



# TIMBERLINES



W. J. Breckenridge Chapter  
Izaak Walton League  
June 2026

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

## Coming Events

### June 2026

- 9 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
  - 23 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
- David Larson**  
**Trapping on Public Lands**

### July 2026

- 12 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 16-18 **National IWLA Convention**
- 26 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm

Social Educational Meeting:  
Tuesday, June 23 7:30 pm  
**David Larson, President**  
**Ban Public Land Trapping MN**  
**A 501(c)3**  
**Trapping on Public Land**

Dave Larson is a 72-year-old grandfather who owns a small business (food sales) and has downsized to downtown Minneapolis. He was “born and raised Minnesota and came from a great family of four boys with great parents who kicked us out the door daily to forage and play.” He is a member of a trap club (24 years) and a DNR Volunteer Lead Firearm Safety Instructor (26 years). He has part ownership in two



hunting/fishing camps in Minnesota, has always run English Setters for Grouse and is an avid fly fisherman.

After his dog was snared fifteen years ago, he began volunteering for Dog Lovers 4 Safe Trapping MN but they failed (like all those before them) to moderate trapping.



He then went on a journey for three years to network with the ten states that have instituted trapping safety protocols. He then took his ideas to three law firms. Eventually, due to the sign pictured here, he stopped hunting on public lands and in October of 2025 launched a very professional website, [BanPublicLandTrappingMN.com](http://BanPublicLandTrappingMN.com)

Ban Public Land Trapping MN advocates for safe, accessible public spaces by eliminating commercial and recreational trapping that threatens wildlife and public safety.

“Trapping technology changed in the 1980’s. The world has changed. So, we must adapt to inviting the crowd. It’s time to talk.”

“We are not anti-trapper. We are against the use of traps on public land and water. We touch animal welfare yet we are not animal rights advocates. I used to be a protectionist. I’ve mellowed into being a Conservationist.”

Come and learn about Dave’s efforts to support trapping while ensuring public safety. Stay afterward for refreshments and conversation.

# 2026–27 Scholarship Recipients

by Jim Arnold

*I think you'll enjoy reading about the six talented students who were recently selected recipients of The Breckenridge Chapter scholarships.*

*Four of the students introduced themselves and their plans at the May 26 meeting.*



**Paige Hebert**, a graduate of Stillwater High School, recently completed her sophomore year at Arizona State University. She has a double major in Sustainability and Geographic Information

Science because it's transforming sustainability work and water issues. She hopes to complete her bachelor's and master's degrees within four years. Her trip to Botswana in 2025 clarified water research as the area she wants to pursue further.

Paige is currently working on her honors thesis "Currents of Change: Integrating Water Quality Science, Geospatial Data, and Visual Storytelling to Assess River Health in Bali." She traveled to Bali in early May to collect water samples.

Beyond academic organization Paige enjoys hiking and exploring outdoors. She has hiked "A Mountain" four times, Piestewa Peak and adventured the Salt River and has worked to initiate a garden club on campus.



**Noah Thelen**, a graduate of Anoka High School, is completing his third year at the University of Minnesota working towards a degree in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology. He is also continuing his work at the University with the MN Sea

Grant assisting on sustainable aquaculture projects. He will continue his work this summer interning with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource Fisheries Department conducting lake, stream and river surveys. His career goal is to become a fisheries research biologist with a state or federal agency.

Noah is involved in a number of volunteer activities: Anoka Waterfowl for Warriors, maintaining wood duck houses, and recently joined the Lake Superior Steelhead Association.



**Evelyn Ameli**, a graduate of Andover High School, is pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering at Gonzaga University. Her interest in engineering is deeply rooted in her passion for environmental conservation.

Evelyn writes that, "I am interested in designing solutions that have the protection of natural resources as a key objective."

At Gonzaga Evelyn has been involved in outdoor activities and environmental projects. She is part of the Outdoors Club and the ski club. She also has been doing volunteer work with a group called Science in Action where she and a few other Gonzaga students travel to a local Title 1 school once a week to teach science to 4<sup>th</sup> graders.

**Jacob Leach**, a graduate of Lakes International Language Academy in Forest Lake, plans to attend Bemidji State to study wildlife biology and criminal justice for a career in conservation law enforcement. The issue that interests



him the most is habitat loss. He writes that, “This career represents more than a job to me. It is a lifelong commitment to serving my state and preserving its natural resources for future generations.”

