

Sax Zim Bog

2020



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

Evening Grosbeak
Poccothraustes vespertina
by Bill Brooks

Bill Brooks 2019

SAX-ZIM IS YOUR BOG!

VIRTUALLY TOGETHER

We really miss our Bog Buddies! But the pesky pandemic has opened new ways for us all to connect...and that has been virtually via video field trips. I really hope you've had a chance to see some of these fun and entertaining and educational trips. My motivation in starting these virtual outings in April was the disappointment of having to cancel all our spring field trips. I love getting together with all of you and not just birding, but sharing stories and laughing. The videos became my therapy and a way to feel closer to all of you.

My Virtually Live videos span from April to October (filming the 11th episode tomorrow!)...and I'm going to keep going! I concentrate on showing the unique birds of Sax-Zim Bog and highlight new land purchases and projects we are taking on.

Head Naturalist Clinton has also created a series called "Clinton's Bog-ventures": mini field trips in the Bog that cover all kinds of fascinating non-bird natural history. And I have to tell you that even I have learned LOTS! In one episode Clinton shares the courtship of the Creek Chub fish that builds little underwater rock structures (nests) to attract the females. But first the Creek Chub must battle competing males. Who knew! Clinton even gets this all on video. He and his eagle-eyed wife Kristina have explored the amazingly diverse insect world in a roadside stand of Dogbane, wondered at the orchids of Indian Pipe Bog, and showcased the natural history of egg-laying Western Painted Turtles.

Yet another virtual creation is our Clinton's Critters video series. Highlighting the lives of our most iconic Sax-Zim Bog birds such as Great Gray Owls, White-winged Crossbills and Sharp-tailed Grouse, we combine my wildlife video with Clinton's narration and insight.

All told, these educational videos have been viewed 15,000 times. You can find links to them all on our website under the "Videos" tab. And we will continue to make more. Clinton is also launching a Webinar series (next page) See you on the "Little Screen"!

TOUGH & EASY DECISION

The unanimous board decision to keep the Welcome Center closed for the winter of 2020-21 was both an easy one and a tough one at the same time. Tough because we LOVE seeing and talking with all of you who visit the Bog. Our Welcome Center naturalists are gregarious folks who love sharing info with visiting birders and photographers. Every day at the Welcome Center is like a little party (with hot cider and cookies and a warm "wood" stove), and we will miss that. But it was the easiest of decisions because the safety of our visitors is priority. The building is tiny...only 16-feet wide (!) and with no ventilation. No room to social distance even if we tried. The decision was also made easier by the fact that we are primarily a land preservation organization that aspires to protect habitat and its biodiversity as our main mission.

Occasionally we hope to have fires in the firepit just outside the Welcome Center and Clinton and our staff of naturalists, as well as myself, will be wandering around the Bog. Feel free to flag us down to ask questions (we will be wearing FOSZB lanyards).

Having said that, all other aspects of birding the Sax-Zim Bog will be "business as usual": feeders will be up and filled, outhouses open, all trails and boardwalks walkable. Now if only I could make sure there are dozens of northern owls across the Bog this winter...Hmmm.

OWL SUPERSTARS OF 2020

Though there was a paucity of winter finches (no Pine Grosbeaks, no redpolls, few crossbills) three individual owls provided much excitement for visiting birders and photographers in Sax-Zim during the winter of 2019-20. "Barry" the ever-present Barred Owl at Winterberry Bog often sat all day long on the aspen nearest the bird feeders. He was making a nice living pouncing on subnivean voles and unwary Red Squirrels below the feeders. Many dozens of folks got to photograph Barry as he kept vigil from his perch.

An über-rare Boreal Owl delighted visitors on and off for several weeks at the Admiral Road feeders. This patient little raptor was the "cover-owl" of our 2021 Sax-Zim Bog Wild calendar. She often sat in the same spruce perch and watched intensely for voles coming up from their snow tunnels, nabbing a meal now and then. Occasionally a Red Squirrel or Hairy Woodpecker would hitch up the same perch tree and have a look at the owl before moving on.

But the craziest owl sighting of the winter was a first-record Barn Owl that was seen hunting over a snowy farm field along CR7 in mid January. This was the TENTH owl species recorded in Sax-Zim Bog! Head Naturalist Clinton was able to get our Boreal Bird Adventure Weekend group to the spot to see this southern owl. But by the next morning it became quickly evident that the bird was not doing well. The owl was carefully captured and was enroute to rehab in Minneapolis when it died.

IN MEMORY OF...

Several memorials were added to Friends of Sax-Zim Bog (FOSZB) land parcels this past year. Auggie's Bogwalk (see page 7 for photos), a 360-foot Tamarack boardwalk through the alder of our Fringed Gentian Bog was begun in the fall of 2019 and capped off with a beautiful arch sign in summer 2020. Our board member Ben Yokel and his wife Heidi funded this project in memory of a friend of the family who lost an infant son. Auggie's great grandfather Bob Briski contributed his own touch by carving adorable little owls of wood that visitors can find at the end of the boardwalk and take home as a memory of their Sax-Zim Bog trip. The family hosted a ribbon-cutting in August for friends and relatives, many of whom live in the Sax-Zim Bog area.

A brand new platform and bench with a memorial plaque was partly made possible by Lance Vrieze and Cassie Kennedy (photo below). The spot at the north end of Gray Jay Way (hiking/snowshoeing trail that starts near the outhouse at the Welcome Center) is a fantastic place to sit in spring and summer to watch birds. I spent an enjoyable hour in July watching a family of Canada Jays and Golden-crowned Kinglets (see Virtually Live 10 video).

The largest memorial project was the 1200-foot Bob Russell Bogwalk at the Walker/Dahlquist Winterberry Bog. Funding was spearheaded by Bob's lifelong birding buddy, (and FOSZB co-founder) Kim Eckert. (See photos when you turn the page).

RESEARCH TAKING FLIGHT

Two very exciting FOSZB-sponsored avian research projects are getting off the ground this winter in Sax-Zim. Ground-breaking is the satellite tracking of Northern Hawk Owls in Sax-Zim. We have long wondered where these owls come from, and where do they breed? We are collaborating with a company that will build the



Though the Welcome Center will be closed this winter, feeders will be filled, the outhouse open, and naturalists wandering about the Bog

2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT

first ever satellite transmitter light enough to put on a bird as small as a Hawk Owl. Thanks to funding from Bog Buddy Rich & Molly Hoeg we will be able to purchase 3 such units. Frank Nicoletti and Hannah Toutonghi will spearhead this ambitious project. Watch our website for data updates as the transmitters become operational.

