

A detailed illustration of a Rough-legged Hawk in flight, shown from a side-on perspective. The hawk's wings are fully extended, revealing intricate feather patterns and dark spots on the primary feathers. Its body is brown and streaked, with a lighter-colored head and a sharp, hooked beak. The background is a vibrant blue sky filled with numerous small, white, star-like speckles, suggesting a bright, clear day.

2024

*Preserving & Protecting
the Greater Sax-Zim Bog*

Sax-Zim Bog

Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*) by Karl Bardon



Sparky Stensaas
Founder & Executive Director

Sax-Zim is YOUR Bog!

Disney World...Really? Our 1,010 acre purchase in 2024 pushed us over the 25,000 acres preserved mark. That is about the same size as Disney World, equal to 18,906 Football fields, 6.5 Bobcat territories, larger than 5 National Parks and all of Minnesota's state parks except two. Wow! YOUR Bog is growing and all your donations are creating a Forever Home for Great Gray Owls, Connecticut Warblers and all boreal critters. Thank you!

Magnificent Mile fully protected

2024's land purchases protected the west side of the McDavitt Road bog stretch nicknamed the "Magnificent Mile" where we put in a feeding station of the same name. At the end of a 1200-foot walk from the south logging road parking pad you'll find an array of feeders that will definitely attract winter finches, and possibly Boreal Chickadees and Pine Marten. This feeder and trail is marked on our 2025 Birding Map.

That's a GOOD problem!

You will notice that we had to add an extra half page of donors this year. And that is certainly a "problem" I can live with! Our Bog Buddies keep us moving forward in striving to accomplish our Mission to Preserve & Protect the Greater Sax-Zim Bog. Without all of you, none of this would be possible. Over 75% of our support comes from individuals like you.

September in Sax-Zim?

For the first time ever we decided to have the Welcome Center open in September, and it was a good decision. Over 1500 folks stopped in from June through September to say Hi, ask questions, check out our displays, and hike Taiga Boardwalk and Gray Jay Way.

LIVE & On the Air

Thanks to a very generous donation from Bog Buddies Melissa and Tish of Moving Wild Photography in North Carolina, we now have a LIVE feeder cam at the Welcome Center. Scan the QR code on this page to check it out.

A Year at a Beaver Pond

Have you ever heard of Bobcats hunting Raccoons? Or seen Timber Wolves playing with sticks? How about a Beaver felling a tree? We have placed 5 trail cameras around a single remote Beaver pond to record all the fascinating action. Videos can be found under the "videos" tab on our website. Don't miss the adorable Bobcat triplets, wolf pups and more!

Great Gray Peatland

This is the name we've given to the 20,000 acre bog on the east side of CR7. This massive and contiguous tract connects to thousands more of our acres on the west side of CR7, continuing west beyond McDavitt Road (see map on this page).



Great Gray Peatland is the name for our vast 20,000 acre tract east of CR7. It is mostly inaccessible (to humans) but a Forever Home for owls & warblers.

New Associate Director

You probably already know her... Sara Blanck was recently promoted and will be taking on new and challenging duties. Besides keeping the "FOSZB ship" afloat and headed in the right direction, Sara also completed the North Sax-Zim History brochure and produced multiple Artist Profiles for our Facebook page/group. FOSZB is blessed with an amazing staff and enthusiastic Board!

What's Next?

We will never stop in our quest to create Forever Homes for all boreal critters. To that end, we will be starting Phase 1 of a new land acquisition project in 2025 by cherry-picking bog lands to save. Priority will be given to connecting existing parcels to expand our Owls & Warblers Critical Corridor. This may take several years to accomplish and \$300,000 more will need to be raised. Exciting!

—Sparky Stensaas, Executive Director



Tune in to our new LIVE Feeder Cam! It will record our Welcome Center feeders daily through the winter. Comment and let us know when something cool shows up!



Your Name on an Acre with \$999+ Gift
*Raising \$300,000 towards next purchase



A new driving tour brochure showcasing history of the Northern Sax-Zim Bog is now available! You can find it on our website or pick one up at the Welcome Center.