Jacob is an avid outdoorsman who hikes local trails, skis in the winter, fishes and hunts in season, searches shorelines for agates and takes yearly trips to the BWCA.

*Two other students could not be at this meeting but we hope to hear from them in the near future.*

**Lucille Hugunin**, a graduate of Minneapolis Southwest High School, is attending Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Vermont. She is majoring in Ecology. She envisions a career of research; studying ecosystems, organisms and all their interactions to solve environmental issues at their root. She would like to work in many different labs conducting research that can help preserve ecosystems on a small scale and then apply it to larger scale climate issues.

Lucy enjoys the outdoor recreation in Vermont - the nearby Green Mountains for hiking and skiing,

outdoor trails for running and Lake Champlain for swimming.

**Sofia Newman**, a graduate of Grand Rapids High school, is now attending Minnesota North College working towards an Associate Degree in Environmental Science. She is considering getting a degree in wildlife biology or a bachelor’s degree or higher in environmental science. Sofia graduated from high school in 2025 with a Presidential Award for Academic Excellence and high honors.

At her college Sofia has started a sustainability club and a composting system. She enjoys being active outside, fishes in the summer and advocates for sustainable fishing. She manages a greenhouse in the summer gaining firsthand knowledge in plant care. She writes: “Being able to manage, rehabilitate, and conserve wildlife and different habitats is what I am most interested in.”

*The Breckenridge Chapter has now awarded 150 scholarships in the 28 years of the program. 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, Walter and Dorothy Breckenridge. The endowment continues to grow, thanks primarily to generous donations each year from Larry Swanson, Tom and Marilyn Breckenridge, Geri Nelson and Hans Neilsen. 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, Karen Ostenson, Mary Thelen or Mary Ellen Vetter*

## Cranes over Minnesota

For the first time, our Chapter held our monthly education meeting with a virtual speaker. This was done due to the long distance between the International Crane Foundation (ICF) in Baraboo, WI and our Chapter. Travel time between the two would have required two hours each way and an overnight stay. Thanks to WiFi, the experiment went well except for a couple minor interruptions which were quickly resolved.

Alicia Ward, Whooping Crane Outreach Biologist at the ICF, told us that 10 of the 15 crane species worldwide are listed as endangered or threatened, the Whooping crane being one of them and the rarest bird species in North America. In Minnesota, the Sandhill cranes were nearly extirpated by early pioneer settlers who hunted them (only several dozen were left in NW Minnesota in the 1930s). In 1929, Aldo Leopold estimated there were only 25 breeding Sandhills in Wisconsin.

The Greater Sandhill cranes have made a huge comeback due to federal laws banning hunting. You can learn more about this specie's recovery in Minnesota by reading the chapter about them in Breckenridge Chapter member Carrol Henderson's recent book *A National Legacy*.

Many of us have heard Sandhill cranes calling even in our urban areas or as they fly overhead. Their unique trumpeting call which carries for miles is made possible by their elongated trachea (2 ft long coiled in their chest). I have observed successful reproduction along Shingle Creek near the Brooklyn Center library just off Interstate Hwy I-94. There are now estimated to be over one million Sandhill cranes worldwide. They are hunted in 17 states (including a brief season in northern Minnesota). The different population in east and central Minnesota is strictly protected. Power-line collisions are a problem as the birds have a hard time seeing them because their eyes are on the side of their head. Wind turbines don't seem to be a big problem for them to avoid.

Whooping cranes are the largest birds in North America standing 5 ft tall with a 7-8 ft wingspan. They have proven much more difficult to restore and are rarely seen in Minnesota, and when they are



it is usually wandering juveniles. It is estimated that there were 10,000 whooping cranes in North America pre-European settlement. Unregulated hunting was the main cause of their extirpation in Minnesota. They became even more sought after as they became rarer. Their eggs too were sought after for consumption. Even their feathers were popular for women's hats. The 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act saved cranes from extinction. In addition to hunting pressure, habitat loss was a huge threat. Ninety percent of wetlands had been drained in WI due to the Homestead Act which incentivized draining of wetlands. The 1934 Duck Stamp Act began a permanent source of funds to protect and restore wetlands. Of course, the cranes benefited by the same wetland protection that the ducks enjoyed.