UMD Grad Student Abbie Valine will be putting trackers on Northern Shrikes in Sax-Zim (and other areas of northern MN) to see where in the subarctic they are coming from. She will have to recapture them next winter to access the data. Currently we have three on-going avian research projects in the Sax-Zim Bog. Dig deeper into this report to find updates on Kestrel boxes and banding, Golden-winged Warbler surveys and our bird-tracking MOTUS tower.

TIME, ENERGY, ENTHUSIASM

I have the greatest board, staff and volunteers a Director could ask for. They jump at any chance to help the cause of the organization. You can see their happy faces on the back of this report.

We have a talented bunch of Tiny Bird Artists...Your donations to the Silent Auction helped us raise a record number of dollars at the 2020 Boreal Wings Gala.

Helping our staff and board at the Welcome Center was our bright and cheery bunch of volunteers: Vicki Harthorn, Lynelle Hanson, Bruce Munson, Rich Hoeg, Steph Horner, Julie Grahn, Eric Gdula, Katie Stedman, Carol-Ann and Tom Bloom, Scott Wolf (and Malyska!).

Our litter clean up crews, workday workers, boardwalk builders gave us 100 percent —In addition to everyone on our board and staff, thanks to Tom Williams, Rick Schroeder, Jason Traver, Dale & Cindy Haugen, Lynelle Hanson, Lonny Gervais, Eric Gdula and Sue Wilmes.

Bill Brooks donated his lovely Evening Grosbeak watercolor for the front of this Annual Report.

Huge thanks to Warner Nature Center of St. Paul for their donation of interpretive items including a very cool 5-foot tall replica of a Pitcher-Plant (complete with door to see the victims of the "death pool"! (photo below) and of course Mortimer the Moose, new guardian of the Welcome Center.

Sax-Zim Bog is YOUR Bog, and all of these folks help make it a better place!

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON? LAND HO!

Land acquisitions will be the focus of our 2021. And specifically one large preservation project that will be part of our Owls & Warblers Critical Corridor Project. We will need to raise nearly \$200,000 to make this project a reality. If you can help, or want to discuss legacy giving and memorials, feel free to call or email me anytime.

Keep feet in the bog and your head in the spruce boughs,

Take good care,

Sparky Stensaas



Sparky Stensaas
Executive Director



"Board" members Gene & Julie Ollila work on the Bob Russell Bogwalk



"Owl" our visitors love owls!



Thanks to Warner Nature Center for our terrifying Pitcher Plant sculpture!

YOUR NAME ON THIS BOG? YELLOW-BELLIED BOG ACRES AVAILABLE

Give your gift to our Acres of Owls Land Fund for upcoming land conservation projects and we'll add your name to Yellow-Bellied Bog

Option 1: A \$1,000 donation will get your name/memorial will be added to a one-acre block.

Option 2: For a donation of \$30,000 you can name this entire parcel!

Contact Sparky at sparky@saxzim.org to discuss



The namesake Yellow-bellied Flycatcher



"The Larks" sponsored an acre of Yellow-bellied Bog as a group

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 19 Thurs.—Give to the Max Day
January 28—Online Tiny Bird Art Auction begins

WINTER WEBINAR SERIES

December 10- Introduction to the Sax-Zim Bog
December 17- Geology of the Sax-Zim Bog
December 31- Biodiversity in the Sax-Zim Bog
January 14- Winter Birds and Birding in Sax-Zim
January 28- Trailside Tracks and Animal Sign
February 11- Citizen Science and Research in the Sax-Zim Bog
February 25- Sax-Zim Bog Property Tour
March 11- Owls in the Sax-Zim Bog
March 18- Spring and Summer in Sax-Zim Bog
DETAILS AT www.saxzim.org (Events tab)

BOB RUSSELL BOGWALK AT WINTERBERRY BOG

KIM ECKERT SPEARHEADS THE FUNDRAISING FOR THIS 1200-FOOT BOARDWALK

Many hands make light work? Well, maybe not exactly "light" but certainly with 10 volunteers, including board members, all staff, a five person Conservation Corps crew and our contractors, Dan Coda and Andrew Webster, we handily cranked out a 1200' boardwalk in just a few weeks. From constructing and hauling 140 4x8' platforms to cutting and screwing in over 1800 decking boards, to placing all of the bog feet, many hands really did simplify things! Stop by and hike the Bob Russell Bogwalk at Winterberry. Will "Barry" the Barred Owl show up again this winter? How about the American Three-toed Woodpeckers? Let us know!

The boardwalk was made possible by funding from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board's Regional Trails Grant, and from a major fundraising effort by Kim Eckert, longtime friend of Bob Russell's. Over 85 donors helped to make the boardwalk possible. Thanks to all for this fitting tribute to a dedicated bird advocate and great man!



At 1200 feet, this is our longest boardwalk
...and the only one that makes a loop



Volunteer Lonnie Gervais built us an Aldo Leopold bench

Our hard-working
Conservation Corp
crew

HABITAT FOR GREAT GRAYS & CONNECTICUTS

WE ARE GETTING CLOSER TO OUR GOAL, BUT NEED YOUR HELP



We have a couple HUGE land deals in the works...BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP! The Owls & Warblers Critical Corridor Project will protect 1000s of acres (yes...I said "thousands"!) of prime Black Spruce-Tamarack habitat for Connecticut Warblers and Great Gray Owls (and a myriad of othe boreal species) for future generations. See the sidebar map for the priority areas for these preservation projects.

Members continue to amaze us with their gifts to support habitat conservation in the Sax-Zim Bog. To date we've protected 524 acres of boreal forest! And we're not done yet. Want to be a part of supporting habitat conservation in the Bog? We can definitely use your help. You can leave your legacy in land by donating today! Head over to our website and click the DONATE button or mail your gift anytime. Feel free to call or email Sparky to discuss legacy donations (sparky@saxzim.org or 218-341-3350).



GREEN patches
are priority
bogs for this
project

Naming
rights for
donations
over \$20K

RAISED: \$635,000

GOAL: \$835,000

ACRES FOR OWLS DONORS 2019-20

Leave
your Legacy
in Land!
*contact Sparky
for opportunities

\$5,000

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\$1,000-\$4,999

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*DONATIONS MADE DURING OUR FISCAL YEAR: APRIL 2019-MARCH 2020
**See DONOR page for Dedications



The Larks donated. How about you?
(illustration by CCC)

ACRES FOR OWLS DONORS

WOOD THRUSH WOODS

MEET WOOD THRUSH WOODS ON THE WHITEFACE!

