# TIMBERLINES

**W. J. Breckenridge Chapter**
**Izaak Walton League**
**September 2026**
**www.breckenridgeikes.org**


## Coming Events
## September 2026

8 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
22 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
**Jonathan Slaght, Wildlife Biologist & Author of *Tigers Between Empires***

## October 2026

13 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
27 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
**Bruce Anderson - History of American Wilderness2**

## November 2026

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

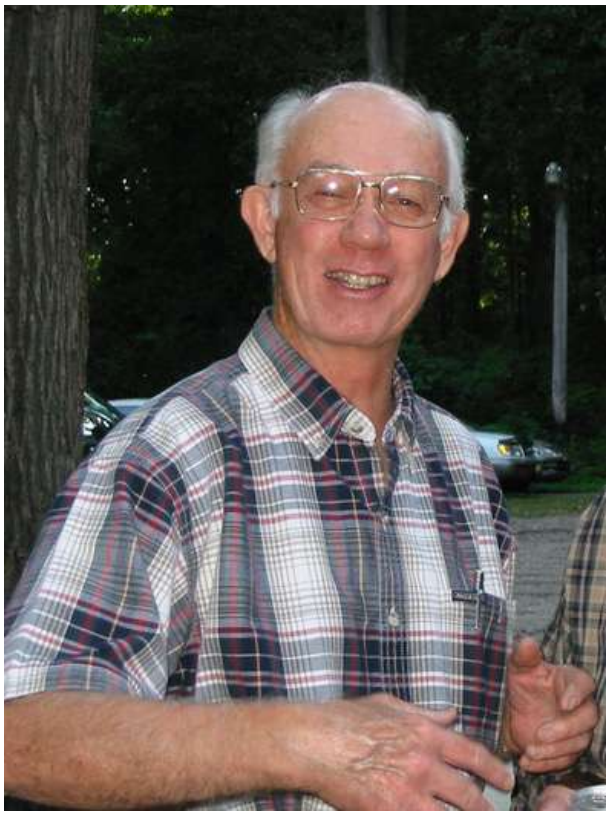
Social Educational Meeting:

## Tuesday, September 22 7:30 pm
## Jonathan Slaght, Wildlife Biologist
## Author of *Tigers Between Empires*

In Jonathan C. Slaght's new book, *Tigers Between Empires*, the award-winning author and conservationist charts the incredible, thirty-year story of how Russian and American scientists came together to help protect Amur tigers, more popularly known as 'Siberian Tigers,' from extinction. Slaght weaves together the lives of field-savvy researchers and the elusive tigers they study, detailing how both respond to the evolving threats that faced them in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Through robust science, innovation, and tenacity, this small, fearless international coalition laid the foundations of new tiger research across

*(continued on page 2)*

## Dick Brown
## 1927-2026



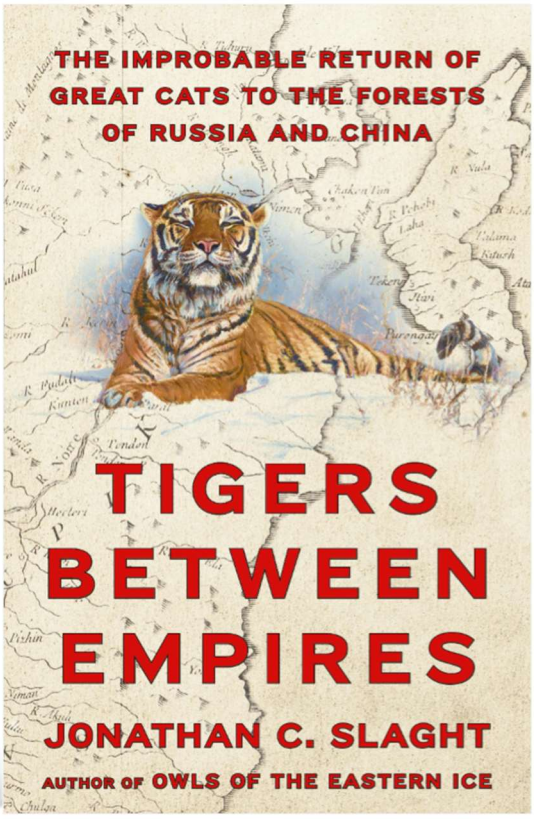
On Monday, August 31 we were saddened by the loss of our oldest and one of our most prominent chapter members. A member since 1982, Dick Brown also served as a State Director, has held leadership positions within the Minnesota Division Leadership and is designated as a Director Emeritus for the Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter. Dick was also a frequent contributor of opinion pieces in *Timberlines*.He will be sorely missed.

