

FRIENDS OF

SAX-ZIM BOG

2015-16
ANNUAL REPORT



SILENT DUSK BY ADAM SWANSON

SUPPORTING, PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE SAX-ZIM BOG FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF BIRDS AND BIRDERS

ONE GIANT LEAP FOR THE BOG

The Superstars of the Sax-Zim Bog were fat and happy deep in the Black Spruce and Tamaracks this winter. Yes, the Great Gray Owls did not show themselves often, but what is disappointing for birders and photographers is often good for our owls. Evidently they were finding plenty of voles deep in the bogs and rarely needed to hunt the roadsides. Fortunately there were a couple semi-cooperative Great Grays which many folks got to see, and lots of redpolls. No Hawk Owls graced us with their presence this winter, and Rough-legged Hawks were scarce. Evening Grosbeaks continue to enjoy the banquet set out at Mary Lou's feeders and a small flock of Pine Grosbeaks made the Welcome Center feeders their winter home.

I want to give a big and heartfelt THANKS to my friend and co-founder of Friends, Dave Benson, who stepped down as Board Chair. Dave's experience with larger non-profits and his common sense leadership style helped us grow into the solid organization we have become. Long-time board member Lori Williams has stepped up to be our new Board Chair...Welcome Lori!

ONE STEP FOR FRIENDS, ONE GIANT LEAP FOR THE BOG

Thanks to your support of Friends and some welcomed grants, we've been able to make some major progress on our goals in 2015-16. Here are a few of our accomplishments

—Saved and protected another 186 ACRES (!) of prime Black Spruce-Tamarack bog in Sax-Zim Important Bird Area. We established the Boreal Chickadee Bog-Doris Petrie Staub Tract (40 acres), Boreal Chickadee Bog East (40 acres), Indian Pipe Bog-Sue & Bruce Henke Tract (80 acres), and recently, the East Stone Lake Bog (still raising money for this purchase).

—Hired a year-round naturalist, Clinton Nienhaus, to conduct programs and field trips, organize events, write for our website and social media, run our research programs, and more. This position is split between Friends and Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory and was made possible in part by a generous grant from the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation.

—Renovated the outhouse. It truly is the nicest privvy this side of the Mississippi River. The outhouse now has a pedestal toilet, urinal, and grab bars. The cedar lining also makes it smell good! (usually).

—Added sidewalks to the Welcome Center and outhouse. They are now mostly ADA compliant and folks in wheelchairs can access both buildings.

—Completed the sod roof atop the Welcome Center. Thanks to Steve Horvath (our ingenious excavator who built a set of stairs to the roof and a rope and pulley system), Dan Coda & Andrew Webster (our builders, and Friends members and volunteers).

—Launched a new website design that is much easier to use and mobile-friendly. Kudos to Jane Reed at Red Pebble Web Design in Duluth.

—Established new feeding stations at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog and Yellow-bellied Bog. These will be expanded in 2016-17.

—Implemented several citizen-science projects including a 100-mile Winter Raptor Survey, two routes for the Western Great Lakes Owl Survey, and Frank Nicoletti and Clinton Nienhaus are ramping up our American Kestrel Nest Box monitoring and banding program.

—Built up and promoted our Acres for Owls Land Purchase program.

—Planted a perennial butterfly garden at the Welcome Center.

—Redid the Welcome Center "store" by adding locally milled, rustic pine slab shelves. We also expanded our merchandise selection.

I also need to mention a MAJOR SAX-ZIM PRESERVATION PROJECT that we supported but did not spearhead; the Sax-Zim Wetland Bank was finally approved in 2015. I was even able to speak face-to-face to Governor Dayton about the importance of this project. Since wetland banks cannot be altered in any way, this 23,000 acres (36 square miles...an area larger than Manhattan!) will never be logged, never be mined, never be developed in any way. A major coup for the Bog's wildlife.

YOUR GENEROSITY...THANK YOU!

All of you...our Bog Buddy members...have made our significant advances possible this year. We absolutely could not have accomplished anything without all of you. Kiitos!...as our Finnish neighbors in the Bog would say. Thank you!

—We now have a "bog buggy" thanks to a generous donation from Ben & Mae Lou Thompson. The lower mileage 2003 Honda Odyssey van they donated to Friends has already been invaluable for transporting staff to events, taking participants on field trips, hauling bird seed, feeders, lumber, food, garbage, etc. [See photos elsewhere in this annual report]

—It's good to have talented members! Head Naturalist Clinton's father Darold Nienhaus handcrafted four beautiful bird feeders out of native woods for our silent auction. Thank you!

—We benefited from Jan and John Green's nice assortment of bird-related items that they allowed us to auction off at the Boreal Wings Gala. Included in the goodies was a signed and numbered Roger Tory Peterson print.

—Rich Armstrong donated 120 (!) of his stunning bird photography note-cards for us to sell in the Welcome Center.

—A rare find was the First Edition of T. S. Robert's landmark Birds of Minnesota donated to our Boreal Wings Gala by Gene and Julie Olilla. Wow!



Construction has begun on Gray Jay Way, our new bog trail.



Permanent Donor Bird Tiles Display in Welcome Center



—Many folks anonymously dropped off bird seed and feeders at the Welcome Center this winter. Thank you for this much needed feed! Joe Sausen gave us a big batch of high quality beef suet, Janet Stalpes donated seed and suet, Melanie Dalbec and Denise & Paul Paulisich each donated a bird feeder.

—There are so many talented photographers in the Bog! Thanks to Rubin Stenseng, Jason Mandich and Tim Glackin for donating their stunning images for our 2016 calendar.

—A generous donation from Steve Thompson and Ron Frey enabled us to completely redesign and revamp our website.