NEW 41 ACRE PARCEL PROTECTS A UNIQUE FLOODPLAIN FOREST; CANOEING/KAYAKING

You might have listened to the Wood Thrush's ethereal flute-like song at this spot on one of our Warbler Wednesday field trips. These 41 acres bordering the Whiteface River are a beautiful example of riverfront floodplain forest which has some trees not common in the bog including Silver Maple, Basswood, Green Ash, Ironwood and Oak. It attracts birds that are at the northern edge of their range including Wood Thrush, Great Crested Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager and Yellow-throated Vireo. It is a very unique habitat within Sax-Zim.

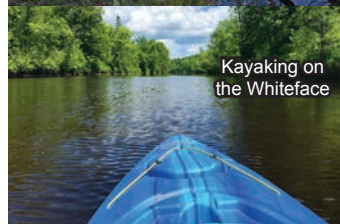
This site is especially conducive to spring/summer/fall exploration and programming. It will be a fine place for picnicking, canoeing, kayaking. Future plans for this site include hiking trails, snowshoe trails, interpretive signage (thanks to a grant from St. Paul Audubon!) and canoe/kayak access to the Whiteface River.

Huge thanks to Arvella Greenway for her very generous donation and the many donors to our Acres for Owls Fund that made this project possible!

[**Note that this parcel is not yet accessible to the public. We want to get our site plan and signage completed first. Watch our website and Facebook page for details and a map in the spring. Thanks for understanding!]



Rare floodplain forest



Kayaking on the Whiteface



Yellow-throated Vireo is one of the rarely seen Sax-Zim birds found here



Several old growth stands of Red Pine dot the property



Aerial view of the property



Warbler Wednesday at Wood Thrush Woods

DONORS APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020 (fiscal year)

\$40,000+

Leuthold Family Foundation

\$10,000-\$20,000

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To support your work in education,
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To support the creation of
Auggie's Bogwalk

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To my Dad who encouraged me
to explore nature and to enjoy
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In memory of Jack Hofslund
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In appreciation of your educational
programming. Thank you Clinton
and Sparky.
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In honor of my dear friend Cathy
Drexler, whose love of birds & all
creatures is an inspiration to me!
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In honor of the DeBoer family
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Thank you for preserving these
lands and providing top notch
naturalist led field trips.
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Greenman

Pamela Myers
Jeffrey Nelson
In honor of Mike Hendrickson:
Without your efforts, I would
never have seen some of the
owls of this special place.
Thanks for your work.
Kate & Frank Nicoletti
Darold & Carolyn Nienhaus
Carole Nimlos
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*We could not survive
without all of you...
Our Bog Buddies!*

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Roger Everhart
Gregg & Joanna Fenton Friesen
Joseph Fierst
Megan Fillmore
Susan Finnla
Bill Flahave
Hope Flanagan
Martha Fleck & Eric Twito
Jennifer Flynn
Thomas Flynn
Steve Fox
Deborah Freedman
Susan & Robert Frei
Ron Funes
Clarke Garry
Gloria Gervais
Sarah Gillaspay
Susan Gillespie
Ann Glumac
Malcolm Gold
J.J. Goodwin
Jane Gottwald
Sarah Govig
Jim Grassinger
Mary Graves
Sherry Gray & David Blaney
Arvella Greenway
Karol Gresser
In honor of the Bloom family

Chris Guida
Austin Gullixson
Jan & Bob Haarman
Thomas Haase
Jerry Hadder & Marie Oakes
Sara Haigh
Mary Margaret Halsey
Sharon Halvorsen
John Hanske
Gary Hanson
Susan Hardy
Peter Harris
Vicki & Kim Harthorn
Jane Hartley Kingston
In memory of John Joseph
Yureitch
Lynn & Dick Hartshorn
Nancy Harvey
Melissa Hein
Chad Heins
Bill & Nancy Henke
Amy Henriksen
Carol Hepokoski
Diane & Patrick Herbert
John Hershey
Pam Hesck
Julie Hessler & Todd Nielsen
Cathy Higgins
Ruth Hilland
Christine Hills
Gerald Hoekstra
Diane Hoese
Mary Hoffman
Andrew Hogg
Dave Holets
Dorothy Holmes
Paul Hosch
Eric Howe & Kristin Wegner
Kathryn Hoyman
Christine Hubert
Barb Huberty
Linda Huhn
Denelle Hygrel
Judy Ilse & Larry Heinis
Ron & Barb Isaacson
Jill Jacoby
Alesia Jamnick
Susie & Steve Jedlund
Kye & Mary Jenkins
Allison & Jeff Jensen
Calvin & Linda Johnson
Deanna Johnson
Douglas Johnson
Joyce Johnson
Judy Johnson
Nancy Johnson
Samantha & Matthew Johnson
Anna & Kirk Joles
Howard Josephs
Amy Juraschek
Jessica Kainz
Laurie Kania & Greg Sliwka
Jan Karon & Warren Howe
William Kass
Kathy Kaul & Cindy Johnson
Brienne Keenan
Lisa Keitel
Betsy Kerr
Rob & Kay Kieval
Dawn King
Steven Kirkhorn
Dave Klein
Bruce Knutsen
Erik Knutsen
Charles Kosek
Susan Kosoris
Kenneth Krahn
Mary Lee Krahn
Ann Kramer
Gene Kremer
Cheryl Krenner
Bert Kritzer
Mary Krohnke
Kristi Krumlauf

Kay & Harry Kuefler
Gordon Kuehne
Robin LaFortune
Val Landwehr
Gustino Lanese
Gary & Sylvia Lanham
Kathy Lapp
Sabrina Lau & Mark Staba
In honor of Mark Johnson
on his birthday
Tony Lau
Paul Lavrakas
Pamela Layton
Lee Charitable Fund
Cathy Leece
Daniel Leger
Milton Legg
Kevin & Nancy Lelle
Larry Leonard
Sherry Leonardo
Jack Leow
Susan Light
Peter Lindstrom
Patrick Lister
Alicia Little
Joseph Lofgren
Donna Long
Micky Louis
Scott & Sara Lounsbury
Paula Lozano
Dedicated to Archimedes
Jo Ann Ludwig
Judy Luetkemeyer
Glen Lundell
Bruce Lunning
Peter Lutz
Michael & Barbara Macioch
Kathy MacKnight
Macy's Matching Gifts
Robin Maercklein
Fran Maki
In honor of Andrea Crouse
David Mancuso
Sonja & Jon Marifke
Lynne & Howard Markus
Rodney Marquardt
Richard & Carolyn Marra
Gary Maschmeyer
Warren & Ann Mathson
In memory of our son,
Jon Mathson
Donn & Kathy Mattsson
Robert & Linda Mazanec
Diane McCarthy
Barbara McCauley
Chris McDonald
Catherine McGinnis
Linda McGouirk
Pamela McInnes & Kevin Lee
Diane Meiborg
Susan Meisner
Linda & Kevin Meissner
Patricia Melling
Tim Metcalf
Barbara & Tom Meyer
Karl Meyer
Krista Meyer
Terry & Sue Meyer
Daria Miklavcich
Melinda Miller
Minnesota River Valley
Audubon Chapter
Mark Moilanen
Jennifer Montilino
Jeff Moravec
Michelle Muhich
Edward Mullaney
James Muller
Darby Murphy & Heriberto
Verdugo
Jessica Murray
Deborah Muzzy & Deb Griffith
Dan Neff
Eric Nelson

