



WINTER 2018

Friends of Quarry Hill Nature Center

FIELD NOTES



Where Nature Takes Root, Continuing to make progress together

In the pages of this newsletter you will read about all we have done together this year and our excitement for what's to come. In the coming weeks, we'll share even more. Follow us as we celebrate what makes us strong; our friends who are as passionate about nature as we are. It may sound like we've been saying this for some time. We have! Good things are worth the wait and the effort.

Our *Where Nature Takes Root Capital Campaign* is 95% of the way to our \$2.6M campaign goal! Both the Prairie House education building and the interior exhibit renovations continue to develop in exciting ways. If you have been thinking about a donation to support the campaign, now is the time. We are in the homestretch and so close to being able to do all we set out to do to make your nature center better than ever.

[Donate online](#) or by contacting the nature center at 328-3950.

Progress Update: Prairie House

With major structural construction complete, we have moved indoors to the interior finish work and systems installations. Solar panels were installed the first part of this month and just before the cold weather set in, we fired up the wood pellet furnace. Mother Nature didn't allow for much of the outdoor site work this fall, so we will look toward wrapping up the site prep in the spring.

Interesting Facts about a Pellet Furnace

The big yellow hopper that holds our pellet fuel isn't very photogenic, but certainly is worthy of a few words! Pellet fuel is a biomass energy product made of wood residue and other plant materials. Pellets are made from 100% wood waste material. Using pellets helps reduce the costs and problems of waste disposal. Each year millions of cubic yards of waste are diverted from landfills and converted into pellets for heating. By recycling this wood waste into a clean burning and high heat value fuel we are helping to reduce our over-dependence on fossil fuels. In addition, every ton of pellets used vs. oil reduces CO₂ emissions by about 1.5 tons.

Left: the exterior chimney stonework; an extra flue will hopefully attract chimney swifts to roost
Middle: wood burning stove for heat and ambience
Right: Solar Connections installing the rails that hold the solar panels that will power the building



Progress Update: Exploration Hall

Inside the nature center, we continue to prepare the Exploration Hall for new exhibits and develop the interactive features with our creative team of exhibit fabricators at Blue Rhino Studios. Recently installed were in-floor glass windows that will give visitors a unique look at what is underfoot in nature. Engineered to hold 6000 lbs each and protected with 3M scratch coating, these windows have certainly been stirring up curiosity with kids and visitors.

Here's a sneak peek at what's in the works for this exhibit:



Top—Critters you may find under the surface of the pond and prairie waiting to be added to the diorama.

Middle—A diorama in the early stages of construction.

Bottom—A Blue Rhino artist working on microscopic organisms you might find in the soil.

Who knew honey Bees could be thieves?!

We have a unique bee hive in the prairie at Quarry Hill called a top bar hive. It is a single-story frameless beehive in which the comb hangs from removable bars. We keep this type of hive for ease of observation and education about bee behavior and honey production. The convenient viewing window allows us to view activity inside the hive, similar to our indoor observation hive.



Unfortunately, but part of the cycle of nature, all the bees in this hive unexpectedly died this fall. It was a sudden and unfortunate demise – we are unsure of the cause. With no bees to protect the hive, the honey was up for grabs. By the time we noticed, and to our disappointment, another bee colony got busy and quickly robbed all the honey out of the hive for their own use! *Who knew we had little striped bandits flying around among us?*

A top bar hive requires no specialized equipment and typically a 'hands-on' method of crushing and straining the comb is used to extract the honey. We were looking forward to demonstrating this method and sharing the honey with our friends and visitors. Maybe next year!

Along with the top-bar hive, we have two traditional hives in the prairie. Our partners from the Bee Shed maintain all the outdoor hives, provide bee education, and harvest the honey. You can find Bee Shed honey at local grocery stores, the People's Food Coop, and The Root Cellar.

Be a Part of TEAM NATURE!