More information on plans for his memorial will be posted as it is available.

*(Tigers from page 1)*
Asia and transformed public opinion around tigers from something to be feared and hunted, to creatures we must protect.

Jonathan C. Slaght, a scientist with the Wildlife Conservation Society, is the author of *Owls of the Eastern Ice*, which was nominated for a National Book Award in 2020 and won the PEN/E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award in 2021. His latest book, *Tigers Between Empires*, was named a Best Book of 2025 by the Minnesota Star Tribune, Scientific American, and others. His writings have been featured in The New York Times, The Atlantic, The Guardian, and Orion. He lives in Minneapolis.

Please join us for this presentation followed by refreshments and conversation.




# Saving the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee

*By Tim Johnson*

This Rusty patched bumble bee was seen and photographed with an iPhone in the Brooklyn Park front yard of member Tim Johnson last week. Native wildflowers have been planted on this former turfgrass lawn.

"Before the year 2000, the rusty patched bumble bee, *Bombus affinis*, was a common sight through most of Minnesota, across the east to the Atlantic Ocean and south through the Appalachian mountains.

Suddenly, around the year 2000, they disappeared across their entire range. After 10 years of looking, conservationists and bumble bee biologists found rusty patched bumble bees again, primarily in and around urban centers in the Midwest, including the Twin Cities.

Though still here, current rusty patched populations are a shadow of their former selves, having lost over 95% of their range and experienced over a 90% decrease in abundance. In 2017, the rusty patched bumble bee was granted endangered status by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." *(U of Minn Department of Entomology)*

Rusty patched bumblebees were granted 1.57 million acres of critical habitat in May of this year. This designation was finalized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and secures protection for places essential to the survival of one of America's most imperiled pollinators.

This win was the result of a lawsuit filed by Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas (four Breck Chapter members are on the board of FMSNA) alongside allies NRDC and CBD, which challenged the Service's earlier decision to deny critical habitat for the imperiled species.

### How the US Fish & Wildlife Service says you can help save the rusty patch

"…Here are some tips if you want to give the rusty patched bumble bee and other pollinators a helping hand:

- Create your own bumble bee habitat that offers a mix of flowers throughout the growing season. Rusty patched bumble bees are generally active from April through October. For greatest benefit, plant a mix of flowering trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants so that something is always blooming. Native plants are a great choice as they are especially nutritious and typically not treated with pesticides.
- Early spring is important! The only bumble bees that survive the winter are queens, which mated the previous year. The future of bumble bees depends on these queens as they emerge and look for nest sites and start laying eggs. Help them start new colonies by providing spring flowers that bloom quickly. Early blooming flowering trees and shrubs are great options.
- If you discover a bumble bee nest, great! Nests are a rare find. Leave the nest be – it will be occupied only until the fall.
- In fall, leave some areas of your yard unraked or pile leaves and branches at the edge of your yard or garden beds. Rusty patched bumble bee queens use these places to overwinter.
- Avoid pesticides as much as you can. Pesticides, especially insecticides, can harm bumble bees and other pollinators (they're insects, after all!). And herbicides used on weeds can reduce food sources by removing flowers from the landscape. If you do need to use pesticides, limit use and follow instructions carefully."

# Soil and Us

"Pick up a handful of good soil and you'll have more microorganisms (bacteria, fungi) in your hand than there are stars in our galaxy."

Diversity Breakdown

- **Bacteria:** Estimates range from 10,000 to over 75,000 distinct bacterial species in just a small sample or teaspoon of rich soil.
- **Fungi:** Thousands to tens of thousands of fungal species, alongside massive networks of microscopic fungal threads (hyphae).
- **Protozoa and other microbes:** Thousands of species of single-celled protozoa, algae, archaea, and microscopic nematodes or viruses.