Steve Nesbitt
Alan Netland
Gerald & Bonnie Niemi
Devon Novy
Diane & Mark Ochs
Kevin O'Connor
Michael Oetken
Jeanne O'Gorman
Tim Oksiuta
Gail Olson
Manley Olson
Jon Osier
Kathryn Palmer
Maddy Papermaster
Jan Paradise
Craig Parsons
Rachel Paseka
Karen Pauls
Virginia Pear
Paige Peline
Sil & Ed Pembleton
Brandon Percival
Autumn Perkins
Alan Peterson
F Robert Peterson
Jim Peterson
Pfizer
James Phillips
Tanya Platz-Sandberg
Julie & Robert Pink
Gary & Laura Pipenhagen
Janet Polansky
Marcia Pratt
Terry Proescholdt
Michael Prokosch
Scott & Faye Propsom
Jerry Pruett
Jodi Puff
Caryl Radatz
Emily Raleigh
Anthony Randazzo
Joel & Joleen Randolph
Sam & Diana Rankin
Jeff & Mary Ranta
Gary Rauvola
Sushma Reddy
John Reed
Steve & Rita Reischel
Becca Reiss
Cory Reynolds
Mark Rhodes
Eliot Ricciardelli
Marietta & Steve Rice
Liz Richards
Diane & Ricco Riihluoma
Annette & Tim Riley
Dan & Laurie Roberts
Donna Rogers
Sandy Roggenkamp
Lanae Ronchetti
Root River Photography
Robert & Susan Rose
Alexander Rothman
Phyllis Ruper
Jeff Ryan
Rita Ryan & Gale Havrilla
Connie & Mike Sabetti
Alan Samuelson
JES Avanti Foundation, Inc
Kyle Sandersen
Russ & Rita Sandstrom
Lana Schaffer
Linda Schave
Joel Schmidt & Amanda Raetzman
Lynne & Arthur Schoenborn
Steve Schon
John Schroeder
Christine Schwegman
Nancy Schweitzer
Bill Schwen
Jeri Schwerin
Daniel Scolaro
Brian Scott
Linda Seifert

Colleen Sharkey
Kirk Shillinglaw
Ed & Jane Sibley
Dena Sievert
Scott Slocum
Gary & Jan Small
David & Stacey Smith
Deborah Smith
Annemarie Solon
Lynne Somers
Jim Soupir
Linda Sparling
Dean & Linda Squires
Jay Steele
Dana Sterner
R Clay Stiles
John & Judy Sullivan
Linda Sventek
In honor of Sally &
Peter Grames
Sandra Swanson
Suzanne Swanson
Michael Sweet
Ron & Carolyn Taube
Jim Taylor
Will Taylor
Kyle Te Poel
Carol Temple
Mark & Debra Thurlo
Sandy Tighe
Mark & Peggy Timmerman
Carol Tollman
Sharon Traen
Jason Traver
Dawn Trexel
Martha Troolin
Robyn Tryggseth
Jerry & Renee Tschida
Eva Turner
In memory of Lorraine Rosati
Dennis & Anne Twiss
Abbie & Dave Valine
Joan VanGorp
Nicole Vasquez
John Vidmar
Josh Vineyard
Cathy Wagner
Sheila Walker
William & Sylvia Walker
Kim Waltman & Cindy Kenus
Don Wanschura
Liz Wanschura
Robin & Marvin Warburton
Carol & Peter Waselk
Justin Watts
David Weaver
Robbyn Weaver
Casey Weissburg
Randy Wendel
Charlotte Wenger
Laura Wentz
William Wermerskirchen
Debra & Jack Werner-Kelln
Em Westerlund
Steve Weston
Robin Whaley
Ron & Lisa White
Sara Whitehead
Boak Wiesner
Sarah Wilcox
Tom Will
Pat Willenbring
Mary Willert
Mary Williams
Janet Woehrl
Patricia Wolesky
Jerry & Vicky Wotczak
Joe Wujcik
Laurie Young
Marie Young
Laura Yrjanson
Linda Zaletel
Leah Zook
Susan Zwierko

SOCIAL DISTANCING & BIOBLITZ VIII

RECORD NUMBER OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THIS VIRTUAL EVENT

For the 8th year in a row there has been a Bog BioBlitz and each event brings us a better understanding of the biodiversity in the Sax-Zim Bog. Due to that pesky pandemic, participants went in the field alone or in small groups of friends, but we still called on our field trip leaders from prior bioblitzes to come out and find species in their respective fields: lichens (Joan Hunn), butterflies (Jerry McCormick), nocturnal moths (Clinton & Kristina Dexter-Nienhaus; Jason Heinen & Katie Stedman), insects and spiders (Chad Heins), flora (Kelly Beaster). Thanks to all!



Bog BioBlitz IX tentatively set for July 17, 2021

We also expanded the bioblitz to four days to give folks time to get into the field and record their data to iNaturalist (search "inaturalist sax-zim bioblitz 8" to see the species photos).

So, how many species did we document during Sax-Zim Bog BioBlitz VIII? With an extended observation period, iNaturalist use and all of our intrepid participants, we documented 730 species! In this tally, we added 135 new species to our Master Species List and documented roughly 36% of our entire species list! Wow...Can you say "bogdiversity?!"