Closer Look at... WARREN NELSON BOG



This wonderfully diverse 120-acre parcel has been preserved thanks to Judd Brink, Dick & Mary Brainerd, Gordon Andersson and all the wonderfully generous friends of Warren Nelson.

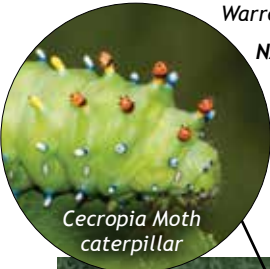
ACTIVITIES AT SITE: Birding, photography, walking, botanizing, all can be enjoyed at this site. Bird feeders along the 1000-foot Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk in winter attract Canada Jays, nuthatches, redpolls and more. Year-round Porta-potty.

NAMESAKE: This bog is named in memory of legendary birder and all-around nice guy, Warren Nelson of Aitkin County, Minnesota. Warren was a pioneer in bog birding and helped hundreds to see Yellow Rails and Great Grays. In 2017 Warren Woessner donated money for his legacy 1000-foot bog boardwalk at this site.

FLORA & FAUNA: Black-backed Woodpeckers, Snowshoe Hares, White-winged Crossbills & Bobcat; Pink Ladyslippers in June.

If you explore Warren Nelson Memorial Bog and have an interesting sighting, email Head Naturalist Clinton at naturalist@saxzim.org with your report. Check out the species documented for this property on iNaturalist.org.

LOCATION: Address is 7750 Blue Spruce Road just north of CR133.



Cecropia Moth caterpillar



Ostrich Fern



Snowshoe Hare



Black-backed Woodpecker



Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk



All Friends of Sax-Zim Bog parcels become Forever Homes for Owls & Warblers

Thanks to your generous giving we were able to purchase and protect an additional **1,010 ACRES** in the last year. FOSZB is now protecting over **25,000 ACRES** of prime Black Spruce & Tamarack bog (See details of our latest purchase on page 11)



3,750,000

Metric Tons of Carbon Captured on FOSZB peatlands*

A study by The Conservation Fund found that wetlands store 81 to 216 metric tons of carbon per acre, depending on their type and location.



PROTECTING BOGS IN SAX ZIM PRESERVES A MAJOR CARBON SINK FOR THE PLANET

Think Globally, Act Locally

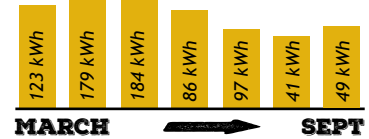
It All Adds Up

7,279



visitors came through the Welcome Center in the winter of 2023-24; Additionally 1,572 more folks stopped by from June through Sept 2024.

SOLAR POWER GENERATED and SOLD back to the power company!



WE NOW ARE STEWARDS OF 25,000 ACRES, WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO...

- ❖ 18,906 football fields
- ❖ 6.5 Bobcat territories
- ❖ Size of Disney World
- ❖ Bigger than all of MN's state parks except two
- ❖ Larger than 5 national parks



GTMD 2023

You helped us raise this much during Give to the Max Day.

\$29,282

given during GTMD period by...

307 Donors



FOSZB YEARLY REVENUE

- Food at WC
- Picnic tables
- Heated bathrooms
- More programs
- Longer hiking trails
- More interpretive signage
- Welcome Center open more
- More outhouses across Sax-Zim
- Better parking at trailheads
- More bog boardwalks

Least Important ↑
↓ Most Important

\$1 Million+

donated by all of you for land preservation since 2013. Wow! 25,000 acres preserved.

