

River Bend Nature Center

Outline of Significant Events

Updated: 4/2/09

1974 Orwin A. Rustad shares his dream of a nature center with Kay Janky. (Fall).

1975 The Horizons Subcommittee moved to recommend "development of a nature center...as an everlasting monument to the Bicentennial." (January 30).

The recommendation was adopted by the Faribault Bicentennial Steering Committee. (February 4).

Kay Janky and Charlie Turnbull appointed co-chairs of the Horizons Subcommittee. (February 4).

The Faribault City Council passed resolution 75-137 asking the State Legislature to deed unused lands of the Faribault State Hospital to the City of Faribault for development of a "nature and agricultural interpretive center." (December 23).

1976 Turnbull resigned as co-chair. (February 20).

Janky becomes chair of the Environmental Interpretive Center. (February 20).

United States Bicentennial celebration. The focal point in time that powered the dream of creating an environmental education facility. (July 4, 1976)

The Land Acquisition Bill failed in the Minnesota State Legislature. (April).

1977 Governor Perpich signed a bill authorizing 536 acres to be leased to the City of Faribault for a "nature interpretive center." (May 25).

1978 Faribault Area Nature Interpretive Center, Inc. is officially incorporated as a nonprofit organization. (July 25).

First trails are staked by Orwin Rustad, Steve Griesert, and Bob Yochum. (August 11).

Bylaws adopted. (September).

Greg Carlson elected president. (November 20).

LAWCON Grant

1979 Inception of the volunteer naturalist program. (January 18).

City of Faribault leased 536 acres of State land for a nature interpretive center. (January

29).

City of Faribault received a \$311,444 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to develop an access road, parking lot, trailside shelter, restrooms, and trails. (March).

Name changed to River Bend Nature Center. (April 9).

City of Faribault and RBNC signed an agreement detailing each party's responsibilities for the nature center. (April 16).

Official logo approved. (May).

First *Nature Center News* published by Co-Editors Jeanne Cleary and Pat Rice. (June 4).

Mardag Foundation approved \$35,000 grant to RBNC. (July 25).

Launched first public fund drive that ultimately generated \$103,000. (August 18).

RBNC signed a \$9,000 contract to provide nature programming for Independent School District #656. (September 26).

B.H. Heselton Co. started construction of the trail system. (October 1).

1980 Ron Miles hired as the RBNC's first executive director. (February 1).

Faribault City Council adopted rules and regulations governing the use of RBNC. (March 11).

Held the first Festival of Nature and Art. (August 17).

Entrance sign completed by Ivan Whillock. (September).

Grand Opening and Dedication of RBNC. (September 21).

1981 Executive Director Ron Miles resigned. (March 28).

Virgil Luehrs hired as 3/5-time interim director. (April 8).

Charlie Turnbull elected president. (May 4).

Self-guided trail completed by Orwin Rustad. (July 10).

Ron Osterbauer hired as Executive Director. (September 15).

Ron Osterbauer started writing a weekly column for the *Faribault Daily News*. (October 22).

1982 Held the first River Bend Ramble at the Faribault Golf and Country Club generating a total of \$645. (May 22).

Completed the first Phenology Calendar (1993). (July 30).

Faribault's public and parochial elementary students began participating in a minimum of two programs per grade level. (Fall).

Held the first Kooks and Spooks Halloween event. (October 24 & 30).

Held a kick-off at the Lavender Inn for the educational endowment fund. (November 18).

1983 Unveiled *The Nature of River Bend*, a commissioned painting by noted wildlife artist James Killen. Signed and numbered prints were given to donors contributing a \$1,000 or more to the endowment fund. (March 24).

Orwin Rustad received (in absentia) the Association of Interpretive Naturalists' *Meritorious Service Award*. (April 1).

Virgil Luehrs resigned his position of interpretive naturalist. (April 11).

Marlys Reuvers hired as a 3/4-time interpretive naturalist. (August 2).

RBNC leased 49 acres of land from The Nature Conservancy bringing its land base to 585 acres. (December).

1984 St. Olaf College donated 16 acres to the City of Faribault bringing RBNC's land base to 601 acres. (February 8).

Held the first Winterfest. (February 11).