Lesser Rattlesnake Plantain



A first record for Minnesota found by Chad Heins! Cantrall's Wolf Spider



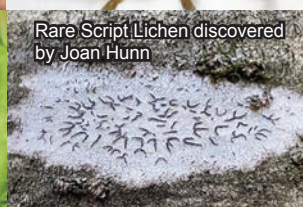
Woodsy Thyme Moss by Joan Hunn



Sparky got a "three-fer": Bee Fly, Goldenrod Crab Spider & Brown-eyed Susan



Black Swallowtail at the north edge of its range (Chad Heins)



Rare Script Lichen discovered by Joan Hunn



Purplish Ghost Moth found by Clinton & Kristina



Jason Heinen and Katie Stedman found this rare Zigzag Darter

AUGGIE'S BOGWALK

YOKEL FAMILY MEMORIAL FOR BABY AUGUSTUS FETH

A new 360-foot bogwalk was built in the memory of Augustus James Feth and funded by the Ben & Heidi Yokel family. Augustus's great grandfather Bob Briski has been carving little wood owls to give away to those who walk to the end of Auggie's Bogwalk. He asks that you sign your name on the sheet in the box. It is a wonderful memorial project.

Auggie's Bogwalk at Fringed Gentian Bog winds through an alder swale (look for Bottle Gentian in late summer) to the trailhead of a walking/snowshoe trail that loops through a Black Spruce bog. Look for the arch sign with the Golden-winged Warbler along Fermoy Road north of Zim Road (see the Birding map on our website for the location of Fringed Gentian Bog).



Pick up your memorial "Auggie Owl" at the end of the boardwalk



The boardwalk is 360 feet long, and a snowshoeing and hiking trail continues into the bog

2020 SAX-ZIM BOG WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The Live Owl show for the local Meadowlands area residents is always a hit



Meeting a live Saw-whet Owl

Finnish pasties are always a treat after a long cold day of birding



BOG BIOBLITZ VIII

AUGGIE'S BOGWALK

BOREAL BIRD ADVENTURE WORKSHOP

TEN FOLKS CAME FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY...CALIFORNIA, CONNECTICUT, NEW YORK

Building on the success of our first Boreal Bird Adventure in 2019, we decided to offer two workshops in 2020, both led by Head Naturalist Clinton and volunteer naturalist Kristina Dexter-Nienhaus. The goal of these 2-day field excursions is to find and learn about the many boreal forest birds and winter specialties of northern Minnesota. Our first day of the Boreal Bird Adventures found us exploring the Sax-Zim Bog and on day 2 we explored the under-birded bogs and forests around Cook, MN. Participants in the two workshops hailed from across the country: Rhode Island, New York, California, Illinois, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

No two days of birding in Northern Minnesota are ever the same. This sentiment rings true when applied to our Boreal Birds Adventure Weekends! Our second Boreal Birds Adventure weekend of 2020 was completed in February and our intrepid group of 9 sought boreal specialties in rain and snow in very mild February weather.

Aside from great conversations and laughter, the groups also experienced some amazing boreal birds including Great Gray Owl, 4 Northern Hawk Owls (!), Boreal Owl (!!), Barn Owl (!!!), Boreal Chickadee, two Black-backed Woodpeckers (drumming, calling, displaying!), American Three-toed Woodpecker, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Northern Goshawk, Northern Shrike and Black-billed Magpie. Porcupine and Snowshoe Hare too!

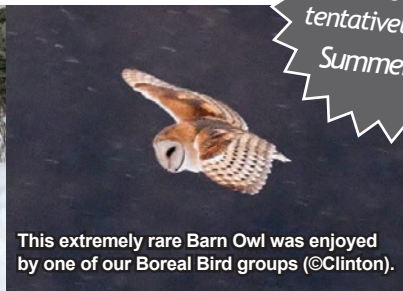
Boreal
Bird Workshops
tentatively set for
Summer 2021



The group enjoys TWO Black-backed Woodpeckers



Clinton and Kristina Dexter-Nienhaus (front) led both Boreal Bird Adventure Workshops



This extremely rare Barn Owl was enjoyed by one of our Boreal Bird groups (©Clinton).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER SURVEYS

FOSZB NATURALIST JASON HEINEN FINDS NEARLY 100 ACTIVE GOLDENWING TERRITORIES!

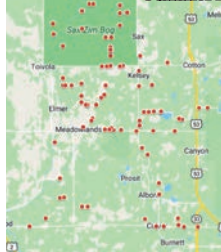
Golden-winged Warbler is a species of Conservation Concern and is currently listed as Near Threatened by the IUCN. Although Minnesota represents a stronghold for their global population during the breeding season, these birds have lost an estimated 22% of their nesting habitat in the Great Lakes region since the 1960s (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2013).

During our survey period, approximately 250 miles were surveyed by car, and 96 singing males were documented. This translates to roughly one territory every 2.6 miles. As expected, territories primarily occurred where more mature mixed forests met early successional growth and open, wet shrublands. Grassy roadside and railroad buffer strips were also common locations for males to set up territories.

By expanding our knowledge of this species in the Sax-Zim and compiling future data for years to come, we will be in a position to aid in conservation of this important species. We should also be able to expand education and outreach opportunities through training and experience for seasonal field researchers, volunteers and school groups.

—Jason Heinen

96 Singing male Goldenwings
Summer 2020



Fledgling Golden-winged Warbler
© Jason Heinen



Welcome Center Host & Naturalist Jason Heinen surveying Goldenwings



WHAT BIRDS MIGRATE OVER THE BOG?

NEW MOTUS TOWER NEAR WELCOME CENTER MAY HELP US ANSWER THAT QUESTION

MOTUS towers track bird movements by picking up signals put out by transmitters fitted to banded birds. There is an international network of these towers, which helps track migration at a large scale. There are already many towers along the North Shore of Lake Superior and hopefully we can add more to the Sax-Zim Bog in future years.

Thanks to Bog Buddies Sharra & Eric Brockman for donating to our Science & Research Fund to make this project a reality! Our researchers are Steve Kolbe and Dr. Alexis Grinde of Duluth's Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI).

No pings off the tower yet, but the NRRI is hoping to implement some bird tracking projects in the near future. You too can donate to our Research Fund.



BOREAL BIRD ADVENTURES

SCIENCE IN THE BOG

CLINTON'S CORNER



Clinton (front center) and his wife Kristina led this awesome group of birders during our Boreal Birds Adventure Weekend in January

I look forward to writing this season recap every year as it gives me a chance to look back on the year's programs and field trips. It also gives me a chance to be grateful for all the awesome folks who support environmental education in the Sax-Zim Bog.

A Wonderful Winter: The winter education season was wonderful. Statistically it was the best education season we have had to date with field trip and program attendees and education corner users totaling over 1600! As an educator, I was thrilled with the numbers of folks coming out in the cold, wintery landscapes of the Sax-Zim Bog for learning purposes!