—And Kelly Larson came through again this winter, and donated firewood, suet, feeders and 8 deer rib cages for us to feed the birds and mammals at the Welcome Center. The Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Gray Jays, Ravens, Bald Eagles, Chickadees, a couple Black-billed Magpies, and about a thousand birders would personally like to thank Kelly.

—Can't forget the McDavitt Township Volunteer Fire Department that doused our brand new Welcome Center sod roof with their fire truck right after we installed it. It stayed green and beautiful well into fall.

THERE'S NO "I" IN VOLUNTEER

Our volunteer posse is growing in size and number of hours spent helping. These selfless folks have donated many hours to help the cause: Rubin Stenseng (83 hours), Amy Johnson (47.5 hours), Tom and Carol-Ann Bloom (28 hours), Rich and Molly Hoeg (21 hours), Jim and Nancy Fisher (14 hours), Sandy Roggenkamp (10 hours), and also Lori Williams, Dave Steining, Juliann Grahn, Karen Stubenvoll and Kate Nicoletti. Round of applause!

TRIALS, TRIBULATIONS & CHALLENGES

I need to be honest here...The biggest challenge over the last year has been relations between birders/photographers and locals. As is usually the case, 1 percent of the people create 99 percent of the problems.

I'd like to encourage all of us enjoying the Bog to remember to be especially considerate of the local folks...Specifically, don't park in the middle of the road. Watch your rear view mirror when driving slowly and birding. Move over to allow cars to pass safely. DO NOT point binoculars or cameras towards private homes. Let's be considerate neighbors.

Very important to us is completing the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog project by adding a small parking pad where folks can get off the road. We also want to display the two beautiful kiosk panels honoring Warren's memory. BUT we have not been able to secure a permit...yet. We will be working towards a solution in 2016.



Another challenge during the last year was getting our solar panels, inverter and batteries hooked up. Minnesota law regarding solar installation changed in 2015 and it is now difficult to find installers who have the qualified and accredited electricians. For technical reasons, we also have to have the inverter and batteries in the storage shed near the panels so this means heating the shed! Big sigh...We will keep searching for a solution.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We are chugging into fiscal year 2016-17 with a full head of steam! Clinton, our Head Naturalist, has a full slate of interesting programs on tap. He is a fantastic addition to our team.

Thanks to the \$19,000 Hoeg Family Foundation grant, we will be establishing the Good Neighbor Fund to finance projects that benefit the local population and visiting birders. Possible projects include winter feeding stations, butterfly gardens, dragonfly ponds, field trip visits by area schools, and more. This is very exciting as funded projects will not only be enjoyed by all but this will strengthen community involvement and understanding. Applications can be found on our website.

Now that we have several parcels of bog, it is time to start thinking about access to these tracts. Those of you who have donned snowshoes or rubber boots and bug dope and entered the realm of the interior of a bog know that it is an amazing experience. But how do we make this experience available to all? Boardwalks are the only answer. So I think it is time for all of us to pitch in and raise some serious dollars to make this happen. Sure, most winter Bog's roads, but many folks have expressed an interest in getting out on foot, and we want to make that happen. Will you join us in this important goal by donating dollars?

Thank you all from the future generations of birds and birders!



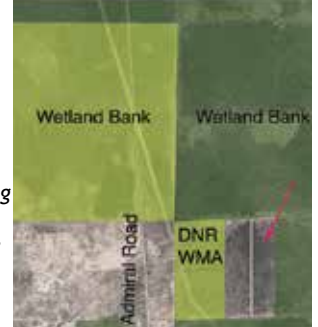
BOREAL CHICKADEE BOG

BOREAL CHICKADEE BOG IS 80 ACRE WILDERNESS PRESERVE

What a way to start my Halloween morning...A call from one of our members saying they'd like to give us a gift to purchase 40 acres of land! And Doris and I agreed on the perfect tract...A remote parcel between Admiral Road and County Road 7. This would strictly be a Preservation Project as the site has no road frontage. I had bushwhacked to the site a year ago and found a group of 4 Boreal Chickadees amongst the tall Black Spruce. The deep moss carpet and large spruce make it a cathedral-like experience. Then a few months later, an anonymous donor made possible the purchase of the adjacent 40 acres making Boreal Chickadee Bog 80 acres. A trail camera on this property recorded the Moose and Wolf photos shown below. What a wonderful legacy Doris...Thank you!

A Note from Doris... "For 25 years I've dreamed of preserving and protecting wild lands for wildlife. When I read about FOSZB's "Acres for Owls" goal of buying tracts of newly available prime bog habitat, my heart jumped "yes"! That goal makes so much sense to me: buy up and preserve the pristine parcels while they still exist, saving them for wildlife, nature lovers and the larger ecosystem/web of life which we all rely on. I trust FOSZB to keep this land safe - now and into the future. We can't have the wildlife we love if suitable habitats aren't available. And hey - I'm celebrating my good fortune to have survived 3 cancer episodes! I'm retired now. I was a biologist, then a programmer/analyst, and most recently, an artist. Not sure what the next iteration will be! I've been an environmentalist and birder forever." —November 2015

The Boreal Chickadee Bog—Doris Staub Petrie Tract has mature Black Spruce-Tamarack bog covering most of the land. Prime habitat for Great Gray Owls, Connecticut Warblers, Boreal Chickadees, Black-backed Woodpeckers and many other bird species that require mature bog. The fact that the site is close to the Sax-Zim Wetland Bank is also important to us. This Sax-Zim Wetland Bank will forever preserve 23,000 acres of the Sax-Zim Bog which will never be mined or logged!



Timber Wolf at Boreal Chickadee Bog



Doris Staub-Petrie made this purchase possible with her legacy-making donation



We found a group of FOUR Boreal Chickadees when scouting this land for purchase.



