



The Source

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November 2016

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Snow Sparkles and Winter Wonders at Neilson Spearhead Center

Attention parents and grandparents! We'd love to have your kids and grandkids join Naturalist Dan Bera at the Neilson Spearhead Center for a very special post-Christmas treat!



Photo by Monte Draper

Wednesday, December 28, 2016, 12 noon

to 5:00 pm. Enjoy a toasty bonfire, hot chocolate, and snowflakes, snowsnakes, animal tracks, and a walk on the frozen lake. Second grade and older welcome! Dress warmly; bring an extra pair of snowpants and mittens, bring trail mix ingredients, and leftover Christmas cookies to share. \$10 per person, or \$15 for two siblings or friends. www.spearheadMHAS.org

Register by December 23 by calling George-Ann at 218-586-3414.

40th Annual Bemidji Christmas Bird Count

For some 40 years the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon chapter has sponsored a local Christmas Bird count (CBC). The CBC is a fun tradition going back nationally over 115 years. This important long-term data is used for all kinds of studies from bird populations to the effects of climate change.

There's no cost to register or to participate. The Bemidji count area is a 15 mile diameter circle centered around the Bemidji Township Hall. This year's count will take place on **Saturday December 17, 2016**. We'll meet at the Minnesota Nice Cafe starting at about 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. to register participants and divide into teams. Each team will be given a specific area to count birds seen in that area. We'll need your birding assistance for at least one-half of the

(Continued on page 2)

40th Annual Bemidji Christmas Bird Count Continued.....

day to make sure the best coverage of the count area as possible. No prior experience or expertise is required! Beginning birders can be matched up with more experienced observers. Let us know if you need binoculars and a bird guide.

Another CBC will take place on **Sunday December 18, 2016 at Itasca State Park**. Meet between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. at the Jacob Brower Visitors Center near the East Entrance to register and participate. It is helpful to bring a sack lunch as we reassemble at noon for a break and Christmas cookies at the Visitor Center and again at about 4:00 p.m. to compile our totals. You can ski, hike or drive the area to help with the Itasca bird count. Contact Doug Johnson at 751-4162 for more information.

Be a part of this long-standing citizen science project! Help us survey bird life of northern Minnesota.



**We hope to see YOU
at the Christmas Bird Count!**

Saturday December 17, 2016

Registration 7-7:45am at Minnesota Nice Cafe

Recognition from National Geographic



This November MHAS received the enclosed certificate from National Geographic for a unique and special place for Mississippi River Geotourism. We think NSC is pretty special, so we're very excited they think so too!

The Mississippi River National Geotourism project highlights natural landmarks, events, attractions, activities, business, and other unique features along the entire Mississippi River corridor.

You can learn more about the Mississippi River Geotourism project, and find other local unique places to explore at:

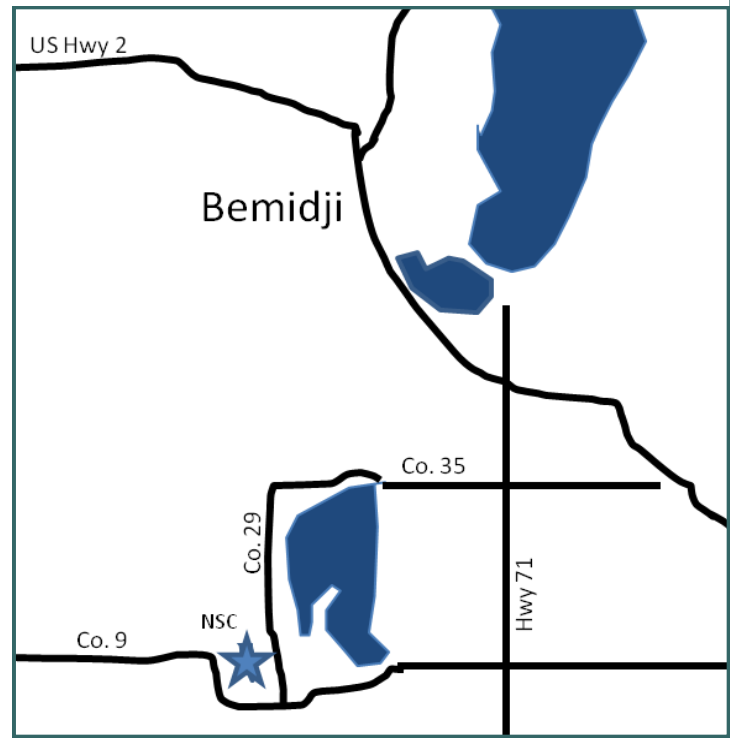
mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com.

