

# Sax Zim Bog

*Black-backed Woodpecker*  
(*Picoides arcticus*)

by Tanya Beyer

\*\*Entire printing & mailing cost paid  
for by Lori, Ben, Dave, Julie, Rubin  
& Gene—the amazing Board of  
Directors of Friends of Sax-Zim Bog

PRESERVING, PROMOTING & PROTECTING THE SAX-ZIM BOG FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF BIRDS & BIRDERS



# IF NOT YOU...WHO? (Hooo!)

**L**and preservation is the number one mission of Friends of Sax-Zim Bog. With your help, we have purchased and forever protected nearly 500 acres of prime habitat for boreal bog species. But now it is time to step up our game and try and connect parcels into a true bog corridor of habitat, giving wildlife room to roam. Can we reach 1,000 preserved acres by 2020? I think we can! If not us, who?

## INTO THE CATHEDRAL

Much of the birding in Sax-Zim Bog is done from the roadsides and probably always will be. But it is a priority of Friends of Sax-Zim Bog (FOSZB) to get all of you “into the cathedral” of a mature Black Spruce bog. Beneath the canopy of evergreen boughs is a magical place of deep sphagnum moss with a hushed soundscape.

We have just recently completed the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. Funding from the IRRRB (Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board) and the Donald Weesner Foundation, and you, our members, enabled a jumpstart to construction in the fall of 2017. Then I received a call from Warren Woessner. Warren really wanted to see us complete this project, so he and his wife Iris Freeman made a major donation to FOSZB in order to ensure that not only would the boardwalk come to fruition, but that it would be an important legacy for the family.

Believe it or not, the vast majority of the 900-foot boardwalk was constructed by the FOSZB board, staff and volunteers. Dan and Andrew of Cobblestone Construction (the same two guys that built the Welcome Center) installed the framework in just four days! But screwing down 1,650 pieces of rough-sawn untreated Tamarack decking took another few months! (Welcome Center Host/Naturalist Mark Dudek Johnson put in superhuman effort on completing this portion of the project!)

## THE GREEN SEASON

Winter is not the only time to visit the Sax-Zim Bog. Spring means 26 species of migrating warblers, dancing Sandhill Cranes, noisy Trumpeter Swans, colorful grassland birds, and an occasional owl out hunting to feed hungry mouths back at the nest. Summer starts off with a cacophany of early morning bird song in June (yes, you need to get out of bed early to enjoy the peak dawn chorus), and then as bird activity slows down, wildflowers steal the show. Pink Ladyslippers bloom in early June, and then Yellow Ladyslippers at mid month, followed by Showy Ladyslippers peaking in late June to first few days of July. But don't give up on August; most songbirds have become mute and started migrating south but you can enjoy the green season along Gray Jay Way at the Welcome Center or on our Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk. Interpretive signage will help you identify some of the mosses, shrubs, trees and flowers.

## WHAT THE HECK IS SAX-ZIM ANYWAY?

We admit that most “Friends” groups are created to support an existing park or designated natural area. But Friends of Sax-Zim Bog is different in that we are supporting a vast and vaguely defined 300-square mile birding area known as the “Sax-Zim Bog,” which is a patchwork of ownership: there are state DNR Wildlife Management Areas, a massive Wetland Bank, thousands of acres of St. Louis County tax forfeited lands, state forest, privately owned hunting land, farms, private residences and towns.

My point is that we do not own the Sax-Zim Bog. There are no gates, no “open or closed” times. You can come and explore any time you want.

## ONLY OPEN IN WINTER?

The Welcome Center is, as of now, only open from mid-December to mid-March. This confuses many folks who are not hardcore birders or wildlife photographers. Historically winter is when most visitors come to Sax-Zim due to the visibility of owls and other boreal birds that spend the winter in our “Arctic Riviera” of northern Minnesota, the south end of North America's boreal forest.

I get calls all the time wondering if “the Bog is open.” So how do we fix this perception? One way is to promote “off-season” birding/recreation opportunities. Folks visiting in spring, summer, fall can walk the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog; or hike Gray Jay Way that goes north from the outhouse at the Welcome Center; or canoe on Stone Lake. Someday we hope to have good maps that show the parcels of land that we own and what folks can do there.

We started as a group to cater to our winter visitors. But we've grown and now feel that we need to broaden our perspective...a bit. We are looking at hiring a Naturalist/Host to staff the Welcome Center from mid May to mid July.

## BOREAL WINGS TAKING FLIGHT

Creating the next generation of “Bog Buddies,” Sax-Zim supporters, and possibly some future land preservationists, biologists, or conservationists is the goal of my **Boreal Wings: Bird Superheroes of the Northern Forests** film. I am making this film in conjunction with Friends of Sax-Zim Bog and supported by the JES Avanti Foundation, EarthCloud Foundation, and the Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation. Our Head Naturalist Clinton is working with an advisory committee of science educators to create a companion curriculum. A copy of **Boreal Wings** will be given to every school in Minnesota, and teachers that want to further explore the curriculum will also be able to sign up for a teacher workshop.

This exciting project is scheduled for completion in late 2019. We will have a sneak peak at the Gala in late January.





# 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

## HOW DO I SEE AN OWL?

Undoubtedly the Great Gray Owl is the Belle of the Bog, sought out by almost all visitors. But seeing one is not a given (despite the impression that they are on every Tamarack snag from all the photos posted on Facebook!). Here are some tips: 1. Come in winter; The owls hunt later into daylight and often along back roads. 2. Get out looking at dawn and dusk; Only during irruption years when the owls are hurting for food do they hunt all day long. 3. Skip July through November; Great Grays are rarely seen in these months. 4. Expect NOT to see one, and enjoy all the other things you encounter during a day in the Sax-Zim Bog.