Moose at Boreal Chickadee Bog

INDIAN PIPE BOG MADE POSSIBLE BY THE HENKES AND ACRES FOR OWLS LAND FUND

We were able to purchase this large 80 acre bog parcel from the county thanks to the very generous donation to our Acres for Owls Land Fund from Sue Henke and her husband Bruce. The land is a mere two miles from our 100 acre Yellow-bellied Bog and contains a large stand of big Black Spruce and Tamarack. Parts of the land are park-like with a very open understory. Indian Pipe flowers bloom from the deep beds of moss. Some spruce bear signs of Black-backed Woodpeckers working the trunk for beetle grubs. A small foot bridge over a ditch will enable access to explore the bog on foot.

A note from Sue Henke: "For nearly 40 years Bruce and I have explored the north woods together in every season. Whether skiing, hiking or canoeing, we have benefited greatly from the efforts of others who have worked tirelessly to preserve or restore these ecosystems for future generations. On a recent trip to the Friends of Sax Zim Bog Welcome Center, we learned of the group's mission to purchase tracts of black spruce bog to preserve this important habitat for boreal birds and wildlife. We wanted to do our part to support the mission of this impressive organization."

"The Black Spruce bog is an unique and fascinating ecosystem that we find especially interesting. We are now beginning our retirement years. Bruce is a recently retired pathologist and I will be retiring soon from my position as a project specialist at Essentia Health in Duluth. What better way to mark this transition in our lives than to invest in preserving Black Spruce bog habitat for posterity and future generations of birds and birders." —December 2015



This purchase made possible by a generous donation from Sue and Bruce Henke



Indian Pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*) is the namesake of this bog tract

INDIAN PIPE BOG

DONATIONS TO ACRES FOR OWLS LAND FUND

APRIL 2015-MARCH 2016 [**These donors are also included in the "Donors" list]

\$60,000+

Leuthold Family Foundation

\$10,000-\$35,000

Mason & Lissy Carpenter
Sue & Bruce Henke
Doris Staub Petrie

\$1,000-\$3,999

Steve & Jo Blamich
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Audrey & Joel Evers
Steve & Diane Millard
Steve Wilson & Mary Shedd
Christina Tarasczuk &
David Alexander
Mr Warren D. Woessner &
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\$500-\$999

Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation
Ann Hobbs & David Livengood
Paul Johnson
David Luth & Ann Inouye
Elizabeth Neuvar
Gene & Julie Ollila
Loren Snyder

\$100-\$499

Alesches Accommodations
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Jean Beyer

William Bronn
Marily Caddy
Robin & Charles Erment
Tom & Lorri Evans
Central Lakes College, Department
Of Natural Resources—
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Rick Gibson
Jan & Bob Haarman
Alice Hennessey
Steve & Michelle Hobbs
Richard & Molly Hoeg
Bob Janssen
Jessica Jenner
Wes & Deirdre Kramer
Tom Malone & Kathy Crawford
Steve & Diane Midthune
Fred & Donna Paley
Gwen Papierniak
Dick Sandve
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Heather & Lee Simso
Erika & Paul Sitz
John Sullivan
Terry Swanson
Mark & Peggy Timmerman
George & Josie Vania
Paul Voigt

Up to \$99

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Steve & Cindy Broste

Jason Caddy
Amy Simso Dean
Kevin Downs
Roger Everhart
Deborah Fellows
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Jeff & Michelle Fischer
Ron Funes
Susan Gillespie
Karl Graf
Daniel Guerin
Thomas Haase
Jerry Hadder & Marie Oakes
Nancy & William Henke
Stan & Mary Hunter
Allison & Jeff Jensen
Doug Johnson
Gary Johnson & Leanne Alt
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Alice Laudon
Mike & Mary Moeller
Peter Nichols

Gerald & Bonnie Niemi
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Joel Schmidt &
Amanda Raetzman
Mimi Staub Bowlin
Shelley Steva
Francis Stiteler
Matthew Stratmoen
Janet Swartz-Myrman
Sandy Tighe
Jen Vieth
Jane Watrus
Jude & Jim Williams
John & Sylvia Winkelman

ACRES FOR OWLS

Our land preservation fund is called Acres for Owls for a very simple reason...Every bog tract you help us purchase will be saved for future generations of boreal birds including Great Gray Owls. \$136,345 was raised during fiscal year 2015-16. Thank you all!

HELP SAVE THIS FLOATING BOG!

WE NEED \$30,000 TO FINALIZE THIS PURCHASE...CAN YOU HELP?



** A \$20,000+ DONATION WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR NAMING RIGHTS

** ANY DONATION \$1,000 AND OVER WILL HAVE YOUR NAME PLACED ON A SPECIFIC ACRE

This 26 acre parcel has much lake and river frontage, which is mainly floating mat. The lake is only accessible by foot or paddling (only in spring/early summer due to dense Wild Rice) Trumpeter Swans have nested on the lake, it is a major staging lake for migrating ducks and we've seen Gray Jays in the Black Spruce bog. This will be a nice addition to our bog preservation projects (dark green on the map is bog). Thanks for your donations!

ACRES FOR OWLS LAND FUND DONORS

OVER 400 SPECIES RECORDED BY SIXTY ENTHUSIASTIC PARTICIPANTS IN BOG BIOBLITZ III

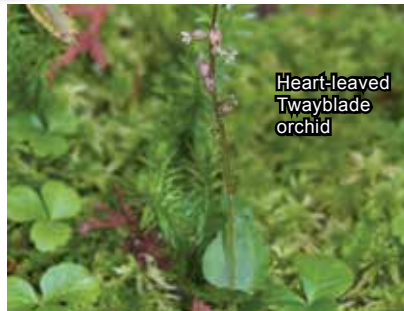
On Saturday, June 27, 2015 nearly sixty participants and leaders tallied over 400 species of birds, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, fish, insects, spiders, sedges, wildflowers, trees, shrubs, moths, mammals and orchids to add to our Master List of Sax-Zim Bog species. **THE BOG IS NOT JUST BIRDS! HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED** over 1300 Showy Ladyslippers, 38 species of sedges, a rare spider (*Uloborus glomosus*), 16 species of warblers, First County Record of Elfin Skimmer (North America's tiniest dragonfly), Yellow-throated Vireo, Black Bear, a couple unusual moths, 7 new species of fish for the Bog, and much more!



HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR FIELD TRIP LEADERS... L-R: SPIDERS with Larry Weber, INSECTS with Cassie Novak, SEDGES with Jason Husveth, BOG WALK with Bill Tefft, FLORA with Josh Horky, FISHES & MINNOWS with Clinton Nienhaus, MOTHS with Sparky Stensaas, BUTTERFLIES with Jerry McCormick, DRAGONFLIES with Jim Lind and Dave Grosshuesch. Not Pictured: BIRDS with Dave Benson & Kim Eckert, SHOWY LADYSLIPPER TOUR with Heather-Marie Bloom & Ben Yokel

JOIN US Sat-Sun, July 16-17, 2016 for "BOG TO RIDGE"—BOG BIOBLITZ IV

We will be partnering with Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory and competing to see who can find the most species between two different sites. This two day event will allow the avid naturalist and outdoor enthusiast to explore familiar sites in greater detail. Join experts on topics as diverse as spiders and wildflowers, to butterflies and birds! We'll have an evening compilation-social time on Saturday evening. Watch www.saxzim.org and hawkridge.org for more upcoming details.



Heart-leaved
Twayblade
orchid



Yellow Ladyslipper along
Nichols Lake Road
photo by Rubin Stenseng



Bill Tefft, Dave Grosshuesch,
Jim Lind



Hairy Honeysuckle (*Lonicera hirsuta*)
photo by Rubin Stenseng



Jason Husveth
seeks sedges



St. Lawrence
Tiger Moth



Clinton Nienhaus discovered new fish
species for the Bog
photo by Rubin Stenseng



First county record of Elfin Skimmer
found on Bog BioBlitz III by Jim Lind
and Dave Grosshuesch. Thanks to
Jaasn Mandich for hosting.



Goldenrod Crab Spider with prey
photo by Cassie Novak



Wildflower leader Josh Horky (in
wheelchair) searches out flora
photo by Rubin Stenseng

BOG BIOBLITZ III

TEAMS TURN UP 71 SPECIES IN NE MINNESOTA AND NW WISCONSIN NEW RECORD SET IN 2-DAY BRRRRDATHON!

Did the SIXTH ANNUAL World's Coldest Birdathon live up to its name? Well, Friday January 16 was downright balmy (20 F) compared to Saturday which bottomed out at 2 F and a windchill of minus 20. Respectable! Six teams competed for the title in 3 categories. WE ALSO RAISED OVER \$800 towards our mission of Preserving, Promoting and Protecting the Sax-Zim Bog for future generations of birds and birders. Abi Kritzer raised the most pledges, followed by Dave Benson, Kim Eckert (via his Minnesota Birding Week-ends trip) and Steve Millard.



Teams birded from the Sax-Zim Bog to Duluth to Wisconsin's Bayfield Peninsula and up the North Shore of Lake Superior to Grand Marais.

2-DAY BRRRRdathon: Team Grouching Twitchers (Dave Benson and Lars Benson) racked up an amazing 61 species to retain their title and SET A NEW ALL-TIME RECORD! (old record 57 species). Team Ivory Gullibles (Clinton Nienhaus, Tod Eggenberger, John Richardson) had a respectable 46 species for second place. Steve Millard did only Ottertail County, Minnesota and came up with 34 species including a Song Sparrow and Rusty Blackbird.

1-DAY BRRRRdathon: Abi Kritzer, Annmarie Geniusz, Stephen Bockhold and David Alexander (Team The Egretables) regained their crown with 34 species, edging out the 29 species of last year's champions, the Goldfinches (Barb Akre, Cindy Edwardson, and driver Chris Edwardson).

WINTERGREEN (Non-Motorized Division)

Tim Bate's team (the Roughlegs consisted of Tim, Bryan French, Andrew Webster and Sparky Stensaas) decided to brave the wilds of the Sax-Zim Bog this year...They biked over 26 miles (19 for Sparky) on Friday and tallied 19 species including Arkola Road Boreal Chickadees (3), Merlin at the Welcome Center, and a Northern Goshawk. This was a new record for non-motorized Sax-Zim Bog team, edging out Diana Doyle's 16 species which she recorded while walking an amazing 14-mile loop! No entrants in the Photothon this year.

BIRD HIGHLIGHTS: 71 species was the composite total: Ivory Gull in Duluth was a new one for the contest (and a real celebrity to boot), 100s of Long-tailed Ducks in and near Grand Marais, Surf Scoter off Paradise Beach north of Grand Marais, 2 Gyrfalcons in Superior, Wisconsin, 1 Great Gray Owl in Sax-Zim Bog, 7 species of gulls (Ivory, Greater Black-backed, Glaucous, Thayer's, Iceland, Herring, Ring-billed), Townsend's Solitaire, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Hoary Redpoll, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

We enjoyed a relaxing compilation dinner where we shared triumphs and tragedies from the birdathon.

PLEASE JOIN US NEXT YEAR!



Top left photo is Team The Egretables, winner of the 1-day event. L-R Abi Kritzer, Annmarie Geniusz, David Alexander and Stephen Bockhold. Bottom right photo is Wintergreen Division winners (non-motorized) before biking 26 miles in the Sax-Zim Bog and seeing 19 species: L-R: Bryan French, Andrew Webster, Tim Bates, Sparky Stensaas. Biking the Sax-Zim Bog on a balmy (25 degrees!) January day (middle top).

