

MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS
AUDUBON SOCIETY
A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 193
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Your resource for environmental education and
resource protection in Northern Minnesota

We're on the Web!

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*The Mississippi Headwaters Audubon
Society's mission is to foster personal
connections to and stewardship
of our natural world.*

A Message from the President

While reviewing an earlier draft of this newsletter, I leveraged some editorial licensing (as most editors do) and inserted reference to the inspirational work by author Richard Louv and his disconcerting yet tell-tale book, *'Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder'* (Algonquin Books). Just as all good books impart, I found myself reflecting on my own childhood and the degree to which my parents afforded me unstructured, 'outside' time to acquire experiences *within* nature.

Today, I often joke casually, labeling myself as a 'social-introvert' to endorse my self-awareness that, though at times I may have an outgoing personality, I do it at a personal cost to the child within; that part of me that prefers an inner solace nurtured by aloneness outdoors, immersion in a good story, and avoidance of group activities.

Having read this, you may be wondering why I now find myself on the board of a local non-profit organization? One obvious answer may be that as president of an Audubon Chapter I am allowed to spend time in the naturalness of our world—like watching birds! That may be partly true. Yet, despite the child in me, I have come to realize that being part of

something larger than myself and working together with others - 'human nature' if you will - I may be most effective in facilitating the protection of those quiet urban, rural and wild natural spaces for that child of tomorrow. Perhaps most urgent is our need to recover the nature that we have lost, to provide safe spaces for all ages to regrow the roots that connect our spirit to a wildness, to 're-nature' that out-of-touch child, young or old, of today.

MHAS, through its youth education programming at the Neilson Spearhead Center and Nature Preserve, creates a space where community members that serve on its board and education committee - including seasonal naturalists and the NSC Caretakers - are all part of something larger than themselves. Through a collective interest and selfless giving, they alchemize bits and pieces of abstract resources, including vital membership and donor support, into tangible, life-rewarding experiences for children to learn and play in a world where there are *no electrical outlets*, where mistakes can be made countered by lessons-learned. A bird-in-nature may symbolize the National Audubon Society; here at MHAS, it is perhaps a child-in-nature that is symbolic of a dedicated group of individuals seeking to make this world a better place.

- Brick Fevold



Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society

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MHAS Needs You!

Please consider serving on the board of directors or on a committee in support of youth education, community outreach, wildlife and habitat conservation, and management of the Neilson Spearhead Center. Send email to: headwatersaudubon@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Brick Fevold
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Vice-President
vacant

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Cassie Novak
Dina Janke

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Jaime Thibodeaux

**Neilson Spearhead
Center Caretakers**
Julie and Lee Patten
218-444-8672

Board meetings occur on the 1st Monday each month 5:30—7:00 P.M. at the NSC June-Sept., Winter months: contact the President for details on the meeting location.

A Day in the Life of a Young Naturalist

By Hannah Marty and Dan Bera

Perhaps you've read *'Last Child in the Woods'* authored by Richard Louv? It's an absolute must read for any parent or guardian interested in gaining that big-picture awareness on the fundamental value of allowing children opportunities to engage with nature in all its mucky, slimy, squeaky, itchy, stickiness. The Young Naturalist Program (YNP), sponsored by the MHAS Chapter at its Neilson Spearhead Center takes this to heart offering youth from 2nd grade through senior high a safe, mentored environment to learn about and explore the natural world around them. When enrolled in the YNP, children are provided the tools to safely explore their inner curiosity of the outer world. The YNP at the Neilson Spearhead Center and Nature Preserve engage with themselves and others through the magic of connecting to the natural world. If there was such a thing as a typical day at one of the YNP's camp sessions, it might look something like this:

Morning—You arrive at the NSC nestled along beautiful Spearhead Lake, get settled in, place your lunch in the lab (so the squirrels don't snatch it!) before joining other early arrivers to explore the nearby trails. After returning from an adventure on the trails, you decide to rest a bit inside the screened porch, tell jokes and listen to stories as other kids arrive. The weather is beautiful with little wind, and you're invited to join others to practice canoeing. So, you pack up your lunch and water bottle, grab a life jacket and paddle from the rack and head down to the water to get into a canoe with a partner as your group starts its paddle lessons with adventures before lunch.

Excited about a full day of exploring, you and a new friend paddle across the lake to search for the mysterious and really cool mushrooms that the Instructor, Dan, found while doing trail work the previous day.

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A Walk in the Bog - The Annual Meeting

By Brick Fevold

In a word "multi-generational" is what describes the attentive audience following along as John Mathisen then Laddie Elwell, both early founders of the Audubon MHAS chapter, shared their *Spearhead Reflections* at the 38th birthday and annual membership meeting held along the beautiful shores of Spearhead Lake. Three generations were in attendance enjoying the savory potluck of home-spun dishes, sugary treats, and fascinating stories and historical memorabilia captured during the early days of the chapter. New and familiar faces arrived early to take part in a pre-meeting hike to Einerson's Bog located at the far north end of Spearhead Lake and co-led by fellow chapter board members, George-Ann and Cassie. The day ended as beautifully as it started—with anticipation of a bright future challenged, yet comforted by the history and achievements of yesterday!