## BOG BUDDIES DONATE TIME AND ENERGY

Our volunteer army continues to grow...and you can enlist! Just contact us at [info@saxzim.org](mailto:info@saxzim.org) with your areas of interest and skills. We couldn't do it without all of you. Special thanks to attorney Bridget Brine for her pro bono work on several land purchases. High fives to the many artists that created mini masterpieces for our Tiny Bird Art Auction. Janet Morgen graciously donated her minivan. Steve & Diane Millard selflessly donated several valuable works of art. Boardwalk warrior Mark Dudek Johnson went above and beyond with his efforts. The city of Mountain Iron, Minnesota surprised us with a gift of TWO commercial-grade picnic tables (Thanks to member Paula for spurring them on to action!).

## WHAT'S NEXT?

I said at a board meeting recently, that "I can see our future, and it is paved in rough-sawn Tamarack." What I meant was that I believe bog boardwalks will be an important goal for FOSZB in order to get more folks out enjoying the "inside" of a bog. A short spur off the main Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk will likely be built in 2019, with other boardwalks in the planning stages.

We feel that expanding the Welcome Center hours to be open during the second-most-popular time of mid May to mid July is very important. Hiring a Welcome Center Host/Naturalist will be step one.

Connected corridors of quality habitat are very important to allowing wildlife to thrive in a shrinking ecosystem. And this is exactly what we will be pursuing in future land acquisitions. Imagine a corridor of Black Spruce and Tamarack bog extending from south of the Welcome Center all the way to Admiral and McDavitt Roads, and linking with the existing 26,000 acre Lake Superior Wetland Bank....and all protected for future generations of birds and birders!

Stay tuned, and see you in the Bog!



Sparky Stensaas  
Executive Director

## YOUR NAME ON THIS BOG?

21 one-acre blocks of the 40 total at Fermoy Bog are still available.

Option 1: A \$1,000 donation will get your name/memorial on a one-acre block. Help us save habitat for Future Generations of Birds and Birders!

Option 2: For a donation of \$20,000 you can name this entire parcel!

Contact Sparky at [sparky@saxzim.org](mailto:sparky@saxzim.org) to discuss.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 15 Thurs.—Give to the Max Day  
Dec. 8 Sat.—Welcome Center opens for season  
Dec. 17 Mon.—Christmas Bird Count  
Jan. 4-5 Fri-Sat.—BRRRRdathon  
Jan. 11-13 Fri-Sat.—Boreal Bird Workshop  
Jan. 27 Sun.—Boreal Wings Gala in Mpls.  
Feb. 15-17—Sax-Zim Winter Bird Festival  
May 3 Fri.—Things that Go Buzz, Croak, Hoot  
May 8, 22, 29—Warbler Wednesdays  
May 15 Wed.—Waffles & Warblers

DETAILS AT [www.saxzim.org](http://www.saxzim.org) (Events tab)

The city of Mountain Iron gave us an incredible donation of two commercial grade picnic tables.



Head Naturalist Clinton  
leading a field trip



Clinton Nelson planting trees at Warren Bog



Welcome Center Host/  
Naturalist Heather-Marie  
educating folks  
about Great Gray Owls





# WARREN WOESSNER BOG BOARDWALK

## 900-FOOT BOG BOARDWALK COMPLETED AT WARREN NELSON BOG!

**T**hanks to a very generous grant from Warren Woessner and his Woessner Freeman Foundation, we wrapped up our fundraising for the Bog Boardwalk in less than a month...

Wow! And many of you contributed generously to this much needed project. I'll say it again... We have the best members on the planet! True Bog Buddies. Huge thanks also to the Donald Weesner Foundation and the IRRRB's Culture & Tourism Grant!

Volunteers, staff and board members donated many days of hard work to make the required 110 8-foot by 4-foot framework for the boardwalk. In April we hauled all sections out to the bog while it was still frozen. A Minnesota Conservation Crew also provided much muscle that day. Cutting and installing the rough-sawn green Tamarack decking took much longer than we thought, but huge kudos to our staff and volunteers who "got 'er done." The boardwalk is now open. Check it out!



Warren Woessner and the golden loppers at the "ribbon" cutting

*"The work of the FOSZB is preserving enhancing & promoting a unique winter birding hotspot in a very cold state. It is a conversation starter on all my birding trips & I am proud to be a part of the effort to keep this special place special."*

—Warren Woessner, October 2017



## WELCOME TO "THE CATHEDRAL"!

Getting to the heart of a Black Spruce-Tamarack bog is an entirely different experience than just birding one from the road. I liken it to being in a glorious high-ceilinged cathedral. And the quiet can be profound as well.



American Three-toed Woodpecker



Snowshoe Hare



Pink Ladyslipper



Recently fledged Canada Jay

Some of the treasures found in the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog in 2017-18. All were photographed in the vicinity of the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk route. This Boardwalk will be worth walking in ALL seasons!

# BOG BOARDWALK DONORS 2017-18

Leave  
your Legacy  
in Land!  
\*contact Sparky  
for opportunities

## \$30,000

Warren Woessner & Woessner  
Freeman Family Foundation

## \$10,000

Iron Range Resources &  
Rehabilitation Board  
(IRRRB Culture & Tourism Grant)  
Donald Weesner Foundation

## \$1,000

Chet & Miriam Meyers

## \$250-300 [BOARDWALK SEGMENT SPONSORS]

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In Honor of Ethan & Annika Citsay  
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Sandy Tigue  
Paul & Jan Wicklund  
Marie Young

## RICHARD & MARY BRAINERD'S GIFT

### 40 ACRE ADDITION TO W.N. BOG IS THE RESULT

A phone call from Richard and Mary over a year ago led to the Brainerd's offering to purchase a 40 acre piece of land that came for sale bordering the existing Warren Nelson Bog in 2018. Friends of Sax-Zim Bog was thrilled at the Brainerd's generous offer that expanded this important parcel of land.

