

# The Cardinal



APRIL MAY 2021

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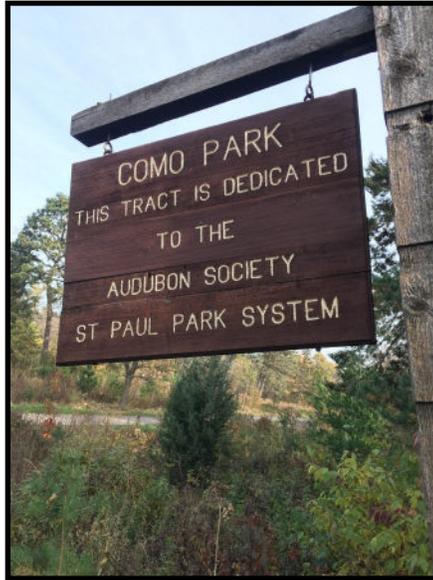
## Reviving the Audubon Woodland

If you wander into the southwestern corner of Como Park, you might stumble upon a sign that says the area is “dedicated to the Audubon Society.” This ten-acre site of unmanaged and overrun woods was originally a nursery that supplied St. Paul parks and boulevards with plants, from 1888 until 1945. It was then dedicated as a bird sanctuary, groomed and managed by Saint Paul Audubon Society members, from 1952 to 1960. Unfortunately, according to a history of the site, “the secluded site was a magnet for vandals, who repeatedly damaged or destroyed the feeders and birdhouses. . . After eight years, Audubon members had had enough. They stopped replacing the feeders and birdhouses.”

Now, after all this time, the site is still considered to be dedicated to the Saint Paul Audubon Society and a new effort is being organized to restore it as a thriving bird habitat. The area continues to have good potential, with open and wooded spaces, and multiple food and water sources nearby. Restoring the site was identified as a priority during the Society’s strategic planning in 2019.

Leading this effort is board member Rebecca Flood. “This will be a multi-year undertaking and our first steps will have to be done with limited participation because of COVID-19 restrictions,” says Flood. “We are looking at pulling garlic mustard in April and maybe clearing burdock in May.” Saint Paul city staff met with Flood on site and they discussed how to conduct invasive removal while being COVID-safe.

Restoring this corner of Como Park is aligned with other projects supported by Saint Paul Audubon Society, according to Flood. “This project, a recent grant to the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog for habitat conservation, and our support of the migratory bird



banding station in Belize are all aimed at protecting local bird populations throughout their journeys across continents.”

Watch for updates on volunteer opportunities, as plans become more certain.

## Landscape Revival is Back!

Colleen Swedberg, Landscape Revival committee team member, is happy to announce that, “after taking a forced Covid-hiatus in 2020, we are back and this will be our 10<sup>th</sup> year.”

Landscape Revival events offer gardeners one convenient location to shop for native Minnesota plants from a variety of growers, and information from conservation organizations on how to grow them. “The goal is to promote the use of native plants by educating people about the benefits for wildlife habitat, pollinators, water quality and landscape diversity, without using cultivars or systemic insecticides,” says Colleen.

Two spring dates and locations have been scheduled. The first is **June 5, in Shoreview** at Shepherd of the Hills north parking lot, 3920 Victoria St. North. The second is **June 12, at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Ave. N.** Both events are 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and there will be a food truck at the June 12 event.

No exhibitors will be present this year, but they have been invited to provide brief videos that will be posted on [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) in May. Masks and social distancing will be required at both events and cash or checks are preferred. For the latest information, visit [tiny.cc/SHOREVIEW](http://tiny.cc/SHOREVIEW) or [tiny.cc/OAKDALE](http://tiny.cc/OAKDALE).



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**SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY**


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PO Box 7275, St Paul, MN 55107-7275

Welcome...

To the Saint Paul Audubon Society.

We're a chapter of the  
National Audubon Society.

Our mission is to conserve and restore  
natural ecosystems, focusing on birds,  
other wildlife, and their habitats  
for the benefit of humanity and  
Earth's biological diversity.