BRRRRDATHON WORLD'S COLDEST BIRDATHON

DONORS APRIL 2015 - MARCH 2016

\$20,000-plus

Hoeg Family Fund of The
Minneapolis Foundation
Leuthold Family Foundation
LLoyd K. Johnson Foundation
Doris Staub Petrie
Sue & Bruce Henke
Charitable Fund

\$10,000-\$14,999

Mason & Lissy Carpenter

\$1,000-\$4,999

Steve & Jo Blanche
Gene & Claire Calligure
Ronald Erpelding
Audrey & Joel Evers
Dick Green
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Susan Kennedy
Harris & Mary Mallory
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Chet & Miriam Meyers
Diane & Steve Millard
In memory of sister, Rene Mueller,
& brother-in-law, Jim Heathington.
Earl Orf & Diana Hestwood -
Heart and Mind Fund of The
Minneapolis Foundation
Elmer L & Eleanor J Andersen
Foundation
Myron & Holly Peterson
Marie Ruthgeerts
In honor of Outdoorsmen: My
father Emil Ruthgeerts, Jr. &
brother Joseph (Joe) Ruthgeerts.
Steve Wilson & Mary Shedd
Christina Tarasczuk & David
Alexander
Woessner Freeman Family
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Rebecca Buck
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Lori Williams & Dave Steininger

\$100-\$499

Sherry Abts
Alesches Accommodations
John Arthur & Pamela Deerwood
Carol Aschbacher

Parker Backstrom & Holly Weston
Dedicated to all the volunteers
who work so selflessly to move
this important cause forward.

Dave & Rita Baden
Donald Beck
Joan Becker
Jean Beyer
Stephen Bockhold &
Annmarie Geniusz
Mark & Susan Bowman
William Bronn
Paul & Mariann Budde
Diana Burlison
Marily Caddy
Mark Citsay & Connie Osbeck
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Mark Amland
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Gift membership for
Don Whitehead.
Joe & Marion Deschenes
Pat DeWenter
Kevin Downs
Diana Doyle
Joel Dunnette
Daniel Eberly
Chris & Cindy Edwardson
Tod & Margaret Eggenberger
Russel Ergen
Roger Everhart
Deborah Fellows
Albert Filemyr

DONORS

APRIL 2015 - MARCH 2016

Up to \$99 (continued)

Susan Finnila
Robert Firay
Jeff & Michelle Fischer
Carolyn & Thomas Fischer
Sharon Fischtrom
Martha Fleck & Eric Twito
Thomas Flynn
Katie & Rick Fournier
Alex Franzen
Deborah Freedman
Gregg Friesen
Ron Funes
Mary Gabrys
Mary Garmer
Clarke & Sue Garry
Susan Gillespie
Jim Gindorff
Don Glasco
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Kelly Godfrey
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Juliann Grah
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Saul & Irene Grysman
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Patricia Hoglund
David Hojnacki
Raymond Holm
Mary & Tom Holman
Dorothy Holmes
Ron & Marlene Holmquist
In memory of Dwayne Basell.
Robert Holtz
Paul Hosch
Rachel Hultman & Matt Mayfield
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Matthew Johnson
Doug Johnson
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Mary Klidzejs
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Rick Magee
Janet Majerus
Fran Maki
In honor of Andrea Crouse.
Michael Malkovich
Maryanne & David Marjamaa
Richard & Carolyn Marra
Kelly Martin
Gift membership for Joni Norris.
Keith Mattson
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Georgia Miller
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In honor of Sparky Stensaas.
Christine Milliken
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In honor of Carol Midthune,
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Amanda Raetzman
Nancy Schweitzer
Michael Scott & Lorna Cooper
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To all interested in preserving
natures abundance.
John & Chadda Shelly
Hebe & Jim Shipp
Doreen Shoberg
Joe Sikkala
Lonni Skrentner
Scott Slocum
Valerie Slocum
Thomas Smith & Gayle Henkin
Baxter Smith
Dwight Smith
Kevin & Cindy Thury Smith
Barb Spears
Dean & Linda Squires
Liz Stanley
Marti Starr & Dave Bucholz

Mark & Suzanne Starr
Nancy Staub
In honor of Doris Staub Petrie.
Mimi Staub Bowlin
In honor of Doris Staub Petrie.
Jerry & Karen Steinbach
Cheri & James Steinmueller
Will Stenberg
Ruth & Dennis Stephens
Doug & Kathy Stetzer
Francis Stiteler
Larry & Margaret Stone
Chris Straight
Bill & Sandy Sullivan
Suzanne Swanson
John Swartz
Janet Swartz-Myrman
Ron & Carolyn Taube
TEGNA Foundation
Scott & Candy Thompson
Sandy Tighe
Carol & Roy Toepke
Debra Tollgaard
In honor of Nancy Haulata.
Happy Birthday!
Heather Tomczak
Dawn Trexel
Robyn Tryggeseth
Anne Tuskan
Victoria Tuskan
United Way
Julie & Fred Van Etten
Heidi Van Heel
James Vanderpoel
Jen Vieth
In honor of Vincent and Katie.
Paul Voigt
Timothy Walker
In honor of Patricia Walker.
William & Sylvia Walker
Pat & Barb Ward
Jane Wattrus
Andrew Webster & Erin Dewitt
Candace Wegerson
Heather Wendel
In honor of Susan Wright.
Charlotte Wenger
Em Westerlund
Gregg & Marie-Anne Westigard
Steven Weston
Todd & Terrie Whitesel
Barbara Whiting
Sarah Wilcox
Pat Willenbring
Mike Williams
Jude & Jim Williams
John & Sylvia Winkelman
Scott & Nan Wisherd
Susan Wiste
Jane Wobken
Patricia Wolesky
Michael Woodard
Jerry & Vicky Wotczak
Jerry Wozniak
Linda & Hank Zaletel

MEET OUR HEAD NATURALIST...CLINTON NIENHAUS

The Friends of Sax-Zim Bog family has grown with the November 2015 hiring of a full-time Head Naturalist. A big Bog welcome to Clinton Nienhaus! Some of you may already know Clinton through his position as Count Interpreter at Hawk Ridge, or as a leader for Duluth Audubon field trips, or maybe you met him when he guides for the Sax-Zim Bog Winter Bird Festival...or maybe you joined him on the Fishes field trip at the Sax-Zim Bog BioBlitz III...You get the idea...Clinton has become an important leader in the northern Minnesota nature scene.