NOT a normal year: Things changed dramatically in March 2020, not just for us, but for everyone. The COVID-19 pandemic removed the possibility of in-person education for the 2020 Spring and Summer season. Choosing to cancel programs was an easy decision and the right choice. Of course, it is hard not having face-to-face education programs, but safety of our visitors is more important. We have tried to make the best of a bad situation and got creative on how we "do education" in the Sax-Zim Bog.

Virtual Field trips via Clinton's Bog-ventures videos. In place of spring and summer education field trips, the Clinton's Bog-ventures series was started and continues to showcase the non-avian diversity of the Sax-Zim Bog. These videos may act as a replacement for in person field trips, but I also hope they give folks an insight to the Sax-Zim Bog's biodiversity that might not otherwise get observed. To date, these videos (and Sparky's) have racked up nearly 15,000 views! You can find links to all of these videos and more by visiting the "Videos" tab on our website.

We will see you all soon...I hope. I hope everyone has been able to glean a few interesting insights from the virtual field trips we have compiled. I look forward to the time when it is safe to have in-person and in-the-field educational opportunities. Until that time, I will be hosting online educational Webinars via Zoom. Topics will range from winter tracks and geology to owls, citizen science and biodiversity (see opening spread for dates).



****NEW VIDEO SERIES!** Have you seen that we have SEVEN episodes of Clinton's Bog-ventures? These are mini-field trips with Clinton. Check it out on YouTube or at saxzim.org under the "Videos of Sax-Zim" tab. You can also search YouTube for "Clinton's Bog-ventures."

KESTREL NEST BOX PROGRAM 2020

What an exciting year for the American Kestrel Nest Box Project! This marks the 5th year that boxes have been monitored and chicks have been banded in the Sax-Zim Bog.

In 2020 we had the greatest number of occupied boxes of any season (17), chicks fledged from a record number of boxes (15), we banded the most chicks in one season (61), and documented a nest box with 7 eggs produced!

Our data is shared with the American

Kestrel Partnership (in association with the Peregrine Fund). We join 1670 other partners and 3,750 other registered nest boxes. All of us are working to collaboratively understand American Kestrel demographics and advance kestrel conservation.

This project wouldn't be possible without Frank and Kate Nicoletti who placed the initial boxes in the Sax-Zim Bog.

****If you'd like to volunteer as a nest box monitor, please contact Sarah at info@saxzim.org.**

Thanks to Program Coordinator Frank Nicoletti. Much appreciated were the hours put in by the volunteer nest monitors and banding helpers: Kristina Dexter-Nienhaus, David Alexander, Mary Gabrys, Jean Elton-Turbes and Sarah, Camilla, Emelyn and Grace Beaster.



Clinton "on location" filming an episode of Clinton's Bog-ventures with his new friend




Patently waiting their turn to be banded

A donation of \$500 will support a week of naturalist education

2020 GALA—BIRDING BLIND, BIRDING THE WORLD

LEGALLY-BLIND BIRDER MICHAEL HURBEN SHARES HIS WORLDWIDE ADVENTURES

 Our 6th Annual Friends of Sax-Zim Bog Boreal Wings Gala flew into Fridley in January with a flurry of fun. The Tiny Bird Art auction was a great success and we tripled our dollars raised over previous years. Jeffrey Saffle's wood marquetry Pileated Woodpecker went for \$500!

**Tiny
Bird Art
Auction is
ONLINE in
2021**

Keynote speaker Michael Hurben entertained the crowd with tales of his southeast Asia "Global Working Big Year." Michael is legally blind and part of his talk was about overcoming these limitations in travel and birding, but the majority of his talk was sharing interesting and hilarious stories about birding adventures in remote locations. Lots of great photos and funny stories. [During that 2018 Big Year he donated \$5 for every species seen during the first six months...This amounted to a whopping \$6,170 donation to FOSZB. Thanks Michael!]

Sparky updated the members on some exciting new projects coming in this summer and fall. Warren Woessner of Bog Boardwalk fame read us five of his new poems from his new book.

Our super salesman 11-year old Brady wrote a Sax-Zim Bog version of the 12 days of Christmas and his grandfather Gene who is on our board read it for the group. Brady is the future of this organization! And did I mention the fun conversations, laughter and great appetizers?

Thanks to our awesome board and volunteers who helped make this event a success!



Michael Hurben speaking to a full house



Michael birding in Sax-Zim (note Great Gray in background)

See Michael's photos at legallyblindbirding.net



The Silent Auction of Tiny Bird Art has become a regular, and very popular feature of our January Gala. The range of bird art created by our Bog Buddies is astounding...What a talented bunch! We raised nearly \$5,000 in the auction this year. Our members also came through by financially supporting some of our scientific research projects and sponsoring several acres of our properties. Thanks to all!

SHOP THE SAX-ZIMPORIUM!

2021 BOG WILD CALENDAR, NEW JACKETS, TS, TOTES: SEE "SHOP" TAB ON OUR WEBSITE

Our popular calendar is hot off the press! Over 90 stunning photos and all taken in the Bog in the last 12 months!

Calendar Only...\$15; Calendar + Membership...\$40



BOREAL WINGS GALA

THE SAX-ZIMPORIUM

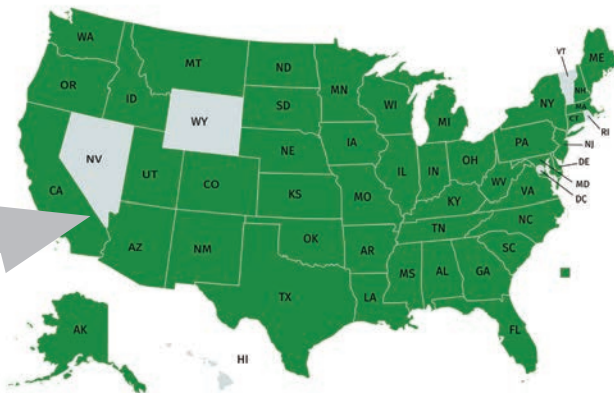
VISITORS

5,559

Visitors to the Welcome Center
in the winter of 2019-20

...from **45** states & **14** foreign countries
Australia, Columbia, Estonia, India, Russia & more

After Minnesota, most visitors came from
Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan & Texas.



2019



Thanks to a wonderful matching
grant of

**\$10,000 from
Warren Woessner &
Iris Freeman**

you helped us raise a good portion
of our operating expenses during Give to the Max Day 2019.

\$39,621

given in 24 hours by...

264 DONORS



1600+

visitors contacted
during winter 2019-20
field trips, workshops,
programs, etc

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH



15,000

views on YouTube of our
Virtually Live and Clin-
ton's Bog-ventures field
trip videos.