Come Hike and Snowshoe Trails at NSC

Autumn is an amazing time here at Spearhead. The beautiful color, abundant wildlife and the peace and quiet found here, entice many visitors to the Neilson Spearhead Center. The trails are in great condition and people come again and again to enjoy a walk or run.

Looking for places to snowshoe this winter? We have amazing trails perfect for snowshoeing. We invite you to come and respectfully enjoy this beautiful place. Please sign our guest log at the kiosk and let us know your thoughts about your time here. You can see for yourself why NSC is a special place for exploring and learning about nature.

Just where IS the Neilson Spearhead Center? You can now find us on google maps! We also included a map here for your convenience. If you see our caretakers, Julie and Lee Patten, or our NSC watch-dog Dan Bergsven, thank them for all their hard work to keep the Neilson Spearhead Center wonderful!



The main entrance to the Neilson Spearhead Center is located off County Road 29. You'll see blue signs directing you to the main entrance. You'll be taken down a long gravel drive as you head to the main visiting and parking area. Enjoy your visit!

Mississippi Headwaters Watershed Project

The Mississippi Headwaters watershed runs from Itasca State Park to Lake Pokegama near Grand Rapids, MN. Agencies such as the Minnesota Pollution Control, Minnesota Dept of Natural Resources, City of Bemidji, local soil and water conservation districts, as well as Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe have pooled resources to study the watershed on a landscape scale. Water quality, biological diversity, hydrology, and stream habitat were all examined as a sort of check-up on our water quality.

All in all, we have one of the healthiest watersheds in the state! Two lakes, however, were found to not meet water quality standards. Those lakes, Lake Irving and Little Turtle, have high nutrient loading. A plan for how to address these impairments are to follow, along with an interactive meeting open to the public. A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that drains off of it goes into the same place—a river, stream or lake. They will be looking at how we use the land around these lakes for potential answers in restoration.

Want to get involved? Send a note to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Project manager: Phil Votruba at Phil.Votruba@state.mn.us or call him at 218-316-3901.

**MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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resource protection in Northern Minnesota

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Permit #28

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

A Note from the MHAS President

Jaime Thibodeaux

We hope you enjoy your latest copy of The Source. We put a lot of financial and volunteer efforts into creating this newsletter. We are contemplating the idea of an online format. Would you read The Source if you received it via email? Or do you prefer print? Let us know!

We have two new additions to the MHAS leadership team: Doug Johnson and Peter Buessler. Doug is an avid birder who can help us with all things birds. We've nick-named him the Bird Czar. Peter is a great naturalist and an amazing leader. I look forward to working with both of them and our board. This year we plan to highlight the Neilson Spearhead Center and all of its unique features. We hope to put on a

variety of new and exciting events, as well as "oldies but goodies". But we need your help!

Would you like to join us in managing this special place?

Do you have any events you'd like to see at NSC? We are looking for NSC volunteers to update us on trail conditions, help to organize simple events, report on natural findings, or get creative!

To sign-up as a volunteer send us an email at headwatersaudubon@gmail.com.

Online newsletter coming soon!

Have you been receiving email alerts from us about upcoming events? If not, email us at headwatersaudubon@gmail.com or visit www.SpearheadMHAS.org and click on "Events" to sign-up for our email list.

Or, if you prefer print, let us know! Call George-Ann at 218-586-3414.