With great appreciation for healthy soil, Annie Beedy spoke to Chapter members on one of the aspects of regenerative design. She specifically focused on a no-till method of building healthy soil in our individual yards for gardening and healthy ecosystems.

We all know the IWLA mission but I will repeat it here to emphasize soil… "Our mission is to conserve, restore and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including **soil**, air, wood, water and wildlife."

Annie thinks we should be trying to reduce the 40-60 million acres of lawn turf monoculture in the USA. She believes Americans grow more lawns per capita than any other country on earth. Every acre converted from turf grass to diverse plantings will reduce the amount of water, fertilizer and pesticides used while increasing the habitat needed to support pollinators and other wildlife. Another benefit of conversion she addressed is more carbon sequestration in soil and roots. This is more important in this era of increased carbon pollution of the air as the commons are used as a dump for fossil fuel emissions. Less gasoline powered mowing of lawns by the now ubiquitous sit-down mowers would be another benefit.

Regenerative soil practices also make it possible to irrigate less as they allow the soil to act more like a sponge while continuous mulching on top keeps the soil cool, reducing evaporation.


Annie mentioned another benefit of healthy soil for humans. That is that science has isolated aerosolized compounds emitted by some of the microorganisms in soil which give a person a sense of well-being when inhaled. She attested to experiencing the effect herself and had no doubt that many gardeners in the audience had as well.

Her suggested recipe for no-till rich soil building in our yards:

- A layer of cardboard watered down before placing other layers on top of it
- Layers of plant material like grass clippings, weeds, organic straw available in bales, sticks, and compost
- Animal manure as available
- Plant your desired plants in this material and roots will penetrate through cardboard into the original soil beneath
- Water as needed and add organic compost and mulch continuously thereafter to keep the soil from drying and to discourage weeds. Any weeds should be easy to pull as your hand should be able to reach right into the soil.

https://www.permanentcultureproject.com/gardenjournal/2026/8/12/jhui5ivxiz63ec4lca52ygaje8jipr

*Reported by Tim Johnson*

# River Dropping

Although not yet as low as during the dust bowl in 1934 or the more recent droughts of 1976, 1988 and 2021, the Mississippi River at Banfill Island is running lower each day. So low that the extensive mussel bed at the south end of the island is nearly as exposed as it was in those years. In early September, a potential future Ike member, Maggie Gale, was photographed rescuing mussels out in the riffles created by the gravel bed. This she accomplished by moving them to deeper water below the riffles. Among the species she rescued that day were Pink heel-splitters, Common pocketbooks, Mapleleaves, Three-horned warty-acks, Giant floaters, Black sandshells, Wabash pigtoes and Threeridged. Some mussels like the Threeridged (pictured) can live between 50-75 years.

The river flow is currently running above the 800 cfs levels seen during 1988 when the upper Mississippi River experienced a dramatic drought. That year, Maggie's mother was the same age and was able to wade across the Mississippi River in Brooklyn Park. Very low water levels severely

stress the aquatic ecosystem, not only drying up much of the riverbed but also heating up the water. Some creatures like racoons and herons benefit by the opportunity to scavenge the dying mussels. But let's hope we get some rain soon to break this drought and save the remaining mussels to provide the eco-service of filtering the river water.

*By Tim Johnson*

**Chapter House Rental Rates***

For current active members only
(damage deposit: $500.00; $100 for previous renters)
Monday through Thursday……..…$150.00
Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays.……$200.00
Scouts: (damage deposit $50.00)
Overnights…..$50.00
*Rates and terms subject to change without notice; please contact the Chapter for special circumstances.
The Rental Agreement and Renters Checkout List are available on our website by clicking here.
For availability, please contact Tim Johnson by email.

**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.

## IWLA Breckenridge Chapter
## Membership Application:

Name:_____ _____Date:_____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Birthdate_____

Dues are subject to change.
Please make check payable to: IWLA, Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter

Membership Dues:

| | |
|---|---|
| Individual: | 75.00 |
| Family: | 99.00 |
| Student: | 43.00 |

Mail to:

Barbara Franklin
8840 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55444