As Head Naturalist, Clinton will be focusing on bog interpretation for groups of all ages and types...school groups, civic groups, speaking engagements, field trips and more. He will also be conducting winter raptor surveys (important baseline data for North America has been lacking), rare owl surveys and participating in other scientific projects. Friends of Sax-Zim Bog hopes to broaden its reach and spread the message that bogs are important and amazing places filled with fascinating plants and creatures.

We teamed up with Duluth's Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory to split support for this position. This move is fiscally responsible for both organizations. Our busy season is December through February and Hawk Ridge's peak is September until November. Clinton will divide his time accordingly.

A self-titled "farm boy" from south central Minnesota (Winnebago area in Faribault County) he first became interested in nature through the influence of his parents and grandparents. Much free time was spent fishing, hunting and trapping and learning about the natural world in the process. Clinton and his brother became champions of the "rough fish"—the lesser loved swimming critters such as suckers, carps, redhorses, minnows and allies (Clinton led our first Fishes Foray during the 2015 Sax-Zim Bog BioBlitz and added several species to our list). Prairie wildflowers and grassland birds are also very familiar to Clinton, learning much during his stint with the non-profit The Prairie Enthusiasts in southwest Wisconsin. He also has a passion for dragonflies (first St. Louis County records for Rainbow Bluet and Skimming Bluet) and "herps." In fact, Clinton has several snakes as pets including Margo the Honduran Milk Snake, Reggie the Ball Python and Severus a Pueblan Milk Snake. (first state/county records) He has FOUR first county bird records for Faribault County including Louisiana Waterthrush, Acadian Flycatcher, Nelson's Sparrow and Henslow's Sparrow. It was no surprise that Clinton was awarded the 2014 "Young Birder of the Year" by the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union.

Clinton received a BA in Environmental Biology from St. Mary's University of Winona, Minnesota in 2013 and has recently finished his Masters of Education in Environmental Education from the University of Minnesota Duluth. He is currently the Vice President of Duluth Audubon where he conducts birding field trips and bird ID workshops.

WELCOME ABOARD CLINTON!

****This position made possible by a major grant from the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation of Duluth, and our members. Thank you!**

FUTURE FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

Saturday, July 16 (Sax-Zim) & July 17

Bog to Ridge—Bog BioBlitz 4

More info under "Bog BioBlitz III" in this annual report. Details will also be posted at www.saxzim.org.

Saturday, August 6

Early Fall in the Bog

8:00-10:00 am Meeting at Warren Nelson Bog off of Blue Spruce Road. Early fall means that there may be hint of change in the forest. Some plants may be already changing into their fall attire, while others may have just only begun to flower. Mushrooms are an important part of any ecosystem and early fall is a great time to see fungi of all shapes and sizes. Lastly, we will take a look at our observations from the season and see how the bog has changed from one month to the next.

Friday-Saturday January 6-7

BRRRRRdathon: World's Coldest

Compete in either the 1-day, 2-day or non-motorized "Wintergreen" division to see how many winter birds your team can find in NE MN and NW WI. Compilation dinner with prizes.

Friday-Sunday, February 17-19

Sax-Zim Bog Winter Bird Festival

Many field trips, evening speakers, meals, vendor tables, and hopefully, owls! Registration is limited to 150 and opens in October.

Details at www.saxzimbirdingfestival.com

WATCH OUR WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK FOR OTHER FIELD TRIPS IN THE BOG THIS SUMMER AND FALL



Clinton Nienhaus is the new Head Naturalist for Friends of Sax-Zim Bog and Education Director for Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory. He will be splitting his duties between our two organizations.



We get REALLY close to the birds on our field trips! Scanning Stone Lake (middle) and waiting for the appearance of a Sora on Admiral Road.

BOREAL WINGS GALA—SUCCESS!

On President's Day February 15th, we hosted a fun evening that included a soup-bread dinner, a showing of several bird/birding films (including the crowd favorite "The Central Park Effect") and a silent auction. Everyone had a good time and we all made new friends. We also raised over \$1200 to help us continue with our mission. Thanks to all!



Over 40 supporters of Friends of Sax-Zim Bog enjoyed an evening of mingling, several fun bird films, a diverse silent auction and yummy food!

2016 SAX-ZIM BOG WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, in association with the Toivola-Meadowlands Development Board, hosted the 9th annual event. Friends organized the speakers, programs, and field trips (Thanks Clinton!) and TMDB did the rest. Big thanks to Jeff Kletscher, Helen & David Abramson, Ray Privett, the Ringhofers and everyone involved.

134 participants converged on tiny Meadowlands, Minnesota from 24 states and even England. Wind chills on Friday hovered around the MINUS 40 and Saturday morning dawned clear and cold at MINUS 27 air temp. Despite the wonderfully normal northern Minnesota temps, almost all participants got satisfying looks at Great Gray Owl and all left with all their digits intact. Humorist Al Batt kept the crowd laughing on Friday night, while Manitoba owl researcher Jim Duncan taught us amazing facts about the Great Gray Owl that he's learned over 30 years of study. Join us over President's Day weekend in 2017!



Bitter cold February temps could not dampen the spirits of the 134 attendees of the 9th annual Sax-Zim Bog Winter Bird Festival.