Other protections like the 1972 Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act were passed when there were only 70 individual Whooping cranes left. In 1973, the first attempt to reintroduce whooping cranes was made but was unsuccessful. In 2001, with lessons learned, they were reintroduced in WI. Now they migrate south to winter in southern Indiana and northern Alabama during the winter. Artificial insemination is used to increase biodiversity. There are about 700 in the wild. Besides breeding efforts, hunter education to prevent shooting, advocacy for power line marking and predator aversion training for the young (predators cause 50% of their mortality) are underway.

Alicia, in answer to a question from Larry K, said she is hoping for whooping cranes to be regularly breeding in Minnesota in maybe two generations, so in her lifetime but not mine and Larry's. In answer to another question, she said that sandhill and

whooping cranes do not get along well. A mated pair (like all cranes they mate for life) requires about 3-4 sq km breeding territory and whooping cranes will drive sandhills out of their part of the wetland in breeding season. You can learn more about our cranes and how you can help at the ICF website <https://savingcranes.org>.

*Reported by Tim Johnson*

## Celebrating 2026 as the Year of Rivers

By John Gibbs

Nice mention of the IWLA in this article from the Brooklyn Park/Brooklyn Center Sun Post

*John Gibbs is the chair of the Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners. He represents District 5, which includes Bloomington, Chanhausen, Eden Prairie, Fort Snelling and Richfield. Contact him at [john.gibbs@threeriversparks.org](mailto:john.gibbs@threeriversparks.org)*

As we developed a theme for the annual Three Rivers Park District State of the Parks Address and Expo, it seemed like a natural fit this year to focus on the important role water resources play in the health and vitality of the metro region.

Each year, State of the Parks showcases recent efforts by Three Rivers and our partners to protect natural areas and connect everyone to nature. This year's event took place on April 22, and there was no better setting for it than the Gateway Center at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park in Brooklyn Park. As we highlighted the vibrant Mississippi River ecosystem, attendees could take in unparalleled views of the river visible just outside the windows.

Throughout 2026 at Three Rivers, we are celebrating the "Big Year of Rivers" with a focus on river and water-themed programming. Rivers are central to who we are at the Park District – our name was chosen because all of the parkland we manage is located within the watersheds of the Mississippi, Minnesota and Crow rivers. And this

year marks a century of recovery and resilience for the Mississippi River, following water quality studies conducted in 1926 that declared the section of river in the Twin Cities area unfit for human or livestock contact and basically a dead zone nearly devoid of living fish.

Protecting and improving habitat is central to our mission, and part of that work includes efforts by our water resources team to improve and maintain the health of the region's water bodies. That commitment includes sampling and monitoring water bodies throughout Three Rivers' 27,000 acres, inspecting watercraft entering area lakes to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, treating lakes when invasive aquatic plants are found, and taking steps to reduce the amount of algae-causing phosphorus making its way to lakes.

We are also making important improvements to our shorelines, including at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park, to provide more accessible opportunities for shoreline fishing as well as reducing erosion into our rivers and streams. These efforts could not succeed without collaboration with other agencies, and **I was glad that many of our partners from the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, the Izaak Walton League cities, counties and watershed management organizations throughout the region joined us for the State of the Parks.**

In addition to providing accessible locations to fish, we are also helping to develop the next generation of anglers. Our fishing summer camps are always the first to fill, and last year, we launched a successful fishing mentorship program where young people learn about the skills, gear and safety aspects of fishing from experienced anglers. I was excited to add that this spring we are launching a Fishing Rod Loaner Program at eight park locations, where visitors can borrow a rod, purchase bait and head to a pier or the shoreline to do some fishing.

Here in Minnesota, access to water for recreation and enjoyment is vital to our quality of life. As we head into summer, I encourage everyone to check out some of the countless ways you can connect with the water resources in our parks. You can visit our website at [threeriversparks.org](http://threeriversparks.org) to plan your adventures.

# Earth Day and the Non-Game Wildlife Fund

Dear Breckenridge Chapter Board Members:

I was enthused to hear our chapter donated \$3,000 through various groups in the past year to help fight off mining in the BWACW. A good use of our resources.