Tom Kaul elected president. (April 10).

A \$200,000 building grant was approved by the Minnesota State Legislature contingent upon a match. (April 21).

Completed the floating bridge. (July 10).

Installed the first bench. (August 18).

Completed the south-side trails. (November 28).

1985 Planted 14,000 hardwoods in abandoned cornfield near the upper parking lot. (May).

Planted 20 acres of prairie near the upper parking lot. (June 21).

The City of Faribault leased an additional 39 acres from the State of Minnesota bringing RBNC's land base to 640 acres. (June).

Sold 550 tickets to the 4th annual River Bend Ramble chaired by Gus Hoffmann. (November 8).

Ron Osterbauer received national recognition by having three articles published in the

newsletter of the Association of Interpretive Naturalists.

1986 Marlys Reuvers resigned as interpretive naturalist. (February 14).

Tim Cook hired for a seven month interpretive naturalist position. (April 7).

Planted 3,500 hardwoods near the upper parking lot. (April 16).

Constructed a 15-acre pond near the lower parking lot. (May 13).

Louise Wright elected president. (May 13).

Kay Janky received an *Outstanding Service Award* from the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International for her work with RBNC. (May 14).

Tim Cook hired as the first full-time interpretive naturalist. (August 12).

1987 Held the first Prairie Day event. (May 20).

Offered first Faribault Regional Center programming. (June 15).

Started building endowment fund with a \$2,000 grant from NSP. (October 5).

Received a \$28,359 grant from the Southeastern Minnesota Initiative Fund to hire an additional naturalist and expand programming to surrounding communities. (October 23).

1988 The board authorized pursuing charitable gambling. (February 9).

RBNC founding member of Faribault (Volunteer) Recognition Coalition. (April 13).

Ron Osterbauer, Tim Cook, and Mark Oestreich discovered new colonies of Minnesota dwarf trout lilies on 5.7 acres of private property subsequently purchased by The Nature Conservancy for lease to RBNC. (Spring).

Jim Loehr elected president. (May 10).

The board authorized preliminary drawings and an artist's conception of a year-round interpretive center. (August 25).

Held the first Volksmarch. (September 16).

Started an Explorers' Post. (September 26).

Replaced Kooks and Spooks with Enchanted Trails as RBNC's annual Halloween event. (October 31).

1989 Piloted program agreement with Owatonna Public Schools. (January).

Held first Great Deductible Race. (Spring).

Bill Saufferer elected president. (July 19).

Prairie Day changed to Nature Fest. (September 17).

1990 Mark Oestreich resigned his position as interpretive naturalist. (March).

John Blackmer hired as a temporary interpretive naturalist. (March).

Held first Earth Day Celebration. (April 22).

John Blackmer hired as a full-time Interpretive Naturalist. (May 7).

Ron Osterbauer resigned as executive director. (July 24).

Tim Cook promoted to chief naturalist and interim director. (July 24).

Thanks to a nomination from Ron Osterbauer, Tim Cook received the National Association for Interpretation's first *Outstanding Young Interpreter Award*. (December).

Established Interpretive Center Building Committee. (December 7).

1991 Launched intern program. (January).

Gerry Heyer elected president. (January 19).

Lower parking lot area chosen as the interpretive center building site. (February 11).

Ron Osterbauer received an *Excellence in Interpretation Award* from Region V of the National Association for Interpretation. (March).

Tom Gagnon named building campaign chair. (March 21).

Tim Cook promoted to executive director. (June 27).

Ground breaking ceremony for new interpretive center. (July 2).

First day of business in the interpretive center. (December 2).

1992 Ron Parker received a *Certificate of Appreciation* from Region V of the National Association for Interpretation. (March).

Held a reception for building endowment fund donors. (June 13).

Dedicated the new interpretive center. (June 14).

Ron Parker received the National Association for Interpretation's _____ *Award* - the highest honor given to non-members. (November).

Conducted the first restricted campaign. (November).

Reviewed RBNC's first certified audit (year ended December 31, 1991). (November 19).

1993 Ron Parker elected president. (January 28).

Gerry Heyer and Pat Rice received (in absentia) *Certificates of Appreciation* from Region V of the National Association for Interpretation. (April).