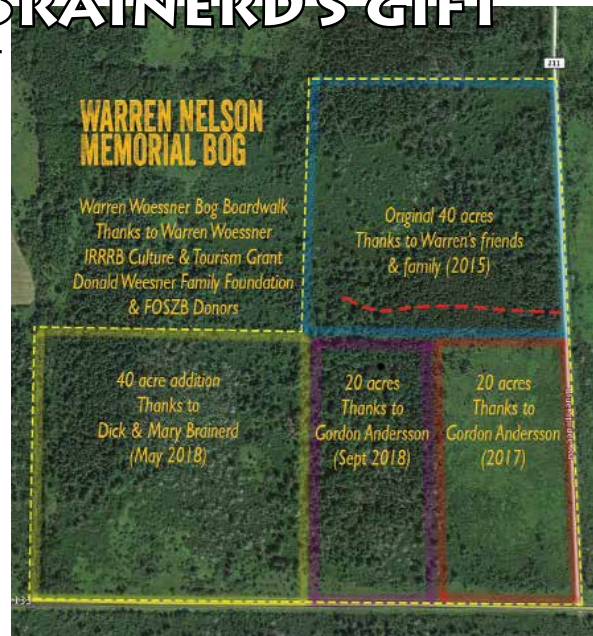


Richard and Mary Brainerd

"The Sax Zim Bog is

incredibly important in preserving and protecting the birds, animals and vegetation of this beautiful and important area. We are so happy to be able to support the expansion of the preserved land, and we always feel fortunate to have experienced its unique beauty."

—Richard & Mary Brainerd, Spring 2018



## GORDON'S DONE IT AGAIN!

### GORDON ANDERSSON'S GIFT ENABLES FOSZB TO ENLARGE WARREN'S BOG TO 120 ACRES

His second generous donation to Acres for Owls has allowed us to add 20 more acres to the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog to bring the total to 120 acres (see map above). Thanks again Gordon!

"When, formerly, I have analyzed my partiality for some farm which I had contemplated purchasing, I have frequently found that I was attracted solely by some few square rods of some impermeable and unfathomable bog—a natural sink in one corner of it. That was the jewel which dazzled me. I derive more of my subsistence from the swamps which surround my native town than from the cultivated gardens in the village." — H.D. Thoreau, "Walking"



BOARDWALK DONORS LAND FUND DONORS



# RAIN COULDN'T HAMPER BIOBLITZ VI

**"BOGDIVERSITY" DISCOVERED BY 40 ENTHUSIASTIC PARTICIPANTS IN SAX-ZIM BOG**

**D**espite gray skies and the threat of rain, over 30 folks & 9 leaders participated in the 6th annual SAX-ZIM BOG BIOBLITZ. The rain held off until early afternoon so we were able to get a fair amount of field time in. Kelly Beaster & Ethan Perry led the wildflower group & found over 200 species of flora! Along with participant Norma Malinowski, the group made an exciting discovery of a threatened carnivorous plant—Hidden-fruit Bladderwort. Joan Hunn took folks out to look for lichens & turned up an amazing 35 species of which four were new for the Sax-Zim Bog! One of the fun lichens they found is called Moosehair. Cassie Novak & Bill Tefft explored the Admiral Road gravel pits and found a cluster of about 20 Pelecinid wasps. Head Naturalist Clinton & Kristina Dexter discovered the very cool & colorful Vesper Bluet damselfly. They also caught several new moth species for the Bog. The early morning birding group turned up a respectable 40 species; not bad for early August. The group had extremely close views of a juvenile LeConte's Sparrow, a very cooperative Black-billed Cuckoo, American Bittern hunting in the ditch near the Welcome Center. But the biggest highlight was a non-bird... two young Coyotes just waking up on top of some large round hay bales. Despite the dreary conditions, Jerry McCormick & crew were able to find some fun butterflies & other insects. FOSZB member Kathy invited the canoeing group to access East Stone Lake for a little aquatic exploration. Five canoes plied the calm, misty waters & found a mama Wood Duck and 7 young, a Donacia beetle that lives only on floating lily pads, several Blue Dasher dragonflies, a beautiful black, Cross Orbweaver spider, & a massive stand of Wild Rice. Rain forced most groups back to the Welcome Center by 1pm or so where we all shared our findings & enjoyed good conversation. Thanks to all our wonderful leaders! See you next year at Bog BioBlitz VII!



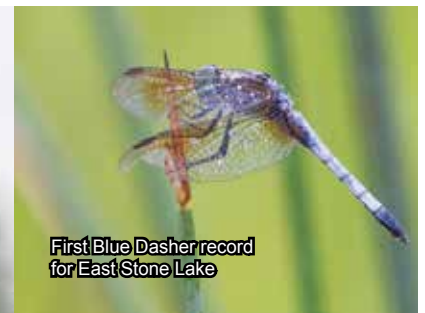
Bog  
BioBlitz VII  
tentatively set for  
July 20, 2019



It is BioBlitz day!



Young Coyote  
atop a round  
haybale on the  
bird outing



First Blue Dasher record  
for East Stone Lake



Blazing Star (roadside  
escapees from a  
garden)



Casey Weissberg  
& Kristina Dexter



Wild Cucumber



Cross Orbweaver



Canoe group on  
East Stone Lake



Sandhill Crane family (Lori Williams)



Early morning bird group on Poplar Road



Juvenile LeConte's Sparrow



Clinton at the Wrap-up Sharing Session

BOG BIOBLITZ VI

# WORLD'S COLDEST BIRDATHON!

**BRRRRDATHON 2017 LIVES UP TO ITS SLOGAN AS WORLD'S COLDEST BIRDATHON**

**M**inus -26F was the low recorded by participants on our 8th Annual BRRRRdathon. This was the first year of our new system in which all birds were given a 1-5 point value depending on their rarity. Some grumbling was heard about Sparky's assigned values but overall it seems to have added a fun element of strategy to the contest.

