. The easiest restoration of prairie is on old soybean fields (free of brome grass and other exotic weeds and has less stubble).
- Grass seeds planted should have been from local ecotypes (within 100 miles) but originally the closest prairie seed was from Nebraska. The Nebraska grass seeds function much the same



way as local seeds, the genetics not being that different (insects eat them the same).

- Where farmers had introduced brome grass pastures, the restoration method was spray-burn-spray, then drill seeds.
- The old farmsteads on Crow-Hassan were burned and buried – old wells were not capped but they were mostly shallow. One historic barn on the north end was preserved.
- Crow-Hassan is now a prairie complex of 1,200 acres (largest in the Park District) management of which is funded partially through the small grant program of Lessard Sams
- Elm removal was done to slow spread of Dutch Elm disease – skidders were used to get the trees out which may have encouraged buckthorn infestation. The trees were stacked and burned in the winter.
- No-till seed drills were designed especially for fluffy native grass seeds in early 70's. The prototype was developed in Crow-Hassan and now is used worldwide.
- Forb seeds are all local. They are constantly over-planted a week after every burn (every 3-4

years). Burns used to be done of entire prairie but now (even though more expensive) more mosaic, in management zones so as to provide refugia for animals and plants from which they can repopulate the adjacent burn zones in following years.

- Ron Bowen, former gardener for Bruce Dayton (and founder of Prairie Restorations), was hired to help with salvage collecting of seeds in Shakopee and Jordan where gravel pits were being started. The plants were transplanted to Crow-Hassan nursery.
- Every Tues-Thurs-Sat from mid-August to October approximately 1,000 hours of volunteer time is given, picking from 300-350 lbs. of forb seeds (\$60,000/yr equivalent to meet match requirements for grants). Big bluestem grass seed is cheaper to buy (\$120/lb). Blazing star seed goes for \$300-400/lb.
- Crow-Hassan nursery has 40 acres with 40 species of native woody plants (from seedlings to saplings) as well as wildflowers and herbaceous plants. There are 10-15 acres of large trees. They are growing 50,000 trees a year to plant out in Park District for reforestation.



- Plants native to our seven-county metro area are planted, e.g. 4 of 8 species of blazing star, 6 of 7 species of milkweed. People try to help and sometimes bring in seeds not native to this area

like purple coneflowers, which staff pull up if they find them.

- There is more to prairie than just plants. They should be whole ecosystems.
- The first TRPD (then called Hennepin County Park Reserve District) animal restoration was of Giant Canada geese sub-specie which had been extirpated in the United States except for a managed flock in Rochester, MN. Robely Hunt managed this. You could say they succeeded.



- Likewise in 1966 , Three Rivers Parks District TRPD began the [restoration of Trumpeter Swans](#) which had also been extirpated by hunters. The first were brought from Red Rock Lake Wildlife Refuge in Montana. The swans overwintered in pens in several parks until the early 2000s.
- TRPD also reintroduced ospreys.
- They moved in bull snakes (gopher snakes) from Bunker Hill. Bull snakes eat gophers, lay their eggs in their holes and hibernate in them below the frost line. There are so many pocket gophers (a keystone species) that a local farmer who was recruited to hey the prairie said “never again”. Bull snakes need roadless areas because they like to bask on warm roads at night where they are susceptible to being run over.
- Regal fritillary butterflies were brought in. The closest populations were at Weaver Dunes and west of Wilmar. It took four years of planting the two species of prairie violets (buying 2,500





potted violets costing \$30,000). Federal permits were obtained for WPAs and WMAs. The goal was to take one out every four seen. MN DNR said only take 10% (and that was of all individuals caught). John decided to collect on private land instead and ended up releasing 20 butterflies. Females lay 1,000 eggs. Within 3 years there were thousands.