149,920

Virtually Live field trip views



3,802

Sax-Zim Bog species recorded

3,334

Species with photos entered into our iNaturalist database

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

2,055

Webinar & online program views

7,252

Clinton's Bog-ventures video views



VIRTUAL OUTREACH

21,718

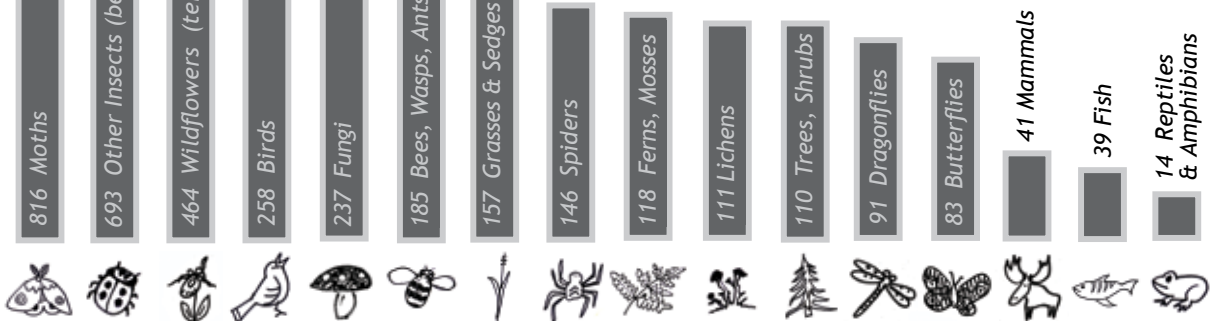
Clinton's Critters video views

Scan for links to ALL videos



What is your "Wish List" for Sax-Zim Bog?

*Data from 2021 FOSZB Survey



Number of species recorded in our Sax-Zim Bog Master List database (**some categories not shown in bar graph)

Bog Buddies at Work & Play 2023-24



This is what it's all about! Getting out and exploring one of our most unique habitats—the magical and mysterious bogs.



Longtime Bog Buddies and Massachusetts birders stop in for a visit.



Young, enthusiastic and our future! No, not Sparky... Asher and Ari from Tennessee!



Sax-Zim is one of the most accessible birding sites in all of North America.



Mother-Daughter birding! Volunteer Eileen with her daughter Annette enjoy a winter day.



Evening Grosbeak researchers Mallory and David from Pennsylvania release a satellite-tracked bird.



Auggie's Owls never fail to put a smile on visitors' faces; including our FinnFest group.



Smiling photographers enjoying the Admiral Road feeders and their birds.



You're never too old to enjoy the Bog! 101-year old Howard with his son Bruce.



Live-Streaming Feeder-Cam guru, Dennis O'Hara volunteering his time to get us live & on-the-air.



Bog Buddies Mary Ward, Bette Lawler and Barb Ferguson donated for this Red Crossbill tile.



Does Mark like Great Gray Owls?



Hundreds of "bog feet" need to be moved, and Volunteer Rick has it under control.



What other Boards and Staff LOVE to bond over garbage! Our bi-annual litter clean-up of CR133.

Donors APRIL 2023 to MARCH 2024 (fiscal year)

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On behalf of artists who battle
effects of years of betrayal.
Keep at it the battle is worth it!
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John Zakelj

\$100-\$499

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She loved birds.
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Copper!
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For all his fantastic
contributions to Sax-Zim
and birding!
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In memory of Allen Loken—
May your spirit continue to
fly among the birds you
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 the young birds and for us
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We could not thrive
without all of you...
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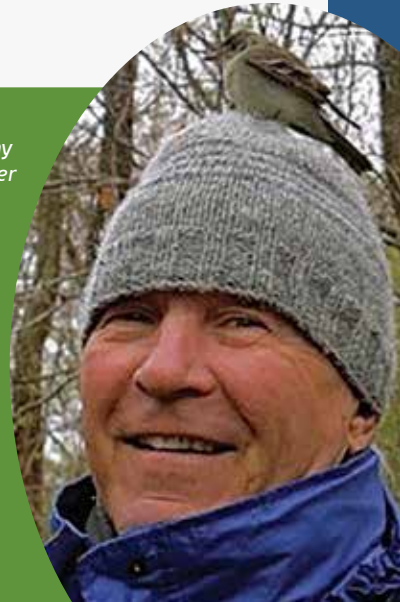
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many folks gave in memory of AL LOKEN
of Duluth. Al was a Bog Buddy for many
years and joined us on multiple Warbler
Wednesday field trips as well as participating
in the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog BRRRRdathon;
World's Coldest Birdathon.