You will automatically become a  
member of the Saint Paul Audubon  
Society if you make a gift of \$30 or  
more to the National Audubon Society  
and reside in Saint Paul, Ramsey and  
Washington counties, and surrounding  
areas.

The Saint Paul Audubon Society  
welcomes everyone to become a  
member or participate in activities as a  
non-member regardless of their race,  
color, national origin, sex, disability,  
sexual orientation, marital status, age,  
or gender identity.

**SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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**ABOUT OUR CHAPTER**

Founded in 1945 as the 'St. Paul Bird Club' with twelve members, the Saint Paul Audubon Society now serves the entire East Metro region of the Twin Cities, and has around 2,800 members. Our Member Meetings are held from Sept.-Dec. & Feb.-May on the second Thursday of the month. For more info please contact leaders at left, or visit [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org)

**ABOUT THE CARDINAL** The Cardinal is published 6 times a year and posted on [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) at the beginning of February, April, June, August, and October. For information contact Martha Douglas, editor, or Jackie Bussjaeger, assistant editor. Copy is due to the editor on the 15th of the month preceding publication.

The Cardinal is available free to everyone on our website. If you would like to receive a notice when new issues are ready, go to [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) and go to the "Newsletter" tab to subscribe with your email address. Our Webmaster is Ben Wilson, [ben@simpledesigns.biz](mailto:ben@simpledesigns.biz) or 651-332-1362.

## Next issue: June/July 2021

## Help Wanted!

Saint Paul Audubon members and friends are involved in a wide range of activities promoting the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of birds and their habitats. For an all-volunteer organization, we get a lot of work done! But there is more to do and volunteers are always needed. Current opportunities for which we need immediate help are listed below along with contact information for following up.

### *Annual Fund Drive Chair*

A volunteer is needed to take on this important role, as our long-time chair Dean Doering will be relinquishing the position in June. The Fund Drive chair receives, tracks, deposits and acknowledges donations. Almost all of the activity takes place in November, December and January during the annual Fund Drive. Dean estimates that he typically spends 20 hours on the drive in December, the busiest month, and 10 hours each in November and January. "I've also had great support from the Society's treasurers and newsletter editors over the years," he says.

Thank you to Dean, who has done an outstanding job as chair for the past 11 years.

Our members and friends are extremely generous with their gifts, with more than \$15,000 donated in this fiscal year so far. The Saint Paul Audubon Society relies on the support it receives from members and friends to do its work in protecting birds and their habitats.

If you are interested in learning more about this position, please contact James Stout, Treasurer at [jstout@umn.edu](mailto:jstout@umn.edu).

### *Reporter/Writer*

We would like to provide more information in the *Cardinal* about activities hosted by other organizations that might be of interest to Saint Paul Audubon Society members, and are looking for a volunteer to research and compile this information and write the article. Please contact Martha Douglas at [mdouglas@umn.edu](mailto:mdouglas@umn.edu).

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**BOARD MEETINGS**


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Saint Paul Audubon Society board meetings, held the first Monday of most months, are conducted via Zoom. The next meetings are April 5 and May 3. Visit the events calendar on [saintpaulaudubon.org](http://saintpaulaudubon.org) for a link to the meeting if you would like to tune in.

## Calendar

Information about the following can be found in this issue of the *Cardinal* on the page indicated. Zoom links are available at [saintpaulaudubon.org/events](http://saintpaulaudubon.org/events).

April 5	Board of Directors Meeting, 6 p.m., via Zoom
April 8	Online Speakers Series featuring Rob Schultz, 7 p.m., via Zoom (p. 4)
May 3	Board of Directors Meeting, 6 p.m., via Zoom
May 7	Board nominations due (p. 6)
May 8-10	Modified Warbler Weekend (p. 6)
May 13	Online Speakers Series featuring Lynette Anderson, via Zoom (p. 4)
May 14	Board elections, via email (p. 6)
June 5	Landscape Revival Shoreview (p. 1)
June 12	Landscape Revival Oakdale (p. 1)

## *President's Message*

### **Maintaining the Quality of Our Local Environments**

In the last dozen or so years, evidence has been shown that being in nature in almost any manner is beneficial to human health. Also, as noted in a *Wall Street Journal* story on March 9, a current trend in health research is trying to identify “what about nature makes us healthier.” Beach time, being on a golf course, and the “practice the Japanese call forest bathing” are all strongly linked to lower blood pressure, heart rate, and stress hormones. Many scientists believe that substances released from trees, plants, and soil contribute to human health.