- John tried to introduce Karner blues (federally endangered) whose life cycle depends on wild lupine. Crow-Hassan has hundreds of acres of lupine so he got an LCCMR grant for research. They even spaded in burr oak to build a shady

lupine habitat which females prefer. The closest Karner blues were at Cedar Creek on roadsides but the County regraded the roads and wiped them out. In Whitewater WMA, the population was wiped out by doing complete prescribed burns instead of mosaic. Now the closest are in Crex meadows. Ft McCoy has the largest population in the world. Karner blues lay 200 eggs/yr (only 1/5<sup>th</sup> of Regal fritillary).

- Other ideas for reintroduction must take into account the development in Dayton which is closing in around the park. Grasshopper mice or Tiger beetles might be possible but not badgers (one family's range is 2,000 acres).
- Invasive plants are the biggest issue they have (not counting climate change). Parsnip is sprayed and dug out. Buckthorn control process is to burn-spray-burn-spray. Spotted knapweed is handled by using bio-control. TRPD spends over a \$1 million/yr on invasive plant control
- TRPD has a foraging policy with a limit. The limit is zero. But no one has ever been arrested for picking and eating berries along the way.

You won't be disappointed if you visit the Crow-Hassan Park Reserve just about any time of the year. You'll most likely find a new prairie plant blooming you've not seen before every time.

*Reported by Tim Johnson*

## PLEASE RENEW YOUR ANNUAL IWLA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2026

Second notices have been sent out if you missed the first mailing in September.

Please return your dues with the pink portion with the label to Barb Franklin or bring it to a meeting.

## Happy Birthday!

A few of us were honored to attend Mary Ellen Vetter's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party on December 23 at St. Therese Independent Living. A longtime Breckenridge Chapter member, Mary Ellen managed our chapter's membership well into her 90s. She also served as President of the Brooklyn Historical Society, where she authored the chapter on the natural history in *History of The Brooklyn* in the published by the Society.

Congratulations,  
Mary Ellen!



## Firefly Corner

Flash flash, flicker flicker, buzz buzz... or for those of you just learning *Photinus pyralis* (our local twinkly dialect), that means Sparkly Greetings!

Happy 2026, to you, curious and caring Ikes! While we're cozied up as larvae under the snowy riverbank, here's to you for maintaining clean streams, ponds, and wetlands! Some of us have aquatic larve, so it helps our squiggling little ones to have that fresh clean cool melted ice!

A sweet nudge: if you're renewing your Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter membership this month, please send your check in the **exact amount due** because the National Chapter likes tidy receipts.

And give a big, warm hello to our new membership volunteer at the next meeting—Savannah would love to meet you and it's going to take a few months to put all the names and faces together.



Flicker flash buzz (Stay Bright!)



# Opinion: Fireflies

*By Dick Brown*

(Ed note: With apologies to Dick for neglecting to include his article last summer)

On July 22 our Social-Educational speaker, Diane Hirigoyen from the Xerxes Society, gave us great information that few people know about the lives of fireflies in the Midwest including Minnesota. She explained the lives of various firefly species from mating to egg, to pupa and then to adult. She also spoke about their diminishing numbers due to human encroachment.

The most important part of the talk was about firefly's need for a better environment which has been greatly altered by humans. Fireflies need semi-moist woodlands, tall grass meadows and natural prairie wildflower areas. We learned that allowing one's lawn to grow a few inches taller, to avoid the use of weed killers and pesticides (nothing wrong with a few violets, dandelions etc. No mow maybe should be followed.) and leaving some leaves and grass clippings on the lawn is beneficial.