ANNOUNCING THE SAX-ZIM BOG GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND!—\$20K IN GRANTS AVAILABLE

The purpose of the Sax-Zim Bog GOOD NEIGHBOR Fund will be exactly what the title implies...creating good will and mutually beneficial projects for both local residents and visiting birders. The Fund will also foster natural history education and first-hand experience with birds in the Sax-Zim Bog. The goal is to foster a community that considers the needs of both locals and visiting birders. Applications will be taken and reviewed by a committee. Grants may range from \$25 to \$1,000. Applications can be found on our website at www.saxzim.org.

Who is Eligible?

All projects must be implemented in the Sax-Zim Bog area (including but not limited to Meadowlands, Cotton, Toivola and Zim). Applicants applying for projects on private land (feeders, ponds, trails) must be seasonal or year-round residents of the Sax-Zim Bog area. There is no location restriction for schools applying for field trips.

APPLICATIONS FOR BIRD FEEDERS, BIRD SEED, TRAILS, BOARDWALKS, PHOTO BLINDS, PONDS, GARDENS, ETC...MUST BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT ALL TIMES (BOTH LOCALS AND VISITING BIRDERS) EVEN IF ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

****Made possible by a generous donation from Rich & Molly Hoeg & Will & Ellen Hoeg in memory of Dr. Dwight and Janet Hoeg of Duluth, MN**



Richard & Molly Hoeg of Duluth originated this idea and donated the money to make it happen.

What Types of Projects are Eligible?

- Purchasing feeders and bird feed for WINTER bird feeding stations (Must be open to viewing by the public)
- Creating photography and bird watching blinds (Sharp-tailed Grouse lek?, pond, etc.)
- Boardwalks and trails open to the public for birding and photography
- School field trips to the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog Welcome Center with interpretive program by FOSZB Naturalist

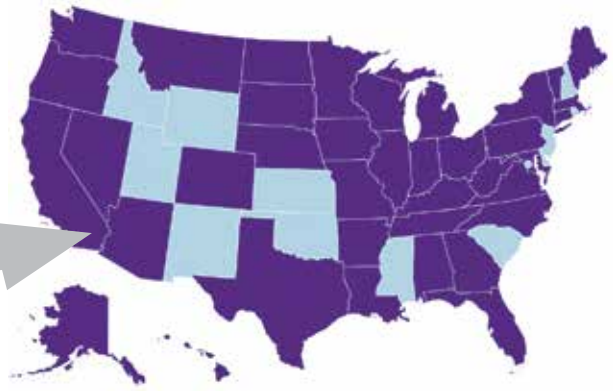
- Butterfly garden (for observation and photography)
- Dragonfly or wildlife pond (for observation and photography)
- Visit to your school by FOSZB naturalist to give an educational program
- Community field trips to the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog Welcome Center with interpretive program by FOSZB Naturalist
- Other projects that encourage local participation and education centered around the Sax-Zim Bog

BOREAL WINGS GALA WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL...

2,670

Visitors to the Welcome Center
in the winter of 2015-16

...from **38** states and **4** foreign countries
Canada, Kenya, Australia, England



Thanks to a wonderful matching grant of
\$20,000 from **Doris Staub Petrie**
you helped us set a new record for giving during the November 2015 Give to the Max Day.

\$33,319

given in 24 hours by...

207 DONORS



\$136,345

donated by all of you to...

ACRES FOR OWLS

71 19

bird species tallied by Team Grouching Twitchers (Dave and Lars Benson) that set a new all-time record in the 2-day event



bird species seen by Team Roughlegs while BICYCLING (!) through the Bog during the 1-day non-motorized Wintergreen event.

400+

species recorded during Bog BioBlitz III on June 27, 2015

**Chart below does not include shrubs, ferns, horsetails, rushes or other insects

151 species of Wildflowers

59 species of Birds

25 Moths

23 Sedges

21 Butterflies

21 Spiders

20 Trees

19 Dragonflies

8 Fish

5 Mammals

3 Frogs



species recorded during our 2015 Bog BioBlitz III

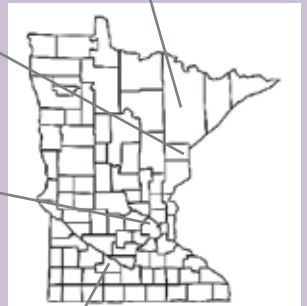
15%
Visitors from Duluth

14%
Visitors from Iron Range

49%
Visitors from Twin Cities

Home locations for the 2,670 visitors to the Welcome Center in the winter of 2015-16

22%
Visitors from Greater MN



BOG BUDDIES AT WORK



We kept Bemidji sign-maker Dave Wagner busy this year as he made us two gorgeous signs.



Though we had no owl irruption from the north, a few resident Great Grays showed themselves.



Our builders Dan Coda and Andrew Webster installed the solar panel brackets



Our 2016 Bog Wild Calendar was a hit! Thanks to photographers Jason Mandich, Tim Glackin.



A butterfly garden was planted at the Welcome Center. Hummingbird feeders have been added.



A Hoary Redpoll at the Welcome Center was spotted by host/naturalist Frank Nicoletti.



Autumn at the Welcome Center on Owl Avenue.



Darold Nienhaus (Clinton's dad) donated his handcrafted walnut, cedar, cherry bird feeders.



Talented artist Adam Swanson painted this stunning work "Silent Dusk" for us.



Ben and Mae Lou Thompson donated their Honda Odyssey van to us...Thank you!



We launched a redesigned website this winter. Thanks to Jane Reed of Red Pebble!



Board Member and Volunteer Rubin Stenseng fixes the outhouse door.



Ingenious and generous local Steve Horvath made us stairs to easily install the sod roof.



It was a real team effort to install the sod on the roof of our off-the-grid Welcome Center.



Three inches of rain right after roof completed helped keep our sod green well into fall.