\$363,344

donated by all of you to...

ACRES FOR OWLS

since we began the program in 2013
—Thank You!

2369

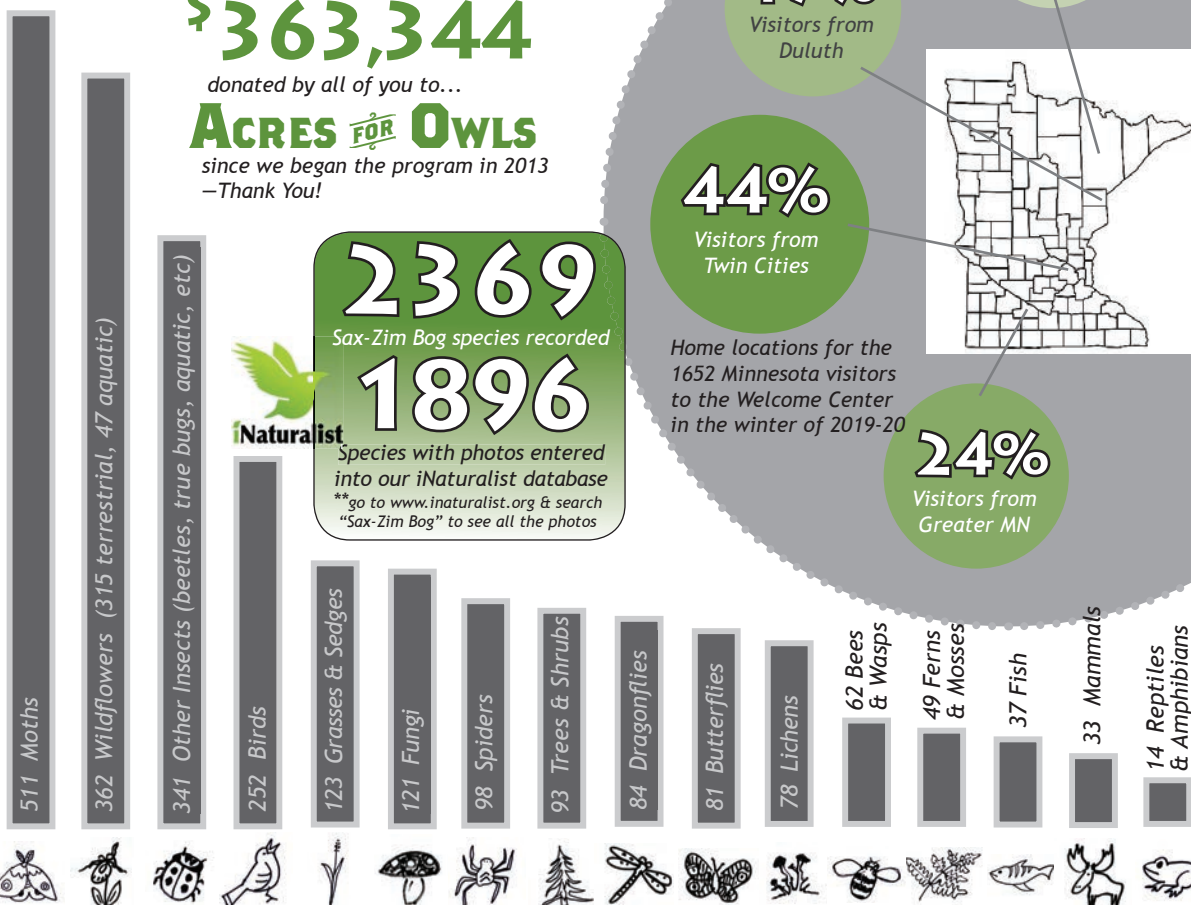
Sax-Zim Bog species recorded

1896



Species with photos entered
into our iNaturalist database

**go to www.inaturalist.org & search
"Sax-Zim Bog" to see all the photos



Number of species recorded in our Sax-Zim Bog Master List database

BY THE NUMBERS

17%

Visitors from
Duluth

15%

Visitors from
Iron Range

44%

Visitors from
Twin Cities

24%

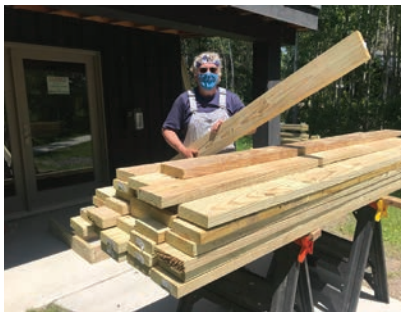
Visitors from
Greater MN



Home locations for the
1652 Minnesota visitors
to the Welcome Center
in the winter of 2019-20

BOG BUDDIES AT WORK & PLAY 2019-20

BOG BUDDIES AT WORK & PLAY



Masked Mark Johnson sorts lumber



Clean-up crew for our 2-mile Adopt-a-Highway stretch



Ribbon-cutting event for Auggie's Bogwalk at the Fringed Gentian Bog



Moritmer the Moose—Guardian of the Welcome Center



Board Member Rubin Stenseng with his "Auggie Owl"



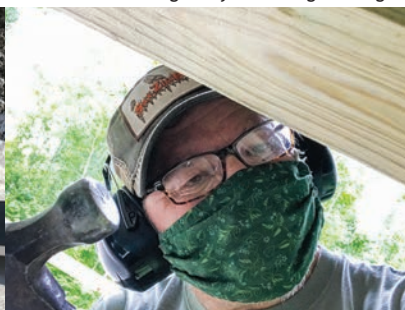
What's better than a winter picnic at the Welcome Center during a day of birding the Bog?



Welcome Center Host/Naturalist Jason Heinen shares info with Bog visitors



Mark Johnson (left), Moritmer Moose (middle) and John "Herm" Closterman (right)



Sparky works safely on the boardwalk frames for the Bob Russell Bogwalk



Board Member Gene Ollila with a unique way to haul bog feet for the Bob Russell Bogwalk



An Ermine entertained Welcome Center visitors as it fed on a deer rib cage for several weeks



Fast and furious bidding at our Tiny Bird Art Silent Auction at our January Gala



Tim Bates participates in the "Wintergreen" non-motorized division of our BRRRRdathon



Mark Johnson (Welcome Center Host/Naturalist) and two of our 5,000+ visitors last winter



Development Director Sarah Beaster and Welcome Center Naturalist Mark Johnson work on the Bob Russell Bogwalk

Viceroy on aster



The superstar Ermine at the Welcome Center



Wasp's-nest Slime mold (Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus)



American Three-toed Woodpecker at Winterberry Bog (Jason Heinen)



Any Great Gray Owl or Northern Hawk Owl sighting is a Bog highlight, but watching Sharp-tailed Grouse dancing on a lek is truly something special to watch. The Boreal Owl has been elusive for me and that would be on my "Most Wanted" list for Sax-Zim.