Avid birdwatchers, Al and his wife Kim traveled
from coast to coast, and abroad, to find birds,
including travels to Galapagos, Australia, New
Zealand, and Africa.

He especially reveled in birding trips with
Minnesota Birding Weekends (MBW) and enjoyed
learning from leaders Kim Eckert and Craig
Mandel. He and wife Kim even proudly accom-
plished "a Minnesota Big Year."



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**SUSTAINED
 GIVING HELPS
 US BUDGET**
 1. monthly via card
 2. Required Minimum
 IRA Distribution



12-YEAR DONORS

Myron & Holly Peterson

Our favorite sightings was the American Three-toed Woodpecker at Winterberry Bog in 2020. We tried for it multiple times. The seventh time was the charm; we found the elusive American Three-toed Woodpecker. We've got two mammals on our Bog wish list—Moose and Wolf.

The Sax-Zim Bog is a gem. We've seen many lifer birds in the Bog. We've met a lot of people and made some good friends in the Bog. We want the Sax Zim Bog experience to be available to many people for many years to come. Friends of Sax Zim Bog will make that happen. We are pleased to support this exceptional organization.

Shout out to our most consistent givers!

15 consecutive years
 Dave & Pam Benson

14 consecutive years
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 & become a
 Bog Buddy

We are donor supported

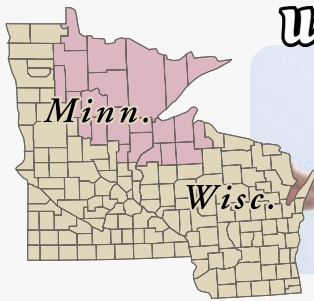
We could not thrive without all of you...
Our Bog Buddies!

SHOP THE SAX-ZIMPORIUM!

2025 Bog Wild Calendar, New Ts & Hats: See "Shop" Tab on our website



WORLD'S COLDEST BIRDATHON



January 3 & 4, 2025
1-day or 2-day events [Details on our website]



Calling All Artists! Tiny Bird Art Auction

Auction will be online beginning January 23, 2025

HOW?: Create an original piece of bird art that measures 6x6", 5x7" or smaller (No exceptions). Any medium except photography. UPLOAD art details and photos ONLINE.

WHAT?: It should be a species that is found in northern Minnesota, but we are flexible. OWLS are always popular (Great Gray, Hawk Owl, Boreal Owl, Saw-whet Owl), but any northern bird is great.

WHEN?: Please UPLOAD INFO and send art to us no later than January 10, 2025

This is a fun and profitable fundraiser...and we LOVE to see all the amazing art from our talented Bog Buddies!. Details at saxzim.org > events > tiny bird art



Volunteers Viki Krikorian (left) and Julie Grahm check in Bog BioBlitz participants

Volunteers!

Our volunteers are crucial to day-to-day operations at the Welcome Center. We are indebted to our Welcome Center hosts and feeder-fillers: Amy Loiselle, Tim Wallace, Jim Sims, Rick Schroeder, Steve Kirkhorn, Lynelle Hanson, Susan Garrett, Mark Hoff, and Kim Driskell. Also a big shout out to volunteers Paul Cherry, Ron Funes, Mary Gabrys, Michele Burlew, John Bauhs, Viki Krikorian, Julie Grahm, Craig Simon, Rich Hoeg, Lucia Marnich, and Patsy Dimas.

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities in the Bog, please email Sara at info@saxzim.org

YOU HELPED US SAVE McDavitt Road's MAGNIFICENT MILE!

9
Reptiles &
Amphibians

16
Lichens
[1 new]

51
Bird
species

54
Fungi
species
[21 new]

84
Moth
species
[6 new]

128
Flora
species
[11 new]

135
Gall, burl
& rust
species
[35 new]

151
Insect
species
[11 new]

Species
found
during
Bog
BioBlitz
XII

1,010 acres added in 2024

Many of you have experienced the MAGIC of McDavitt Road's "Magnificent Mile." Almost every characteristic species of Black Spruce and Tamarack bog—Great Gray Owls, Northern Hawk Owls, Black-backed Woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadees, White-winged Crossbills, and Connecticut Warblers, just to name a few.