17 hardy participants joined the effort, with over half of those competing in the Wintergreen division (or should we call it the "What are you Thinking?" division?...or maybe the "Crazy" division?). These Wintergreeners traversed Duluth & Superior on fat bikes (mountain-bikes with really fat tires) & endured hours of bone-chilling cold...and they even create their own windchill when they ride.

ONLY 55 species were tallied by all teams. This is our second lowest composite total since the event's inception in 2011 when only 50 species were found (73 species is the record total set in 2017 & 2012).

HIGHLIGHTS included Boreal Owl in Duluth's Hartley Park, Red-necked Grebe on Lake Superior, Cooper's Hawk at UMD chasing pigeons, & Belted Kingfisher (also at Hartley Park). A couple surprising MISSES included Red Crossbill & Snowy Owl (though Sparky saw one on the way to buy the lasagna for the compilation dinner in Superior!).

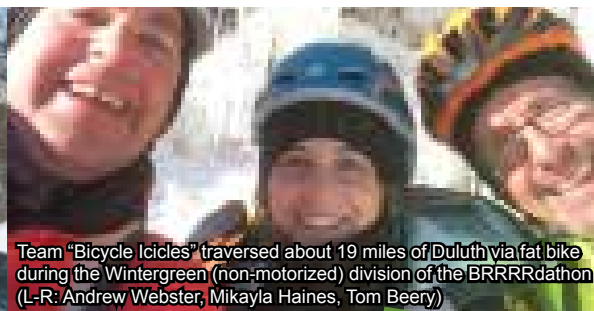
Thanks to our brave participants: Team Frozen Gearfalcons (Bryan French, Pat Kohlin, Tim Bates); The Bicycle Icicles (Andrew Webster, Mikayla Haines, Tom Beery); Team Bird NERRds (Emily Wilmoth, Steve Gebhard, Deanna Erickson); The Coldfinches (Barb Akre, Chris & Cindy Edwardson); The Grouching Twitchers (Dave & Lars Benson, John Ellis); Clinton Nienhaus, Steve Millard, & Kim Eckert's MN Birding Weekend field trip participants.

In the 2-day Event, the Grouching Twitchers came out on top with 94 points (47 species), while the Coldfinches won the 1-day BRRRRdathon with 45 points from 28 species. Team Frozen Gearfalcons tallied 34 points with 26 species in the Wintergreen (non-motorized) event.



2019 BRRRRdathon is  
Fri-Sat. January 4-5

**BRRRRDATHON**



Team "Bicycle Icicles" traversed about 19 miles of Duluth via fat bike during the Wintergreen (non-motorized) division of the BRRRRdathon (L-R: Andrew Webster, Mikayla Haines, Tom Beery)

## BIG HALF YEAR FOR THE BOG

**OVER \$7,000 RAISED...MOST BY MICHAEL HURBEN'S WORKING BIG YEAR**

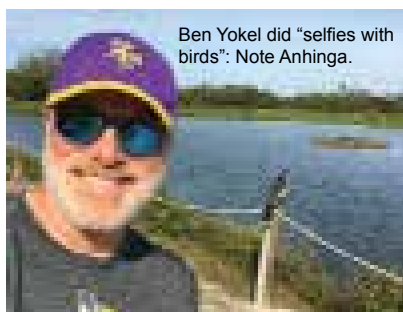
**M**ichael Hurben pledged FIVE DOLLARS PER SPECIES (!!) for all the birds he saw on his Big Half Year for the Bog. The kicker is that he is also doing his "GLOBAL WORKING BIG YEAR" from his 2018 base of Thailand. One of Michael's first Big Year stops was the Sax-Zim Bog where he picked up 17 year birds...and note his first bird of the day in the background...a Great Gray Owl! (photo below). During the 26 week period, Michael & his wife Claire birded Nepal, Thailand, Taiwan, Ecuador, Malaysia, Cambodia, Galapagos, Nepal, China, Ethiopia, South Africa, Australia AND, OF COURSE, SAX-ZIM! He tallied 1,234 species (while working a full-time job), and at \$5 per bird, Michael & Claire's donation to FOSZB was \$6,170!

And here is the rest of the story...Michael is legally blind! He really only has vision in the center of his eyes. Birding and photography is difficult, but it doesn't stop him! And his photos are beautiful. We will be having Michael speak about his Big Year travels sometime in 2019. Stay tuned! [see more at [legallyblindbirding.net](http://legallyblindbirding.net)]

We also thank all those who participated in this second Big Half Year for the Bog. Kudos to board member Rubin Stenseng for raising \$400, and to board members Gene & Julie Ollila for compiling \$270.



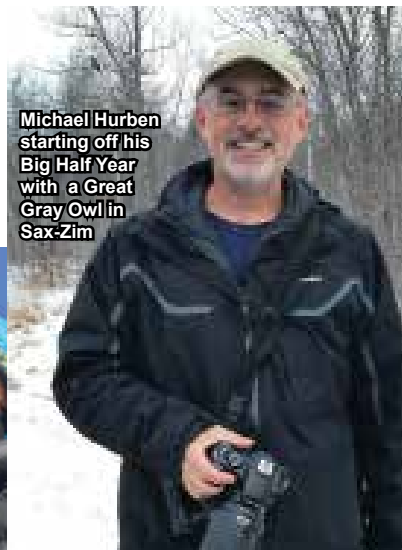
**BIG HALF YEAR**



Ben Yokel did "selfies with birds": Note Anhinga.