BOG BUDDIES AT WORK



Ragged Fringed Orchid
(*Platanthera lacera*)



Moose tracks on McDavitt



Baltimore Checkerspot
along Arkola Road



Pine Grosbeak
at Welcome
Center



Marylou's feeders are very
reliable for Evening Grosbeaks



Pine Grosbeak
at Welcome
Center



Red-breasted
Nuthatch at
Admiral Road
feeders



Phoebe nest at
Welcome Center



Skunk Cabbage
blooms in early April



BOARD PROFILE

*Gene & Julie
Ollila*

"We support Friends of Sax-Zim Bog because of the Bog's uniqueness and tremendous value to wildlife and the plant communities it contains. The Bog is a wonderful educational resource. Sax-Zim is also near and dear to our heart as this is where Gene grew up and we continue to spend much time here."

Julie loves the Northern Shrike, which seems to appear in nearly "impossible to see" places. To Gene, the most intriguing bird is the White-throated Sparrow, his "Zen" bird. Hearing its haunting song immediately calms him, and is a wonderful soporific. Julie would love to see some of the smaller orchids which are endemic to bogs.

Gene is retired from Internal Medicine and Julie has been a volunteer at the Mpls Branch of American Association of University Women since 1982. "We have been married for nearly 49 years, with over 35 trips into the BWCAW and Quetico. Gene grew up in the Zim area and did a year long bird list in 10th grade, but got away from birding for the next 40 years until prompted by Julie to put up kestrel nest boxes. Instead, we had Wood Ducks for many years, including multiple fledgings, and Screech Owls, with one fledging noted. We bird locally, and have also birded Montana, Nebraska, Guatemala, California, Arizona, and Wisconsin. The natural world is a significant part of our lives, and we have met very nice people everywhere we have been."





STAFF PROFILE

*Frank
Nicoletti*

Frank Nicoletti is known to many folks from his years of counting hawks at Hawk Ridge. He is now the Banding Director there and is one of our Welcome Center Naturalists.

"My interest in raptors really started at age 13 when my next-door neighbor in Westchester County, NY and I discovered a baby Eastern Screech Owl; we studied owls, collected pellets, listened to them at night and watched the migration at Butler Sanctuary."

"I really like all boreal forest birds, but the Northern Hawk Owl intrigues me the most...It's an owl but acts like a hawk. I just love watching them hunt." Frank, like many of us, would love to see a Spruce Grouse in Sax-Zim.



willow "blush" of March



Rare white form of Showy Lady's Slipper



Fisher near Owl Avenue
on Halloween field trip



Sora seen on one of our
spring field trips

Chet and Miriam Meyers have been birding the Sax-Zim Bog for over 20 years. Why? Well, Miriam has a special affection for owls, and Chet says he just likes desolate places that attract special animals. They come several times a year, and always on Miriam's birthday in late January to (what else?) look for owls. Both joined Friends of Sax-Zim Bog when it first started back in 2011. Chet would love to see a Wolverine in the Bog (Wouldn't we all!). They've had some amazing days in Sax-Zim including a day with 73 Rough-legged Hawks, and an unforgettable winter outing during the 2004-05 irruption when they tallied 70+ Great Grays and over 30 Northern Hawk Owls! They have generously donated towards our solar panels.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

*Chet & Miriam
Meyers*



Wolf tracks in March
McDavitt Road



DONOR PROFILE

*Nancy
Fisher*



Friends of Sax-Zim Bog should be supported so we can enjoy all the birds, animals, and plants that are only found in bogs. We have people that are very knowledgeable about the things in the bog that make it very interesting learning about it.

I don't have one bird in the bog that is my favorite, but I am amazed at all the different birds that are right in our back yard (We live in Zim). It is fun seeing new birds all the time. Birds are so much fun to watch.

I would like to see more of the birds in the warbler family. They are such pretty birds.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal Year 2015-2016

April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016



RECEIPTS	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16
Donations	\$56,784	\$93,860	\$150,396
Events & Programs	\$3,386	\$3,525	\$3,817
Grants	\$72,151	\$52,750	\$63,750
Merchandise Sales	\$4,681	\$10,241	\$10,407
Interest	\$0	\$31	\$3
TOTAL	\$137,002	\$160,407	\$228,373

DISBURSEMENTS

Staffing	\$36,113	\$41,647	\$63,173
Operations Expenses	\$13,243	\$22,070	\$30,064
Land & Asset Acquisition	\$77,910	\$90,956	\$2,108
Misc Expenses	\$2	\$283	\$2,436
TOTAL	\$127,268	\$154,956	\$214,393
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$9,734	\$5,451	\$13,980

BALANCE SHEET

March 31, 2016

ASSETS	3-31-2014	3-31-2015	3-31-2016
Cash	\$9,455	\$51,838	\$58,579
Savings	\$38,010	\$3,027	\$3,031
Long-term Assets (Land/Bldg)	\$107,853	\$198,619	\$362,658
TOTAL ASSETS	\$155,318	\$253,484	\$424,268
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$53,540
Restricted Net Assets	\$38,010	\$20,000	\$18,433
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$112,308	\$225,484	\$352,295
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$155,318	\$253,484	\$424,268



Scan to go right to our website

CONTACT US
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PO Box 3585
Duluth, MN 55803
218.341.3350 (Sparky)
info@saxzim.org
www.saxzim.org



Get up to date info at Facebook

MEET FRIENDS OF SAX-ZIM BOG



Sarah Beaster
Development Director



Lori Williams
Board Chair



Sparky Stensaas
Executive Director



Heather-Marie Bloom
Welcome Center Naturalist



Frank Nicoletti
Welcome Center Naturalist



Ben Yokel
Board Member



Julie Olilla
Board Member



Rubin Stenseng
Board Member-Secretary



Gene Olilla
Board Member



Amy Godfrey Johnson
Welcome Center Naturalist



Clinton Nienhaus
Head Naturalist



Dave Steininger
Board Member-Treasurer