Species Spotlight: Bark Lice

By Cassie Novak

Have you ever seen clusters of small insects huddled together on tree bark? If you try to touch them, they'll move in a big herd like sheep. These are known as Bark Lice, in the family Psocidae. They are related to the same group as are parasitic lice and booklice. But have no fear!—Bark Lice are nothing like their itchy and annoying cousins. They harmlessly graze on the surface of bark and stones, feeding on algae, lichen, moss and fungus. Some are solitary in behavior where other species can be in large

groups of a hundred or more individuals of mixed ages (or developmental stages referred to as *instars*).

Our most noticeable species is *Ceratipsocus venosus*, a type of Common Barklice. They have wings, but are weak fliers and prefer to stay in their little herds when disturbed by a prodding finger or stick. If separated from the 'herd,' they'll use scent to find their way back. They are most easily seen on the bark of Paper Birch, but are also found on a variety of other tree species as well as lichen-covered rocks and even constructed materials like cement.



A small 'herd' of Bark Lice
(*Ceratipsocus venosus*)

Photo by John and Jane Balaban



A solitary Bark Louse
(*Ceratipsocus venosus*)

Photo by Tom Bentley

MHAS Board Update

Roles changed but familiar faces remain—as chapter members shuffle among seats to steer the MHAS chapter into a promising future with renewed aspiration and commitment as a conservation leader and an environmental educator. Brick Fevold became the new chapter president replacing Jaime Thibodeaux, past president. Jaime continues to serve as a board member supporting executive committee actions and social media developments on the chapter's website and Facebook page. (*we invite members to send in news items and stories!*) As the new president, Brick has proposed some exciting yet challenging organizational changes currently under review by the executive committee; changes intended to catalyze growth in its governing capacity and to transform its identity as a local chapter to one that is recognized as a regional leader within the National Audubon network of chapters. Susan Joy is the chapter's new sec-

retary, previously an at-large director. Her experience working with nonprofits is a great asset to the chapter as it pursues its regeneration. George-Ann Maxson, long-time board member, historian and steering co-chair of the education committee will continue as the chapter's treasurer. There are 3 at-large directors: Cassie Novak, Dina Janke, and Carla Norris-Raynbird. Cassie supports the regular publication of this newsletter, and Dina facilitates action on special events related to Audubon's climate change initiatives. Both provide support to the education committee. Carla, formerly the secretary, is now an at-large director, and will provide objective counsel to the board on all aspects of chapter administration and management activities.

Join us! We invite members and their friends to consider a chapter role to support new and existing programming.
headwatersaudubon@gmail.com

A Day in the Life of a Young Naturalist (cont'd from Page 1)

As you peek around trees and over rotted logs, Dan describes all the different parts of mushrooms that can help you tell if they are edible or not, such as if there are gills on the underside, bright or dark colors, or a ring around the base. Of the two you happen to see today, Dan says one is poisonous and one is edible but it is actually covering another mushroom that may not be edible. In all cases, he tells you to never eat a wild mushroom unless a mushroom expert has identified it. Then it's back to the canoes to explore the shallows for porta-scoping aquatic plants, small fish, and myriad bugs and insects and to learn some of their crazy and whacky names. *Mid-Day*—while munching on your bag lunch, you listen to a story about the *Wanagitchee*, a mythical water spirit that some say lives in Spearhead Lake. You attempt to outwit your partner's imagination pinning weird, funny and scary body parts to the beast and guess at what this creature must eat for its own lunch! After a bit of lunch, you, your partner and others paddle across the lake to the South Access where you pull the canoes up on shore and hike to the county land that surrounds Spearhead Lake, and play a rousing game of 'capture the flag' in a wooded setting. When a team wins you gather as a group and set out to learn about the bones and function of beaver teeth from remains left as

wolf bait by a hunter. *Afternoon*—Time to canoe back to the lab for an "Underwater Aquatic Exploration" to enjoy the last heat of the day before returning home exhilarated, tired, silly, and full of wonderment about how much you learned and all the fun! it can be to spend a day at the YNP at the Neilson Spearhead Center and Nature Preserve.



As Richard Louv put it; "...children hear very well." The YNP program at the NSC creates a safe place for a child to engage and listen to the natural world around them. A place that inspires imagination and an inner connection to themselves and their natural living environment.

Raise-to-Tag to Save the Monarch!

By Cassie Novak and Brick Fevold

By early September, the last generation of Monarchs are emerging from their chrysalises as adults to start their epic migration south to the Oyamel fir forests located within the borders of the Santuario Mariposa Monarca (Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary) in *Michoacán, Mexico*. There, they will spend the winter in near hibernation, protected by the trees and sheltered valleys. Despite the great migration distance and the energy-sapping winters, many will still have the strength to begin a return migration north come spring and be the first of four waves of breeding populations where each wave produces a subsequent breeding population that continues its advancement north into northern U.S. and southern Canada.

The Monarch wintering population is reported to have dropped by over 80% when compared to a 21-year historical average. You can help by joining MonarchWatch.org to captive raise wild Monarch caterpillars to adulthood and tagging them with uniquely marked labels prior to releasing them to start their fall migration to their wintering grounds in Mexico. MonarchWatch.org and others, support international efforts to monitor the populations and health of Monarchs. Tagged Monarchs are reported along their migration by volunteers to help collect data on the survival of individual Monarchs as they migrate during fall and spring.



Monarch captive raised and tagged by Cassie Novak (Monarch #UMJ 125)

Please help! Tagging kits and information can be purchased through MonarchWatch.org. Wild and hand-reared adult Monarchs can be tagged to help with research on the survival of this iconic species.