Lori Williams only counted birds she saw with her dog Lou.



Michael Hurben starting off his Big Half Year with a Great Gray Owl in Sax-Zim



# DONORS APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018 (fiscal year)

## \$50,000 & Over

Leuthold Family Foundation

## \$10,000-\$19,999

Donald Weesner Family Foundation  
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Woessner Freeman Family Foundation

## \$5,000-\$9,999

Gordon Andersson \*  
To purchase 20 acre Warren Nelson Bog Addition 1  
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In honor of Jim & Curly Cargill, Mason Carpenter, Lissy Carpenter, Ethan Ehlers, Caleb Ehlers  
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Rubin Stenseng  
Lori Williams & Dave Steinger

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George Soule  
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Roland Barrett  
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Lorna Cooper  
Robert Crabb & Andrea Lambrecht  
Maxine Dalton  
This is in honor of the birthday of my son John Hatcher of Duluth who first took me to Sax Zim Bog  
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Mark & Jean Davis  
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# DONORS THANKS TO ALL!

**We could not survive  
without all of you...  
Our Bog Buddies!**

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GIVING HELPS US  
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for questions

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donate stock!**

**Click on "donate  
stock" tab at  
www.saxzim.org**



## CLINTON'S CORNER

A donation of \$600 will support a week of naturalist education



Clinton leading a spring field trip

## MY THIRD YEAR AS HEAD NATURALIST IN REVIEW...

**B**iodiversity—The landscape of the Bog may not change a lot during a year, but my knowledge about this landscape has certainly changed. I keep learning new things about this amazing place and during my third full season as naturalist we added to the Master Species List, bumping it over 1400 species!

**Education is taking off**—I was able to put on 54 education programs and outreach events with attendance of 1092. It has been very impressive to see the influx of new faces and in particular, new local faces! I hope I have been able to show a few of these folks the magic that lies in the bogs in their own backyard. This past year included trips to each property to show off new trails. We will continue to offer these trips into the winter months, as this is a great addition to increase access to the Bog for those who are interested in getting off the roads and onto a trail. I am thankful to those who have made the trek to the Sax-Zim Bog.

**Citizen Science Blooms**—American Kestrel Nest Box Monitoring (see article below), Spring Owl Surveys, and Winter Raptor Surveys. New Citizen Science projects are in development: Sarah Beaster is working on a Frog and Toad Survey Route, Kristina Dexter is developing protocols for a Citizen Science Bat Monitoring Project. Possible collaboration on Great Gray Owl and Connecticut Warbler studies is being explored. Stay tuned!

**Trail Development**—Rubin Stenseng and I worked on developing trails through several of our FOSZB parcels this summer. Maps will be forthcoming, as will recommendations for each trail (difficulty, season of best use, etc). This project took a lot of work but thanks to Rubin's excitement and energy we now have some pretty sweet trails in the Sax-Zim Bog.

**Boreal Bird Curriculum**—Along with advisors, I have been working on a Boreal Bird Curriculum that will be a companion to Sparky's forthcoming film, Boreal Wings. It will address National Science Standards and will hopefully expand the knowledge and understanding of the Bog as an ecosystem, as well as show off some of the bird "superheroes" of the North Woods!

This last year has been jam packed with fun, learning, teaching, exploring, and growing. I couldn't have done it without the help of a load of folks! I want to send out a special thanks to Rubin Stenseng for his work on the trails and support in the field; to Cindy Edwardson and Bruce Munson for their help and work on the Boreal Bird Curriculum; to Sarah Beaster for her work and interest in Frog and Toad Surveys; and to Kristina Dexter for all of the work that she does in the Bog and to help me in the field with Citizen Projects and programs and species finding; and last to Sparky and the FOSZB Board for their continued support for my position and work in the Sax-Zim Bog! Thank you for your support for the work we are doing in the Sax-Zim Bog! —Clinton Nienhaus



\*\*Have you seen the latest installment of Clinton's Critters video series? Check it out at [www.saxzim.org](http://www.saxzim.org) under the "Natural History" tab.

More species coming in 2019. We'll even have a "World Premiere" at January's Gala!

## KESTREL NEST BOX PROGRAM

**W**ith the addition of 24 more boxes, the Bog now has a total of 37 Kestrel nesting boxes. Volunteer nest monitors utilized a GoPro camera on a pole to monitor growth and progress in the nests. This is less intrusive than climbing a ladder and opening the nest box.

This year it was determined that 12 boxes were occupied by Kestrels (Starlings took over 2 boxes and 1 box was inhabited by Tree Swallows). Ten of the boxes had

successful nesting, producing 44 chicks that were banded: 22 males and 23 females. We averaged a respectable 3.75 chicks per box. Two of the boxes yielded no nestlings due to predation or nesting failure.

—Clinton Nienhaus (Sept. 2017)

\*\*If you'd like to volunteer as a nest box monitor, please contact Sarah at [info@saxzim.org](mailto:info@saxzim.org).

Thanks to Program Coordinator Frank Nicoletti, and bander David Alexander. Much appreciated was the hours put in by the volunteer nest monitors and banding helpers: Kristina Dexter, Sarah Beaster, Mark Dudek-Johnson, Mary Gabrys, Jean Elton-Turbes, Sally Grames.



Clinton sharing Boreal Chorus Frog on Things that Go Buzz! Croak, Hoot &amp; Bump in the Night field trip

Female Kestrel on eggs in nest box





# TINY BIRD ART IS BIG HIT AT 2018 GALA

5TH ANNUAL EVENT RAISES NEARLY \$ 10,000!