Having worked in land management for 28 years, I understand the need to have a portion of wild land responsibly managed for its natural resources, but it is equally important to preserve and protect areas in their natural state. Friends of Sax-Zim Bog are not only doing great work for today by providing each of us an opportunity to enjoy the bog in its natural state, they are proving the same opportunity for future generations, which is ever so critical in these days of constant pressure to modify the landscape.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Eric Gdula

Formerly from Washington, Eric is a relative newcomer to Minnesota's North Woods. He works with the US Forest Service in Duluth and volunteers at the Welcome Center.



Hoarfrosted aspens along CR229



Meadow Fritillaries (Jason Heinen)



The cute and cuddly Boreal Jumper



Damselfly shadow (Jason Heinen)



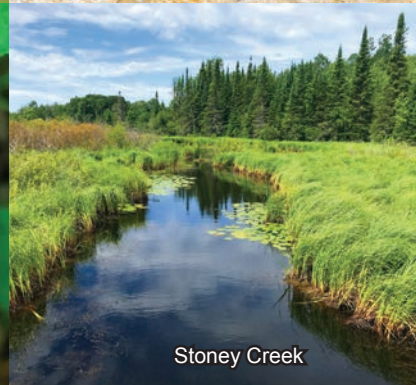
Striped Coralroot (Rubin Stenseng)



Fringed Gentian along McDavitt



Stoney Creek



DONOR PROFILE

Lois & Dick King

Not one but two bog acres have been preserved by Lois and Dick. Their long-time support is greatly appreciated!



Our Bog favorites are the Boreal Chickadees, also Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks and of course the Great Gray Owls. We were up at Mary Lou's feeders one cold snowy February day and met some Texas folks who were so excited to have seen a Hairy Woodpecker. We realized that although some birds are very common to us, they are life birds to birders from other places. We are still hoping to get our first Boreal Owl and Saw-whet Owl sightings.

We think it's important to support Friends of Sax-Zim Bog to protect the fragile ecosystems of the area. We appreciate that it is being well managed and maintained for the protection of the fauna and flora but also available to the public to enjoy and learn about this natural wonder.



STAFF PROFILE

Jason Heinen

Jason jumped in to be our primary Welcome Center host/naturalist this winter. Check out the 2021 calendar to see some of his awesome photos.

My most memorable experience in Sax-Zim was probably my first visit. I drove up from Oklahoma one February and driving in snow for the first time made travel a real adventure. And although I didn't see a Great Gray Owl, the hoarfrost-covered landscape had a special mystique, and I was blown away by the loads of other charismatic boreal birds.

I'd like to cross paths with a Zebra Clubtail at Sax-Zim. It is one of the *Stylurus* dragonflies (my favorites), and I have yet to see this striking species.

Sax Zim Bog is worth conserving because it has become a sort of virtual meeting place for several generations of folks who travel from all over to enjoy the Bog and who have worked together to help preserve Sax-Zim.



A rare Freija Fritillary found in Toivola Swamp



Wild Turkey Tom on Oyerton



Migrating Snow Bunting



Standing alone in the cathedral of a snow-draped Cedar bog is magical, but topping my list is watching the joy and excitement expressed by visitors who are experiencing the Bog and its treasures for the very first time. I am happy to witness whatever may appear next when I visit the Bog, but perhaps someday I will watch a Short-tailed Weasel hunt or a Bobcat slinking through the cedars.

Friends of Sax-Zim Bog serves as an ambassador for the Bog. They are also the paladins, the protectors, of an area that many people had viewed as wasteland. Bogs are among the rarest ecosystems in the United States, and ultimately the land acquisitions of Friends ensure that a unique community of organisms will continue to thrive, from the smallest Sundew to the Great Gray Owl.

DONOR PROFILE

Kelly Larson & Carl Newman

In addition to the pair's generous financial contributions, Kelly has been a longtime guide for the Festival, and is the one who provides us with deer rib cages each winter.



Golden Shiner (Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus)



Thick-headed Fly



Aptly-named Golden Sedge



Boreal Owl at Admiral Rd feeders



Tiger Moth (Jason Heinen)



LeConte's Sparrow and Joe Pye Weed Sax WMA



Moonrise along CR7

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal Year 2019-2020

April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020

REVENUE	FY 19-20	
Individual Gifts	\$163,315	60%
Foundation Grants	\$52,000	18%
Merchandise Sales	\$32,251	12%
Events & Programs	\$20,680	8%
Corporate Matches	\$4,486	2%
TOTAL	\$272,732	

EXPENSES

Program	\$161,057	78%
Administration	\$39,517	19%
Fundraising	\$6,253	3%
TOTAL	\$206,826	
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$65,906	

BALANCE SHEET

March 31, 2020

ASSETS	3-31-2020
Cash (incl. liquid assets)	\$389,685
Other/Savings	\$6,936
Fixed Assets	\$525,249
TOTAL ASSETS	\$921,870
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	\$4,065
Restricted Net Assets	\$135,367
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$782,438
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$921,870



Sarah Beaster
Development Director



Lori Williams
Board Chair



Rubin Stenseng
Board Member



Heather-Marie Bloom
Welcome Center Naturalist



Jason Heinen
Welcome Center Naturalist



Ben Yokel
Board Member



Julie Ollila
Board Member-Secretary



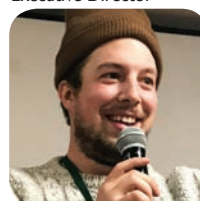
Sparky Stensaas
Executive Director



Gene Ollila
Board Member



Amy Johnson
Welcome Center Naturalist



Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus
Head Naturalist



Mark Dudek Johnson
Welcome Center Naturalist

These people get serious work done! They are diligent and hard-working, responsible and cohesive. A terrific team.

All of us share a deep concern for this special place and its inhabitants. We will continue to uphold our mission as we move forward to Preserve and Protect the Sax-Zim Bog.

—Lori Williams, Board Chair



Dave Steinger
Board Member-Treasurer



Scan to go right to our website

CONTACT US
Friends of Sax-Zim Bog
PO Box 3585
Duluth, MN 55803
218.341.3350 (Sparky)
info@saxzim.org
www.saxzim.org



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