For everyone to enjoy these benefits of the natural world we must have easy access to them. Most people cannot travel to the Boundary Waters or other remote wilderness areas. Most of us must experience the natural world close to home. Unfortunately, this means engaging in constant battles to maintain the quality of our local natural environments.

The East Metro’s population and demand for local outdoor activities of all kinds is growing while the amount of outdoor space remains the same—or shrinks. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in the last decade Washington County’s population grew by 12.8%, Ramsey County’s by 8.2%, and the City of St. Paul’s by 8.8%. Increasing population density is not necessarily a bad thing but the environmental consequences of growth must be considered. The

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis recently joined with other groups and successfully sued to ensure that environmental factors were considered in the City of Minneapolis’ long-range planning [Smart Growth Minneapolis, et al vs. City of Minneapolis]. There are threats in the East Metro too. Ramsey County and the City of Maplewood are considering selling an 82-acre golf course and a 77-acre grassland for development. Ramsey County is also considering what to do with the 72-acre Boys Totem Town which is largely undeveloped at this time. Allowing development of the few remaining natural lands will result in more people using smaller acreage.

A related concern is that much of our natural parkland is being converted to use in active sports such as mountain bike trails. In 2020 the Legacy of Nature Alliance was formed to promote high quality habitat in metropolitan parklands. The group has noted a large increase in spending in recent years on built amenities for recreation in parks and is seeking to allocate more resources to ongoing management of natural lands. Our Society has recently become a member of the Alliance.

It’s great that scientific studies have found real benefits to human health and wellness in experiencing nature. But even with an increasing body of evidence of its benefits we will have to continue to fight to keep a bit of nature in the East Metro.

*-Donn Waage, Saint Paul Audubon Society President*

## Online Speakers Coming Up

Two final presentations will wrap up this year's online speaker series. Presentations begin at 7 p.m. To tune in, go to [saintpaulaudubon.org](http://saintpaulaudubon.org) and click on the current meeting's Zoom link. Details are below, and *please note* that the dates have switched for Lynette Anderson's and Rob Schultz's presentations.

**April 8:** Rob Schultz, Vice President and Executive Director for Audubon Minnesota and the Upper Mississippi River region of the National Audubon Society. Rob will talk about the history of Minnesota Audubon and plans for the future.

**May 13:** Lynette Anderson, Interpretive Naturalist and Restoration Assistant at Belwin Conservancy, will present "Belwin, Bison, and Birds." Belwin Conservancy is a 1,400-acre preserve just east of the Twin Cities. Lynette will talk about the wide variety of habitats at Belwin, most notably prairie and oak savanna, and about the introduction of a bison herd onto their land. Belwin was founded in 1971 and launched Belwin Outdoor Science, a collaboration with Saint Paul Public Schools. Lynette grew up on a farm in southern Wisconsin, which fed her love of the natural world at an early age. She graduated from UW-Stevens Point with a degree in Resource Management and Environmental Education, and has been with Belwin since 2008.



## Seasonal notes — Spring!

What's coming up? And sometimes leaving or going onward?

Birds of all sorts, from near and far. Arrivals to and departures from east Metro Twin Cities. Every day a new population enters greening neighborhoods, woodlands, watery lowlands. Every day, winter visitors and southern tourists stream in and then head on northward.

Yes, spring is springing, with normal interludes of winter prior to summer's upper Midwest heat and humidity. Oh, so short, and intense, we need to carve out time to emerge early, late, any time, day through evening, to listen, watch, feel the energy moving to, from, through our neighborhoods. The busyness peaks the hour or two nearest dawn and dusk, so plan ahead! And join the never-routine celebration.