Over 70 “bog buddies” flocked together to support us and our mission to Preserve, Promote and Protect the Sax-Zim Bog. We gathered at Springbrook Nature Center on January 21, 2018 (yes, Super Bowl Sunday!) We all had a wonderful time and enjoyed the usual appetizers presented in an unusual manner...”Snowy Owl bars,” “Connecticut Warbler eggs,” “owl pellets,” and an owl-shaped veggie tray.

Sparky emphasized that the Sax-Zim Bog is YOUR Bog...not Friends of Sax-Zim's Bog. We all need to be stewards of this precious place. Our East Stone Lake Bog tract was featured and SIX members responded by donating \$1,000 per acre for their own legacy acre of this bog: Big Thanks to Lois and Richard King, Sheryl Sostarich and Jon Sostarich, and Ken and Carol Ellstrom. (They join 3 other folks that also recently purchased a legacy acre here...Kudos to Mark Dudek Johnson, Scott & Nan Wischerd, and Gene & Julie Ollila (Julie surprised Gene with this gift!).

Sparky also premiered the second Clinton's Critters video, highlighting the natural history of the White-winged Crossbill. Clinton and Sparky have a bunch more ideas, so stay tuned! Another big announcement at this event was the introduction of a film that Sparky is working on called **Boreal Wings: Bird Superheroes of the Northern Forests**. This video will highlight about a dozen boreal bird species whose “superpowers” allow them to survive and thrive in the bogs and forests of the North Woods. Head Naturalist Clinton is working on a companion curriculum to the film. Both the DVD and curriculum will be sent to EACH OF THE 2500 SCHOOLS IN MINNESOTA! We hope to inspire the next generation of bog buddies.

Original bird art on tiny canvases was definitely the highlight of the Silent Auction. We received a bounty of fun and very artistic bird creations. Most were paintings on canvas, but folks also sent us stained glass creations, wood scroll work, glass sculpture, pencil and even photos printed on wood and metal. The biggest ticket items were the guided half-day Bog trips by Clinton and Sparky. We did not have any takers for the amazing framed, signed and numbered Roger Tory Peterson prints donated by Steve & Diane Millard (still available; contact Sparky). High Five to all who donated art and objects! The Silent Auction garnered \$3,383.

Al Batt sauntered up to the front and began telling us stories...hilarious tales that involved chickens, chewing gum, the phrase “Uff da”, a Southern Baptist mother, a wise and kind librarian...all woven around memories of his first bird book. A wonderfully funny 45 minutes! I never get tired of his stories. Thanks Al!

Kudos to the crew for creating another successful event... Kent Buell, Therese & Ed Cacek, Rubin Stenseng, Sue Wilmes, Clinton, Kristina Dexter, Sarah Beaster, Gene & Julie Ollila, Cynthia Reuss, Mark Dudek Johnson, Sparky, Dave Steininger, and Lori Williams.

Gala is  
Sunday  
Jan. 27, 2019  
with George  
Archibald

BOREAL WINGS GALA

WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL



Over 70 “bog buddies” enjoyed keynote speaker humorist Al Batt, a tiny bird art auction was a big hit; bird-themed appetizers were devoured. Member Sheryl Sostarich (L), Board Member Julie Ollila (R) sporting appropriate headwear.

## 2018 WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL WAS OWL-RICH!

Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, in association with the town of Meadowlands, hosted the 11th annual event over President's Day Weekend in February. 113 folks from 21 states enjoyed fantastic boreal birding. This is only the second year in Festival history that the “Big Three” owls were seen in the Bog...Great Gray, N Hawk Owl, and Boreal Owl!

As usual, Clinton Nienhaus did the daily compilation of bird sighting before our yummy evening meal. Dr. Alexis Grinde of UMD/NRRI gave the Friday night talk on Birds of our Bog Ecosystems and recent research. Saturday Keynote Speaker Laura Erickson entertained the crowd Saturday evening with her fascinating talk on how boreal birds survive the cold season. A live raptor show was held Saturday.

The Friends of Sax-Zim Bog Welcome Center had extended hours in order to accommodate all the visitors during Festival weekend, and Saturday set a new all-time record of 282 visitors! Wow! Thanks to Heather-Marie and all our naturalists and volunteers for doing a great job!



Next  
Festival is  
February  
15-17,  
2019



[L-R]: Clinton doing the bird list; Group watching Great Gray Owl; Keynote speaker Laura Erickson with Pip; Tom Bloom and Naturalist Heather-Marie.



# BY THE NUMBERS

# 4,317

Visitors to the Welcome Center  
in the winter of 2017-18

...from **41** states & **5** foreign countries  
Chile, Peru, Canada, Australia & England



## 2017



Thanks to a wonderful matching  
grant of  
**\$10,000 from  
Warren Woessner**  
you helped us set a new record  
for giving during the November  
2017 Give to the Max Day.

## \$37,029

given in 24 hours by...

## 209 DONORS



## 1,234

bird species tallied by  
Michael Hurben during  
the first six months of his  
Global Working Big Year.



## \$6,170

Dollars donated to FOSZB  
by Michael Hurben based  
on \$5 per bird during  
our Big Half Year

## \$214,900

donated by all of you to...

## ACRES FOR OWLS

since we began the program in 2014—Thank You!