Your donations to Friends of Sax-Zim Bog made this 1,010 acre purchase possible in 2024. It also helped in connecting parcels, which is a major goal of our Owls & Warblers Critical Corridor Project. Especially exciting is that this purchase protects the highest density area of Connecticut Warblers in Sax-Zim! Thank you Bog Buddies!

 = Land purchased in 2024



Spotlight on Bogdiversity

BOG BIOBLITZ XII AUG. 24, 2024



Bog
BioBlitz XIII
set for Aug 9,
2025



Our 12th Bog BioBlitz attracted 84 participants who went out on 14 varied field trips across Sax-Zim. 17 folks submitted data to our iNaturalist project. We offered a new field trip: Reptiles & Amphibians with Chris Smith. Check out our Bog Blog at saxzim.org for more photos and details.

During this celebration of "bogdiversity," we tallied 623 species. Of these, 92 were new to our list and put us over 3,700 species in the Greater Sax-Zim Bog! (see sidebar graph for group totals). What an amazing day! See you August 9, 2025.

A special THANK YOU to our field trip leaders!—Kyle Johnson, Kristina Dexter-Nienhaus, Sam Guida, Jonny Tostenson, Tim Craig, Ariel Bonkoski, Haleigh Ziebol, Tanner Barnharst, Emma Ambrosi, Bill Teft, Greg Cleary, Chris Smith, Lori Williams, Jeff Fisher, and Mike Moen.



Amethyst
Deceiver
fungi



21 Blue-spotted Salamanders were found at Wood Thrush Woods during the Bog BioBlitz



Clinton's Corner

Now over 500(!) Kestrel chicks banded

Head Naturalist Clinton with the 500th Kestrel chick to be banded in Sax-Zim Bog.



Donate to our "Yellow Bus Fund" to help school groups join us
GOAL: \$5,000



With the 65 American Kestrel chicks banded this season we topped the 500 milestone! But the season got a slow start as they laid eggs on average a week later than usual. In fact, the two boxes we banded on July 25 constitute the second latest banding dates ever for this project.

A major surprise was the number of birds being eaten by our kestrels. Grasshoppers, dragonflies, and voles normally make up the bulk of their diet in our area, but this year not only were there fewer vole remains in the nest boxes, but a relatively large number of birds, including American Goldfinch, Savannah Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Bobolink, Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Black-capped Chickadee.

We saw our highest number of nesting failures ever for the project (11), highest number of nest predations (6), and the lowest nest success rate ever (65% and only 3.25 chicks/box). Why so many failures? Why were birds predated so much this year? Did the large amounts of rain impact them negatively? Lots of questions!

We are so grateful to our volunteers that do all of the nest checks and data entry! Special thanks to our volunteers Mary Gabrys, Jean Elton-Turbes, Nona Gertz, Sue Wilmes, Jessica Phoenix, Dawn Shold, Brian Scott, Kelly Rundell, Steve Kirkhorn, Josef Hagen, and Jeri Schwerin. Without their time and effort, we would not be able to study and support these amazing birds!

A Hearty "Thank You!"

to our Friday speakers during 2023-2024

- Tero Mustonen
- Larry Weber
- Stephen Nelson
- Kelly Beaster
- Elizabeth Miller
- Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus
- Michael Joyce
- Sparky Stensaas
- Iron Range Resource Center
- Twin Ports Rosemaling Society



Naturalist Clinton sharing the wonder of Sax-Zim at our Education table

2023-24 Educational Outreach

1,570 + 43,217

folks attended Clinton's in-person field trips, workshops & outreach events.

virtual educational interactions via views on YouTube of our videos and webinars.