Volunteers are central to the success of Quarry Hill Nature Center. We value the expertise and contributions our volunteers provide each day that contribute to our mission of *“opening eyes and minds to natural science discovery.”*

Current needs include:

Docents If you enjoy nature and conversation, our Exploration Hall is the place to be. Docents welcome visitors and spend time answering questions and providing interpretation about our many interactive exhibits. Docents are typically adults with a keen interest in nature and comfort interacting with the general public. Shifts are mainly on weekends and non-school days. Docents receive training and work alongside Quarry Hill staff.

Ski & Snowshoe Rental Assistant

During the winter season, ski and snowshoe rental is a busy area at the nature center. Volunteers greet visitors, help fit them with the correct equipment, and help them fill out their rental forms. Rental assistants are needed on the weekends and during special events.

Volunteer Saturday 4th Saturday of every month 1:30—3:30 pm

Indoor and outdoor projects, gardening, button making and more: this opportunity is open year – round to families, groups or individuals (children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult). Volunteer one time or monthly. Sign up at uwolmsted.org or by calling the nature center at 507-328-3950.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Jill Danielsen at jdanielsen@qhnc.org.

It's a great day for fishing!

Thanks to our friends at the Royal Bank of Canada.

Late this summer, the Friends of Quarry Hill Nature Center received an \$8500 Blue Water Project grant from the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) for the purchase and installation of a dock on the Harry L. Buck Children's Pond. Launched in 2007, the RBC Blue Water Project is a 10-year global charitable commitment of \$50 million to help provide access to drinkable, swimmable, fishable water, now and for future generations. The RBC Blue Water Project supports initiatives that help protect water in our growing towns and cities. Local RBC employees get involved, rolling up their sleeves to help with the funded projects.



Since 1978, students and park visitors have enjoyed the Harry L. Buck Children's Pond. Renovated in 2010, the three acre pond provides a healthy habitat for wildlife. Opportunities for wildlife observation and research, water studies, and recreation for thousands of students and visitors every year occur in this convenient and accessible location. Stocked by the DNR, the pond is an ideal setting for the novice or experienced fisherman. Staff at the local RBC offices recognized the need for better and safer access to the water at the Quarry Hill pond. Through their efforts, a Blue Waters Project Grant request was submitted and awarded to Quarry Hill, but that's not where it ended for RBC staff. They did just what the Blue Waters project is about—helped with the ordering, delivery, and installation of the dock. From start to finish the staff rolled up their sleeves and got their feet wet!



Top: RBC staff trade their business suits for waders!

Middle: Many hands make light work.

Bottom: Almost complete—stop by to see the dock, now with railing fully installed!





Programs

At Quarry Hill Nature Center

FOR ALL AGES

Sundays at QHNC

Public programs open to all ages are held Sundays, year round, at 1:30 pm
\$2 adults, \$1 kids, free for members

Bird Banding Program

Experience the beauty of birds up close. Learn about bird characteristics, bird adaptations and the Federal Bird Banding Program. Program is hands on and includes trapping, netting, banding, and releasing birds.

**December 3, January 7,
February 4, March - No program**

Critter Sunday

Enjoy an up close look at one of Quarry Hill's live animals including a chance to learn about and observe feeding and care of the animals.

Dec 17 Silly over Snakes
Jan 21 Owls
February 18 Animals in Winter
March No Program

Cave Tour and Historic Hike

Quarry Hill Park was formerly the grounds of the Rochester State Hospital. Learn about the Park's historic structures on a short hike to the sandstone cave, built in 1882. Following the cave tour is an optional hike to a featured historical site.

Dec 10 Cave & Climbing Wall
Jan 14 & 28 Cave & Drop Structure
Feb 25 Cave & Pond
March No Program

Nature Sunday

Fur, feathers, hibernation and more, discover how animals survive winter. This program includes an outdoor hike.