There is another worthy cause: the DNR Non-Game Fund. As reported in the *Strib* in mid-April, the Chickadee Checkoff on our tax forms has been slowly diminishing. Mostly they think because people have been filing taxes online where it is easy to miss the “box” for it. My son filing for me this year missed it.

The Non-Game Fund is especially important for enthusiasts like me because non-game has no dedicated sure-fire funding and is dependent on the whims of the legislature, which is often lacking. Unlike hunting licenses, duck stamps, fishing licenses etc. for game species, the non-game funding covers various types of species such as “song” birds, rare mammals such as bats, various insects such as butterflies, bees, beetles and moths, flowers in our woods and prairies, turtles and amphibians, swans, cranes and more.

Non-game species are important for their own sake, but many are important for the lives of game animals, fish and birds and for one another as prey for predators as well.

*Dick Brown  
Earth Day  
April 22, 2026*

*The Board voted at the May meeting to contribute \$1,000 this year to Nongame Wildlife Fund and to vote again each following year in the April tax season.*

## Opinion: Expansion of the Human Race and Housing

The news is full of conflicting reports on the issues of losing population, of still gaining population and the lack of millions of homes. And then we have many

environmentalists claiming there are already too many humans not only on Earth, not only in America but even in the State of Minnesota. These contradictions must be confusing to anyone who cares about our future, 10, 20, 50 or 100 years from now.

I am no scientist, demographer or economist, but do have what I think are some fairly unbiased opinions.

Are we losing population? I have seen reports that we are losing the acceleration in growth that we once had but we are still growing population at a reduced rate.

If we are losing population, how does one account for the drastic need for new homes? There are thousands of new homes being built around the cities, suburbs and lakeshores with no end apparently in sight.

The April 14 *Strib* reports the White House says “there is a shortage of ten million houses in the U.S.” (at 3 persons per household that could mean 20 million persons without homes). Of course, that figure comes from the White House and the Trumpster is known for inaccuracies.

The talk is also about lowering “standards” of various kinds which I believe could perhaps lead to slums. Are older homes being demolished at a rapid rate instead of being improved?

It seems to me the main reason for housing shortage is the rapid increase in immigration in the last few years.

The problem with housing growth means more deforestation, more need for oil for roads and asphalt roofing, vast mining for cement and gravel, more demand for copper and plastic water limes etc., and worst of all, the tremendous expansion into agricultural and natural lands. Increasing density could also lead to slum areas eventually and fewer places for kids to play and for parents to have gardens. Increase in population has many drawbacks. What needs to be done is halt that increase!

The only “advantage” of a country’s increase in population would be for cannon fodder.

*Dick Brown  
April 2026*

# Bringing Our Work Together: Join Us at the 2026 IWLA National Convention

Across the country, Izaak Walton League chapters are doing important work—restoring habitat, protecting water, engaging youth, and building community.



This year's National Convention is a chance to bring that work together.

The convention will feature:

- An **Innovation Fair** showcasing projects from chapters across the country
- A **national art show** highlighting our relationship with land, water, and community

- A **Youth Convention and Green Crew Summit** focused on developing the next generation of leaders
- Opportunities to connect, share ideas, and learn from one another

We're encouraging members of our chapter to attend—and to help represent the work we're doing locally.

Volunteers will be needed to tend to tables, selling t-shirts, etc. July 15 – 19th. Sign-ups are going on right now and encouraging us and our members to volunteer.

If you're interested in serving as a delegate/alternate, you can receive **free registration** by contacting our Breckenridge Chapter President Steve Schaust

<https://iwla-getitdone.org/registration/>

Home Registration Get It Done Venue Youth Store Resources Explore Speakers

**GET IT DONE**  
Turning Passion into Action

Register Today for the 2026 National Convention in  
Bloomington, Minnesota.

**JULY 16-18, 2026**

Join us as we celebrate conservation leaders, members and volunteers! This 2-day convention is guaranteed to inspire and delight by offering enriching opportunities for engagement, learning and action. PLUS— Come early and take advantage of family-focused activities involving some of Minnesota's favorite outdoor opportunities!

Hi! How can we help?

I have a question

Tell me more

BOOK MY ROOM

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

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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.

## Lunchtime Visitor

Jerry and Wendy Steele, along with other diners, saw this young black bear while having lunch at a restaurant just outside Crosby, MN on 5/30/2026