We welcomed more school groups to the Bog this year than ever before, and were excited to host kids from Harbor City International School (Duluth), Cherry School, Northwoods School in Cook, and even two summer camp groups from the Great Lakes Aquarium! The Lois King Education Center continues to allow us the space for school groups in all seasons and we are thankful to have this amazing space.



Minnesota Master Naturalist aquatics class at Nichols Lake

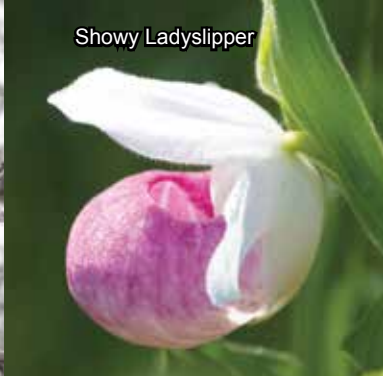
This year we added field trips for those interested in bushwhacking through our underexplored bogs, in-depth outings on Corvids and Plants, and added new field trips to our BioBlitz offerings. In the coming year, I hope to continue adding new field trip offerings and workshops in the Bog. In the coming year I am especially excited to implement some new education opportunities for families when visiting the Bog. We have been building on work done as capstone projects from Minnesota Master Naturalists to increase opportunities for families through activity backpacks, which can be checked out from the Welcome Center! We also recently added a program request form to our website, so you can more easily request field trips, talks, and outreach events at the Welcome Center or virtually. There is a lot to look forward to in the coming year! Until next time, we will see you in the Bog!



Head Naturalist Clinton leads a school group on the new Taiga Boardwalk at the Welcome Center



Barred Owl
Nichols Lake Road



Showy Lady's Slipper



Ruffed Grouse staying warm in below zero temps—McDavitt Road



Evening Grosbeak along McDavitt

Jean is always charged up for finding the Great Gray Owl. My pulse quickens when I am photographing a Boreal Chickadee!

My Most-Wanted bird in Sax-Zim would be the Spruce Grouse! Jean has never seen a Moose, so that is her main "bucket list" Bog resident.

Bogs are such a unique ecosystem. And FOSZB has preserved them, provided access boardwalks, and educated visitors of their importance to various species. A quote from J.J. Audubon, "A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children." We tend to conserve what we love, and tend to love that which we understand, and understand what we have been taught. FOSZB's mission and educational programs help fulfill those objectives.

DONOR PROFILE

Don & Jean Kaddatz

Wow! 14-years in a row Don and Jean have donated to FOSZB. Don has also donated photos to the Bog Wild calendar.



Shamrock Orbweaver
Gray Jay Way



Porcupine eating aspen catkins



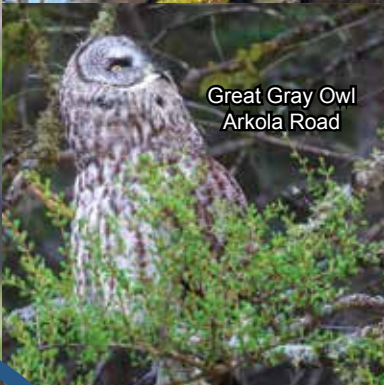
Ermine at Welcome Center



"Steve the Shrike"—Sisu Feeders



Connecticut Warbler
George Road



Great Gray Owl
Arkola Road



Fly Amanita (*Amanita muscaria*)



Short-billed Dowitcher



VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Steve Kirkhorn

Steve is an all-around volunteer, and up for any project that needs to get done!

Watching a Black-backed Woodpecker working over a Black Spruce at eye level 5 to 6 feet away while on Bob Russell boardwalk has been my Bog highlight. I could focus on its behavior close-up for 20 minutes without straining my neck!

Though I have been lucky to see all the owl species, even Boreal Owl, I have yet to see a Red Crossbill.

FOSZB serves a critical role in helping preserve the threatened northern black spruce forest biome through land acquisition and preservation, education, and stewardship. The staff and volunteers spread the word about the importance of maintaining this critical important bird habitat and other species habitat and maybe inspire others to do similar actions in their own area.