Ron Osterbauer received (in absentia) a *Special Services Award* from Region V of the National Association for Interpretation. (April).

Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. (March 25).

Held strategic planning sessions. (April 15 & July 15).

Dedication of Louise Coffey Wright Memorial Prairie. (July 17).

Held the first members-only Ice-cream Social. (September 19).

1994 Started new gift shop. (January).

Ron Osterbauer resigned his position as gambling manager. (January 31).

Jim Kittlesen hired as gambling manager. (February 1).

John Blackmer received an *Excellence in Interpretation Award* from Region V of the National Association for Interpretation. (March).

City of Faribault, Inc. received (in absentia) an *Outstanding Contribution Award* from Region V of the National Association for Interpretation. (March).

Amended Bylaws. (March 31).

Established first weekend hours Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Spring).

River Bend first opens gift shop booth in Rice and Steele County Fairs (summer)

RBNC entered waste education agreement with Rice County, Inc. (August 15).

Andrea Athanas hired for a one year AmeriCorps position. (August).

New *Waste Not... & ...Want Not* curriculum developed. (Fall).

1995 Dedication of Carlander Nature Library. (June 22).

Completed canoe landing and campsites. (Summer).

Replaced the "Enchanted Trails" with the "Enchanted Forest" as River Bend's annual Halloween event, held in cooperation with Faribault Early Childhood Family Education.

- 1996** River Bend satisfies the last of outside debt obligations
- Tim Cook resigns as River Bend's Executive Director (January)
- John Blackmer appointed Interim Director (January)
- Sara Harms hired as seasonal Interpretive Naturalist (Feb-June)
- Prairie Pond temporarily drained for habitat enhancement (spring-summer)
- Founders' Gathering held in the Interpretive Center (August 25)
- Greg Wright hired as new Executive Director
- 1997** River Bend holds first Spring Jamboree (April)
- Garage addition added to Trailside Center
- First year of new summer day-camp programs
- New nine-month, school-year internship program launched (August).
- John Blackmer promoted to Chief Naturalist (December)
- 1998** Ron Parker completes sixth year as President of River Bend (March)
- Dick Carlander elected as President (March)
- Elaine Loran hired in new, two year Naturalist position with emphasis in Public Outreach/Volunteer Development (April 24). Position made permanent several years later.
- River Bend land base permanently deeded to City of Faribault and RBNC (June)
- New Little People/Big People and MEA Nature Explorers Camp initiated (fall)
- Ramble dinner-dance-auction sets new fundraising record, generating \$24,500+ in a single evening (October 9)
- 1999** Summer staffing increased to three to expand capacity of summer nature camps.
- First stage of a cooperative trail enhancement project with City of Faribault adds paved trail from entrance to upper parking lot, resurfaces Raccoon Trail with crushed rock, and extends pavement from NE corner of parking lot to east into woods.
- Partners Scholarship Fund developed to assist families who cannot afford programs.
- School-year internship program expanded to three positions to address expanding programming demands during the fall-winter-spring.

New River Bend Nature Center signs installed along the main entry road and in front of the Interpretive Center.

Emergency Reserve Fund established to ensure the financial stability of River Bend.

Ramble dinner-dance-auction sets new fundraising record, generating \$27,800+ in a single evening (October 15)

River Bend closes for nine days to host its first ever deer management hunt.

2000 Tom Hartman elected as President (March)

New format for newsletter planned and implemented.

River Bend publishes first-ever annual report. (actually there was one in 1988 –nm)

Base membership rates increased by the board of directors effective June 1, 2000.

Summer staffing increased to four to expand capacity of summer nature camps and while also address facility needs.

Fire on south side of Trailside Center burns out window and causes other minor damage.

Second stage of a cooperative trail enhancement project with City of Faribault laying crushed rock along the primary trail corridor from the south side to core trails.

City of Faribault helps complete Cherry Trail installation by laying crushed rock and placing several culverts.

Information kiosks created at upper parking lot, along trail to Trailside and in front of Interpretive Center. Old hanging signs at both lots removed.

Old Turtle Pond bridge removed, new Turtle Pond bridge built and new wetland observation deck installed.

Final sections of dam downstream of Dairy Lane bridge removed.