**December 31
Animals Surviving Winter**

PRESCHOOL—FOR AGES 2-5 (AS NOTED) WITH A GROWN UP

Nature Toddlers

Observe, listen, and feel ... toddlers are natural explorers. Join us each month for a nature-themed class and some special one on one time with your 2-3 year old. Story, art and outdoor adventures are part of the fun! Sign up for one session or all sessions, choose Wednesdays or Saturdays. *(Note: there will be no program in March.)*

\$8 per pair, \$6.50 members
Class time is 10:00 — 11:00 am

Winter Trees, Dec 2 or 6

Some trees are bare in the winter, some are evergreen. Do some trees hibernate in the winter? This month is all about 'speaking for the trees!'

Birds at the Feeder, Jan 6 or 10

Chickadees, juncos, nuthatches, and more; Quarry Hill's backyard is full of songbirds. This month is 'for the birds'! Practice observation, meet a live bird, build a felt bird and make a pine cone feeder to take home.

Deer in the Woods, Feb 3 or 7

Antlers and white tails make us think of deer, but they are not often seen in the daylight. This month learn why deer are secretive and how to spot signs of deer in the snowy surroundings.

Nature Nuts

Children are born naturalists, exploring the environment around them with all senses. Join us monthly for an adventure that nurtures that natural curiosity. Each month we explore a new nature theme through story, art and outdoor adventure. Enjoy time with that special 2-5 year old in your life. Register for one class or the whole series. *(Note: there will be no program in March.)*

\$8 per pair, \$6.50 members
Class time is 10:00 — 11:00 am

Wonderful Wintertime, Dec 16

Explore the sites and sounds of wonderful winter on a chilly hike. Knit mittens, paint with ice and warm up with a story!

Our Feathered Friends, Jan 20

Color and sounds abound as songbirds flutter by. Practice observation, meet a live bird, and make a feeder to take home for your backyard birds.

Tracks , Feb 17

How fast? Which way? How big? Tracks can tell us many things about animals. Adventure outdoors to practice your tracking skills after a fun matching animals to tracks game.

HOW TO REGISTER

Many Quarry Hill programs have a maximum number of participants. Advance registration helps us plan a great nature experience for all.

Call (507) 328-3950

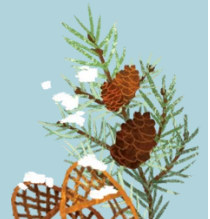
Mon—Fri from 9 am—5 pm and we'll help you take care of all the details.

PAYMENT IS REQUIRED AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

CANCELLATION POLICIES

Quarry Hill may cancel programs due to weather conditions. Rescheduling and/or refunds will occur.

If you cancel your registration more than 10 days prior to the program you'll receive a 75% refund. No refunds within 10 days of the program.



FOR HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS

We are pleased to offer classes especially for home school students. These environmental education classes focus on interactive, hands-on learning and correlate to MN Science Standards. Each class includes indoor and outdoor experiences and access to our Exploration Hall before and after class.

Details:

- Classes often include a significant amount of time outside.
- Please dress for the weather
- Classes are offered for children ages 5-14.
- Parents do not need to accompany students.
- Advance registration and payment is required.

Call the Quarry Hill office M-F, 9 am - 5 pm to register: 507-328-3950

Soil Sleuths

February 9, 9:30 - 11:00 am

Ages 5-7

The "Soil Chef" will reveal the difference between soil & dirt and share the recipe for soil. Students will hike to the QH sandstone cave and also sift & sort soil samples into their components.

Plankton Classification

February 9, 9:30 - 11:00 am

Ages 8-10

Learn microscope basics and practice with prepared slides before moving on to view the amazing world of microorganisms in a drop of water. Preparing a wet mount slide, observation, sorting, & classifying skills will be emphasized.



Winter Survival

February 9, 9:30 - 11:00 am

Ages 11-14

Students will learn animal survival strategies, learn about core and extremity body temperatures as it relates to hypothermia, take the ice bucket challenge, and experiment with insulators. Meet at Quarry Hill and dress to be outside for a portion of the class.