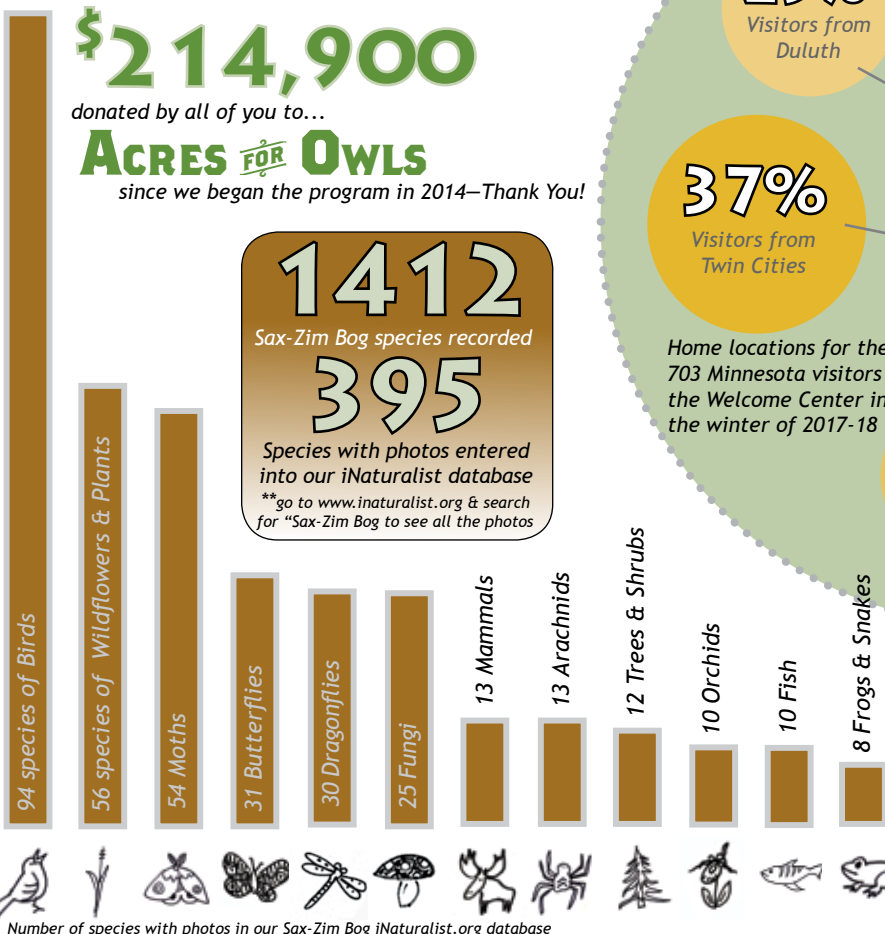
## 1412

Sax-Zim Bog species recorded

## 395

Species with photos entered  
into our iNaturalist database

\*\*go to [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org) & search  
for "Sax-Zim Bog" to see all the photos



Number of species with photos in our Sax-Zim Bog iNaturalist.org database

## 25%

Visitors from  
Duluth

## 19%

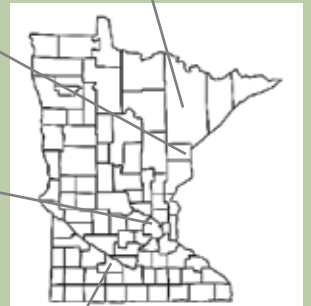
Visitors from  
Iron Range

## 37%

Visitors from  
Twin Cities

## 19%

Visitors from  
Greater MN



Home locations for the  
703 Minnesota visitors to  
the Welcome Center in  
the winter of 2017-18



iNaturalist

# BOG BUDDIES AT WORK & PLAY

# BOG BUDDIES AT WORK & PLAY



Board member Gene Ollila at Waffles & Warblers with a very appropriate t-shirt!



Warbler Wednesday group birding along the Whiteface River.



Volunteer Nancy Fisher whipping up a batch of waffles for "Waffles & Warblers" in May.



Photographing a Great Gray on McDavitt Road.



Christmas Bird Count crew: L-R: Lori Williams, Sandy Roggenkamp, Sarah Beaster.



Sparky doing chainsaw work on the bog boardwalk route at Warren Nelson Bog.



Rubin Stenseng (pictured) and Sarah Beaster cut up countless bog boardwalk boards.



Volunteers Bob and Lonny staging boardwalk frames in April at Warren Nelson Memorial Bog.



Board member Julie working on building the boardwalk frames.



Exploring East Stone Lake during the BioBlitz.



Baby it's cold outside! Welcome Center Host/Naturalist Heather-Marie at -25F.



All generations love seeing an owl!



Welcome Center Host/Naturalist Mark Dudek Johnson displaying all his birding area patches.



Clinton sharing his frog find with *Things that Go Buzz, Croak, Hoot, Bump in the Night* participants.





Barred Owl on Owl Avenue



Many Muskrats were out this winter



Northern Parula on Warbler Wednesday field trip



Ermine at the Welcome Center

**M**y favorite encounters are on the Things that Go Buzz, Croak, Hoot & Bump in the Night spring trip to see and hear the critters of the night. We experience amazing displays and that gets everyone excited about the coming spring migration. Someday I hope to see a nesting Connecticut Warbler in the Bog.

I am on the Board because we are a group of action. We are taking the enthusiasm of the staff and visitors and harnessing it into positive actions. The amount of land we have been able to purchase and the education that is going on in our various trips is just amazing. I am hoping that we can redouble our efforts to ensure that a big portion of the bog will be here for the duration.

## BOARD PROFILE

*Dave Steininger*



Northern Shrike along Stone Lake Road



A November Short-eared Owl on Stone Lake Road was a surprise



Snapping Turtle near the Whiteface River



Fluffy Canada Jay baby waiting to be fed by mom or dad at Warren Nelson Bog



Boreal Owl on Overton Road



Male Hoary Redpoll at Welcome Center



Great Gray Owl in snowstorm along Nichols Lake Road

## DONOR PROFILE

*Judd Brink*



**O**ne of my most memorable experiences in the Sax-Zim Bog came last winter while guiding a Florida birder. We spent a few hours in the Warren Nelson Bog in knee deep snow crawling over and under logs to photograph both Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers from only several feet away. It was an amazing experience for both of us. I hope someday to see a Timber Wolf in the Bog.