Ramble dinner-dance-auction sets new fundraising record, generating \$27,900+ in a single evening (October 14)

River Bend closes for four days to host its second deer management hunt (Nov).

Tod and Nancy Aldrich and family donate 35 acres to River Bend Nature Center along the Straight River on the facilities western edge (December 29)

2001 Remodeling of Trailside program storage garage completed – hot water heater, sink and storage shelves added.

Paula Schanilec hired in new office assistant role (March 2)

New Adult Naturalist Series developed and offered as six-topic series extending from April through November.

Greg Wright steps down as Executive Director (April 27).

Nalani McCutcheon begins as Executive Director (July 16)

Interpretive Center is re-carpeted and re-painted (Nov)

2002 Kids' Corner Interpretive Exhibit is developed by Elaine Loran and intern Becky Rosendahl. Funded by a contribution from the State Bank of Faribault. (spring)

Windows on the Wild Backyard Habitat Demonstration area is developed by John Blackmer and intern Marion Mason. Funded by a grant from the Minnesota DNR. (spring-fall)

Paula Schanilec resigns. Julie Risberg hired as new administrative assistant (Sept)

New map sign installed at trailhead by parking lot. Funded by a donation from the Carlander family. (Dec)

2003 Information Kiosk installed at entrance from Glynnview Trail. Funded by a donation from the Carlander family. (Jan)

Six passenger golf cart purchased for use with tours and work crews. Funded by a donation from the State Bank of Faribault. (May)

Big Woods Amphitheater designed and constructed by John Blackmer and volunteers. Funded by a grant from the Schmidt Foundation. (Summer)

Outdoor water fountain from Regional Center installed in front of Interpretive Center. (Spring)

2004 Digital projector and camera purchased for use with programming. Funded by a donation from the State Bank of Faribault. (winter)

New maple syrup evaporator purchased for use with programs. Funded by a donation from the Carlander family. (winter)

River Bend celebrates its 25th Anniversary with a Founders Dinner at the Knights of Columbus Hall and a community celebration at River Bend. (May 23rd, 2004)

Seasonal photo contests begun. Funded by Dave and Missy Donkers. (summer)

2005 Kids in the Wild Outdoor Play Area constructed. Funded by the State Bank of Faribault and Mike/Kathy Sandberg. (spring)

WHIP grant received from NRCS to support buckthorn removal. Also a grant was received from the Minnesota Community Foundation that supported a major buckthorn

removal event. 16 acres was cleared. (summer)

Trout Lily trail re-routed at river overlook to deal with erosion issues. Funded by the Schmidt Foundation. (fall)

Wiberg family constructs memorial bench and platform by upper parking lot

Deer management hunt held. (fall)

Homeschool Association contracts cultivated by the expansion of a staff position. Barbara Hurley hired. (spring)

After school science club begun with Lincoln Elementary. Funded by Dave and Missy Donkers. (fall)

2006 Trailside bathrooms remodeled. Funded by the Carlander family.

Honor Point developed along Oak Trail. Funded by the Schmidt Foundation and the Carlander family.

Deer management hunt held. (fall)

2007 John Blackmer resigns to take a position at Shattuck-St. Mary's. Programming positions restructured. Elaine Loran, Barbara Hurley and Heather Rickerl (hired July 11th) become the programming staff. Skyp Lee, hired as a part-time Land and Facility Manager.

House purchased on 10th Avenue for intern accommodations.

2008 Julie Risberg resigned as Administrative Coordinator in June

Orwin Rustad died in July

Fall started doing in-school programs (other than Waste Education)

Fall RBNC takes over school-year FreePops program

Fall River Bend began conducting its own deer census due to DNR not counting winter flyovers

December Pat Kiel ceased work on Sundays

Began work at FreePops in January

Spring started doing programs for Free Pops an after school program targeting 6th and 7th grades

Intern house roof replaced

Carpet replaced in Interpretive Center in December

2009 Suzy Boysen hired March 16 as new Administrative Coordinator

Nalani McCutcheon leaves April 3 to become director of new Charter School – Cannon River STEM School

River Bend closed on Sundays

donation for Snowmobile for winter grooming of ski trails. Donation by the Carlander Family