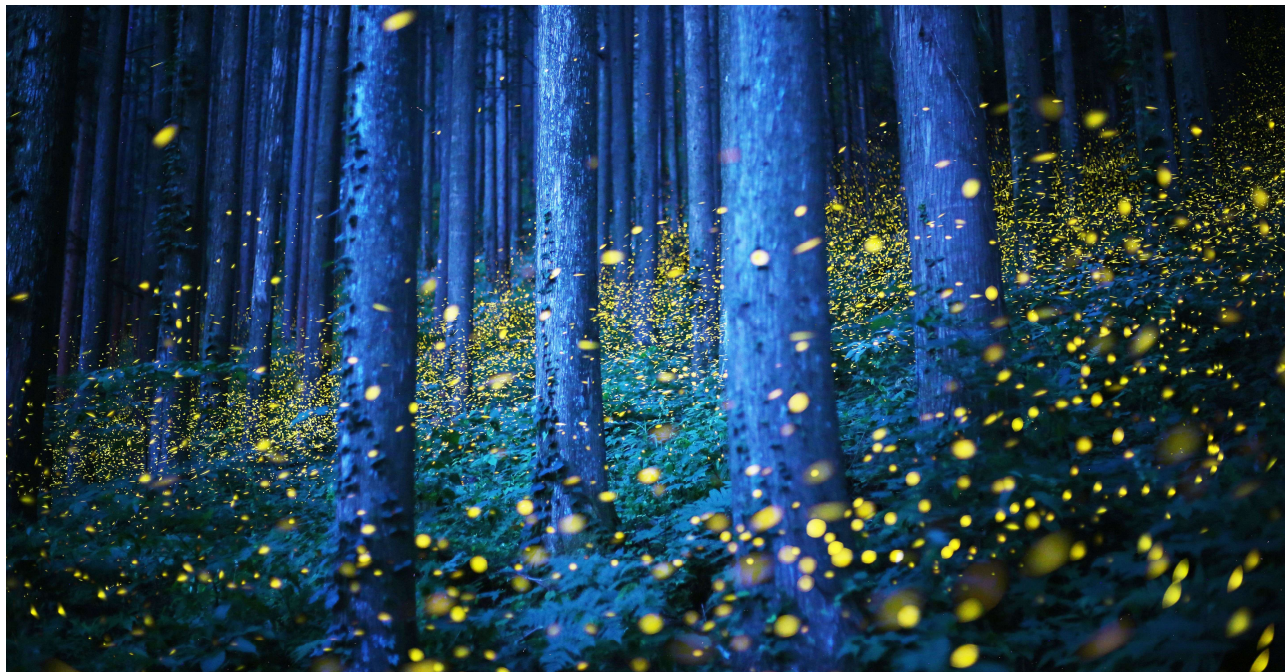
One of the biggest problems is night lighting because artificial lighting makes it hard for mates to see and contact each other.

Years ago, we had fireflies at our property on the Mill Pond, but no more. Their habitat was good here in the 40's and 50's and into the 60's. It may still be good but for various neighbors' perfect lawns and excessive demand for exterior night lighting. City street lights are a major concern; not only do we have street lights on Hayden Lake Road, but on West River Road; also there are many lights at Veteran's Park, Doris Kemp Park and overly excessive lighting on the old Jefferson Highway Historic Bridge in Kemp Park. We are surrounded by lights!

Fireflies are important for other reasons beside viewing. Not only do bats feast on them but some birds also. When the environment favors bats and fireflies you can be sure it favors many species of birds. Flycatchers of which there are many kinds and most all birds feeding their young will benefit from properties producing all kinds of insects. Frogs, toads, lizards, fish and some small snakes benefit from the presence of all insects; mosquitos and flies too.

If we profess a love for nature, we must accept them all, at least to some extent!

Dick Brown  
July 31,2025



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8816 West River Road  
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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](mailto: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.

## Twin Cities Coyote and Fox Project ([tccfp.umn.edu](http://tccfp.umn.edu))

A postdoctoral researcher at the U of M, Geoff Miller, with the Twin Cities Coyote and Fox Project studying their movements in the Twin Cities metro area asked us for permission to capture and collar a fox denning on or near our property at the Chapter House.

Here is a nighttime photo of a fox taken right after they set up a camera trap. They found an abandoned den in our woods. One of the team, Danielle



Brown informed us that many of the fox in our area are suffering from mange this winter but ours looks healthy.

The photo on the right shows what their cable traps look like when set. These traps leash the animal in place and can notify the investigators so they can hurry over and collar it without too



much stress before release for tracking.