I support the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog because they work to save a very fragile and misunderstood landscape, and their efforts and dedication will help improve and support this area for everyone to enjoy for the future. [Judd is a Sax-Zim Bog bird guide and owner of Minnesota Backyard Birds at [www.BirdMinnesota.com](http://www.BirdMinnesota.com)]





Mark Dudek Johnson

## STAFF PROFILE

*Mark  
Dudek  
Johnson*

Last winter I set a goal to find Black-backed Woodpeckers via snowshoe on our various tracks of property and I found one at Winterberry Bog! I was also overjoyed by all of the bog life I saw this spring and summer while working on the bog boardwalk. The bird I would most like to discover in Sax-Zim is one that has not been confirmed in many decades; the Spruce Grouse.

I think it is important to support Friends of Sax- Zim Bog because the most effective way to protect land is to own it. I believe that people are most likely to support the preservation of a place they care about and the best way to get people to care about a place is to know it and have a personal relationship with it. Friends of Sax- Zim Bog accomplishes both of these very effectively through it's mission statement.



Trumpeter Swan on Nichols Lake



American Bittern on Owl Avenue



Showy Ladyslippers



American Three-toed Woodpecker

**M**y favorite Bog bird is the Great Gray Owl, but I was also really hoping to see a Northern Saw-whet Owl in the Bog last winter. While that didn't happen, I did get the opportunity to work with one during my internship at Wildwoods Rehabilitators in Duluth. As for mammals, I'm still waiting for my opportunity to see a bull Moose in Sax-Zim. I've lived in Northern Minnesota for close to 20 years and haven't seen a wild Moose yet!

I support Friends of Sax-Zim Bog because I think its important to preserve this unique natural habitat not only for the many species that call the Bog home but also for future generations. It's nice to know that the land acquired by Friends of Sax-Zim Bog will be preserved and left in its natural state for the enjoyment of all. I also support Friends of Sax-Zim Bog because their education programs are designed specifically to what's in the Bog.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

*Jason  
Trauer*



Sandhill Crane parent  
and colt



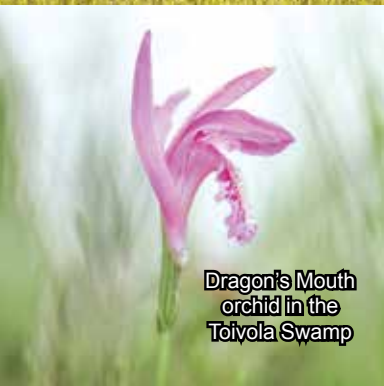
Cecropia Moth  
caterpillar at  
Warren Nelson Bog



Snowshoe Hare at Warren Nelson Bog



Northern Hawk Owl  
along McDavitt Road



Dragon's Mouth  
orchid in the  
Toiyola Swamp



Blackburnian  
Warbler on  
Warbler Wednesday



April Great Blue Heron  
waits for spring



## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal Year 2017-2018

April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018



RECEIPTS	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Donations	\$93,860	\$150,396	\$86,997	\$93,075
Events & Programs	\$3,525	\$3,817	\$7,903	\$12,345
Grants	\$52,750	\$63,750	\$50,000	\$115,950
Merchandise Sales	\$10,241	\$10,407	\$14,103	\$22,616
Interest	\$31	\$3	\$0	\$0
In Kind Donations (Goods, etc)	—	—	—	\$12,782
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$160,407</b>	<b>\$228,373</b>	<b>\$159,003</b>	<b>\$256,768</b>

### DISBURSEMENTS

Payroll	\$41,647	\$63,173	\$74,981	\$81,165
Operations Expenses	\$22,070	\$30,064	\$50,876	\$145,034
Land & Asset Acquisition	\$90,956	\$2,108 *on Balance Sheet	*on Balance Sheet	
Misc Expenses	\$283	\$2,436	\$702	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$154,956</b>	<b>\$214,393</b>	<b>\$126,555</b>	<b>\$226,199</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$5,451</b>	<b>\$13,980</b>	<b>\$32,447</b>	<b>\$30,569</b>

### BALANCE SHEET

March 31, 2018

ASSETS	3-31-2015	3-31-2016	3-31-2017	3-31-18
Cash (incl. liquid assets)	\$51,838	\$58,579	\$73,158	\$125,951
Savings	\$3,027	\$3,031	\$3,034	\$3,037
Fixed Assets	\$198,619	\$362,658	\$384,086	\$453,754
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$253,484</b>	<b>\$424,268</b>	<b>\$460,278</b>	<b>\$582,742</b>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Liabilities	\$8,000	\$53,540	\$80,412	\$46,252
Restricted Net Assets	\$20,000	\$18,433	\$80,408	\$179,922
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$225,484	\$352,295	\$299,458	\$356,568
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>\$253,484</b>	<b>\$424,268</b>	<b>\$460,278</b>	<b>\$582,742</b>



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\*\*Cover art created by Tanya Beyer  
www.epiphaniasfield.com



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Lori Williams  
Board Chair



Sparky Stensaas  
Executive Director



Heather-Marie Bloom  
Welcome Center Naturalist



Frank Nicoletti  
Welcome Center Naturalist



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Board Member



Julie Ollila  
Board Member



Rubin Stenseng  
Board Member-Secretary



Gene Ollila  
Board Member



Amy Johnson  
Welcome Center Naturalist



Clinton Nienhaus  
Head Naturalist



Mark Dudek Johnson  
Welcome Center Naturalist

*I am honored to work side-by-side with these incredible board members & staff who deeply respect the ecology of the Bog. We vow to ensure its diversity by continuing to honor our mission to Preserve, Promote & Protect the Sax-Zim Bog.*

—Lori Williams, Board Chair, November 2017



Dave Steinger  
Board Member-Treasurer



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