Maple Syruping

March 2, 9:30 - 11:00 am

Ages 8-10

Learn how syrup is made from beginning to end, learn which trees produce edible syrup, and then practice tapping a tree before sampling finished box elder syrup.



Growing Up

April 18, 9:30 - 11:00 am

Ages 5-7

This class focuses on animal's lifecycles; how they are born, and change as they become adults. Through active learning situations, (puppet skits and 2 outside activities) students learn about various animal families and babies.

Energy Conservation

April 18, 9:30 - 11:00 am

Ages 11-14

Work with interactive learning stations related to energy conservation, alternative energy sources, and potential environmental problems related to energy use. Students will also play our outdoor energy game trail to test and add to their knowledge of energy usage.

WINTERFEST XVI

Candlelight Ski

Celebrate Minnesota's sparkling season and winter landscape. Enjoy an evening skiing by candlelight and the glow of the moon. Warm up in front of the Nature Center's blazing fireplace while refueling with cocoa and s'mores. Equipment is available on a first come first serve basis. All ages are welcome – equipment is available in youth and adult sizes. Event is dependent on snow and trail conditions—call ahead.

February 2, 6:00—9:00 pm

\$10 person

No registration required.

Valentine's Candlelight Ski and Snowshoe

Enjoy the sparkling winter landscape on a candlelit trail. Bring your sweetheart or come with friends for an enjoyable evening in nature. Then warm up by the crackling fire where champagne and sweets will be served. Equipment is provided by Quarry Hill. Alternate activities will be provided in the case of poor snow or trail conditions. Must be 21+ to register.

February 10, 7:00—10:00 pm

\$20 person, \$15 member

Advance registration required

It's Snow Crazy!

Get ready to experience snow like you never have before! Bring your mittens for snow games including ice bowling, snow snakes, and snowball toss; bring your sweet tooth for making snow candy; and bring your creativity for snow creating! You can color it, shape it, or adorn it for the birds - whatever you are in the mood for. We'll provide the materials and (hopefully) Mother Nature provides the snow! The fire will be roaring and hot cocoa simmering whenever you need to take a warm up break!

February 11, 1:30—3:30 pm

\$5.00/person

Advance registration required.

2017 Summer Nature Camp Photography Contest

Each summer, we hold a contest for our Nature Photography campers. At the end of their week-long photography day camp, each camper chooses a single image to submit for the contest. The winning entry is displayed in the nature center. Enjoy the top three entries voted by the Quarry Hill staff.



Winning Entry: Fly on Wet Leaf, by Jillian Shockman



2nd Place: Dragonfly by Ava Leigh



3rd Place:
Purple Coneflower by Maggie Rubin

Education Opportunities with our Partners



Please join us for a public presentation from UMR students Tuesday, Dec 12, 4:00—5:15 pm All are welcome.

Details of their project follows: [University of Minnesota Rochester](#) undergraduate students enrolled in a genetics course this fall (BIOL3311: Genetics) are participating in a community partnership project funded by an Engaged Department Grant from the University of MN Office of Public Engagement, awarded to UMR biology faculty member [Dr. Kelsey Metzger](#) who is also the instructor of the genetics course. The goal of the project is for students to develop exhibit materials that illuminate the sex determining mechanism in one of five different Minnesota species. The materials

developed by students will communicate sophisticated scientific information effectively to non-scientist visitors of the nature center. Each team of students has a budget of \$100.00, provided through the Engaged Department Grant, to develop their materials. The Minnesota species chosen for this project are: Northern Saw-whet owl, Virginia opossum, common snapping turtle, garter snake, and Western honey bee

So You Think You Want to Be a Beekeeper?

Instructors:

Chris Schad & John Shonyo

This class will be an introduction to bees and you will learn what is necessary to keep bees.