DONOR PROFILE

George Soule

George is one of our "Bird Tile Donors." His bird is the Belted Kingfisher

It's always a thrill to see the iconic Great Gray Owl. But my favorite sighting was a Summer Tanager in May 2021 near Stone Lake. I was told it was the first ever sighting of this species in the Bog.

The species I'd most like to see in the Sax-Zim Bog is the Boreal Chickadee!

I love the Bog! The birds make me happy. Friends does such a great job in promoting and preserving Sax-Zim Bog. I want future generations to have opportunities to enjoy the birds and wilderness that the Bog offers.



Short-tailed Weasel in October snow
Admiral Road



Northern Hawk Owl—Byrn's Greenhouse



Yellow Morel at Welcome Center



Blackburnian Warbler

My favorite species in the bog is the White-breasted Nuthatch. I enjoy watching them climb up and down tree trunks, and it always brightens my day to hear their nasally calls.

I would really enjoy seeing a Blue-spotted Salamander. I missed out on seeing them this past summer, but I am hopeful for next year.

I think it's important to support Friends of Sax-Zim Bog because of the hard work they do in regards to both preservation of land and education. They make sure the land is preserved for important species in the area, and provide a ton of information on why the area is unique. They've shown me just how wonderful this place is that I get to call home, and for that I can't thank them enough.

STAFF PROFILE

Rylee

Rylee is a two-winter Welcome Center Host/Naturalist



Black-throated Green Warbler
Zim Recreation Area



Tamaracks in mid October



Pine Marten at Admiral Rd feeders



Green-winged Teal—Stone Lake Rd.



Escapee Northern Bobwhite
along Admiral Road



Oil Beetle (*Meloe* species)
Welcome Center



Great Gray Owl along Overton Road

Financial Statement

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

REVENUE	FY 23-24	
Individual Gifts	\$509,153	77%
Merchandise Sales	\$83,789	12%
Foundation Grants	\$45,000	7%
Events & Programs	\$22,472	3%
Corp. Matches & Int. Inc	\$5,035	1%
TOTAL	\$665,449	

EXPENSES		
Program	\$289,317	76%
Management	\$72,744	19%
Fundraising	\$18,879	5%
TOTAL	\$380,940	
SURPLUS	\$284,510*	

*Capital expenditure on Taiga Boardwalk of \$38,913.
 Operating surplus after expenditure \$245,597

BALANCE SHEET

March 31, 2024

ASSETS	3-31-2024	
Cash (incl. liquid assets)	\$698,227	
Other Current Assets	\$521,078	
Fixed Assets	\$1,351,258	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,570,563	
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities	\$5,888	
Restricted Net Assets	\$343,038	
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$2,221,637	
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$2,570,563	



Sara Blanck
Associate Director



Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus
Head Naturalist



Rubin Stenseng
Board Member



Julie Ollila
Board Member-Secretary



Sparky Stensaas
Executive Director



Gene Ollila
Board Member



Ben Yokel
Board Member



Lori Williams
Board Chair



Dave Steinger
Board Member-Treasurer

THE MESSENGER

Recently I had the opportunity to help another Board Member install trail signs at a new site along McDavitt Road, part of our Owls to Warblers Critical Corridor. Our vision for this contiguous tract is to provide undisturbed habitat for all boreal critters.

As we finished our work, I heard a Black-backed Woodpecker calling from across the road. That beautiful bird at the top of a dead spruce slowly lifted, flew over the two of us and headed down the newly-signed trail.

That woodpecker was not simply a serendipitous sighting; that bird was clearly communicating, delivering a message of gratitude.

As he disappeared down the trail and across the treetops I was left with a deepened appreciation for the efforts of our staff, volunteers, and Board Members. We continue to strive together to dutifully respect and protect this important habitat.

Next time you encounter a Black-backed Woodpecker in the Sax-Zim Bog, please take a moment to join us in gratefully acknowledging the land.

—With deep gratitude,
 Lori Williams, Board Chair



Scan to go right to our website

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Get up to date info at Facebook



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Preserving & Protecting the Greater Sax-Zim Bog for Future Generations of Birds & Birders



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