January 23, 6:30—8:30 pm

Register by contacting Rochester Community Education



MEMBER MATTERS

More than 700 households join Quarry Hill as members each year, enjoying all the park and center have to offer. We are thrilled to acknowledge the following new and renewing members and since April. Membership and donations help us provide quality animal care, maintain the park and trails, provide quality affordable natural science programs, and keep the nature center admission free.

Matthew & Kristen Anderson
Sarah Streyle & John Bartucz
Michael & Autumn Brogan
Jamie Calvert
Deborah Colgan
Eva Colligan
Kathy & Brian Cook
Doug & Amy Crowley
Gina & Craig Dewink
Joanna Biernacka & Mark Doffman
Margaret Dow
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Bob & Mason Jorgensen
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Pat Kane
Michael & Elizabeth Klein
Alessandra & Cadman Leggett
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Wayne & Mary Alice Richardson
Christon & Adam Sawatsky
Mary Schwager
Alan & Dorrie Seaver
Norma Sedlack
Aaron & Kim Tande
Eric & Clare Tarr
Jan & Christina Tillema
Oliver Tobin
Donald & Kristina Tran
Wendy & David Vogelgesang
Bill & Elaine Wiktor
John & Virginia Woodruff

Things are a bit different this year!

Invest in Quarry Hill through our Annual Fund

Things are changing at the nature center, but we will still be the Quarry Hill Nature Center that you have known and loved for years. Expanded education space and a focus on renewed exhibits will reflect who we are, but help us deliver nature education and recreation reflective of our current times. Our Annual Campaign and member renewal begins this month, and it's a bit different this year, as well. We have asked you to give to our Where Nature Takes Root Capital Campaign and you responded generously boosting us to within 95% of our goal. As we stretch all our resources to complete our building projects we ask for your steady support for our annual operating fund. As we move into 2018, our operating fund will sustain us and launch us into the growth we will see in our education programs and visitors upon completion of our building projects. We look forward to your continued support as Friends of Quarry Hill members.

Your support helps:

- keep the Nature Center open year round with free admission
- provide quality care for the live animals
- keep programs accessible and fees affordable
- maintain the park, trails, pond and historic structures

Donations—Financial gifts are tax deductible and go a long way in helping us carry out our mission. Donations can be made in two ways:

- Give online through the GiveMN link on our website. Online you have the option to set-up sustaining monthly giving. By giving throughout the year you provide steady, reliable support for Quarry Hill.
- Soon, you will receive a request to contribute to our annual fund by US mail. Please respond by using the donation envelope enclosed in that mailing or go to our website to download a donation form.



Memberships—Besides the good-natured feeling that comes along with knowing you are supporting a great cause, all donations of \$60 or more receive member benefits for the 2018 calendar year.



Member Benefits

- Free Admission to Bird, Cave, Critter and Nature Sunday Programs, weekly at 1:30 pm
- Priority enrollment and discounts on all summer nature camps
- Discounted birthday parties for kids ages 4 +
- Discounted fees on naturalist programs and events such as Full Moon Hikes, Nature Toddlers, Candlelight Skiing and more.
- Discounted cross-country ski and snowshoe rental
- Field Notes—our quarterly newsletter in your mailbox

CONNECT WITH US
Phone (507) 328-3950

Fax (507) 287-1345

quarryhill@QHNC.org

www.QHNC.org

www.facebook.com/
QuarryHillNatureCenter

HOURS (Sept 1–May 31)
Mon-Fri 9:00 am–5:00 pm
Sun. Noon-5 pm

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Quarry Hill Nature Center
701 Silver Creek Rd. NE
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2017 QUARRY HILL **Nature Art Show & Sale** at Quarry Hill Nature Center

701 Silver Creek Rd NE, Rochester, MN • **FREE ADMISSION** • Meet the Artists



Saturday, **Dec. 2nd** • 9am - 4pm
Sunday, **Dec. 3rd** • 11am - 4pm



10% of sales donated to Friends of Quarry Hill
www.QHNC.org



Paintings Pottery Fiber Prints Photography Glass Wood Metal Original Art & More!