I have a few "not to miss" birding destinations. Morning walks at Crosby Farm Regional Park and Silverwood off Silver Lake Road on the Ramsey/Hennepin county line. Dusk sounds and occasional sightings at woodcock leks anywhere around the outer 'burbs. Shorebirds and other waterbirds at Salt Lake near Marietta on the MN/SD border. This year I am being treated to a trek to south Texas to intercept the migrants in habitats and waysides unique to me, and as critical to them as Minnesota and Mississippi River areas.

Tops for me and many, of course are warblers streaming through with daily changes observable from most any woodland with watery edges. Why there? Structure, natural structure. Aquatic larvae hatching bugs into the air, overwintering eggs, larvae and adults returning to motion from land and leaf litter, and uncountable eggs hatching on tree trunks and limbs, from popping leaf buds and along new twig growth. Life returning from so many niches. A leisurely stroll anywhere can immerse you in "eye candy" and awe-full song. Take a young at heart for fun! Consider telling friends, other birders, some highlights. OR ME!

-Chase Davies



## Meet Field Trip Leader Chase Davies

Chase Davies loves being outdoors and she loves leading nature walks. No surprise, as she is one of the most frequent field trip leaders for the Saint Paul Audubon Society.

Chase is an ecologist with deep knowledge of the natural world and a wide range of experiences outdoors, beginning from the time she was growing up in Dayton, Ohio. "This was during WWII and there were no men around," she says. "We lived on the edge of the city, on the edge of the school district, and there weren't many kids around either. But there were fields and I wandered and took everything in. I was just outside most of the time." She spent summers with a grandmother who lived in upstate New York on a lake, exploring the outdoors there by boat; and the family drove to Naples FL many years for Christmas. "We explored Marco Island and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary - a National Audubon Society sanctuary -- driving around in my father's jeep," she recalls. Then at age 11 she went to a rustic summer camp near Rocky Mountain National Park and ended up going back every summer for nine years as a camper and then a counselor.

Birding started at age 9 when a friend of her mother's began taking her along on Dayton Audubon Society outings. "Four rivers converge in Dayton and there are dams to control flooding. The area around the dams is fabulous birding habitat," says Chase. "We also went out to the countryside, along the dirt roads. When the fields were flooded, they were full of water fowl and that's when I learned to identify ducks."

The trip that really hooked her on birds was a weekend near Sandusky Ohio. "Sandusky is on the south shore of Lake Erie, at one end of an archipelago of islands that extend to Point Pelee, Ontario, on the other side. This is where migrating birds - and many warblers - hop across the lake to Canada and further north."

The next step in Chase's life was Vassar College, where she majored in Zoology. "As a freshman I took a class that used Eugene Odum's brand new textbook *Ecology*, which was a radically new approach to science.



That course really set me up for knowing what I wanted to do in college and for my future interests," says Chase. "I took an interdepartmental approach and did independent study, one time studying chickadees and another investigating conservation practices on a dairy farm."

In pursuing work and a career, Chase realized, "I was not cut out for classroom teaching." Eventually settling in St. Paul, she worked for the Science Museum of Minnesota teaching classes to adults and kids, and directing the Minnesota Zoological Society as the New Zoo was opening in Apple Valley. In 1994, after a substantial stint as an accountant at H.B. Fuller, Chase retired and was able to spend a year

at the Thorne Ecological Institute in Boulder, CO, where she prepared to become an interpretive naturalist for the Rocky Mountain National Park. She continues to spend "as much time as possible" in the Rockies, often now as a field trip follower.

Chase's most meaningful birding experiences are when she is leading a group. "I enjoy watching people as they are seeing and learning new things. My goal is to help people open up a little so they are more observant using all their senses. I love to see the joy on a kid's face looking through a scope."

Going on a bird walk with Chase is a real pleasure but you need to catch her between travels. Most years this includes a trip to Nebraska in March to see the cranes, back to Minnesota for May, and June in the Rockies, experiencing spring in each location. This year she is going to take in spring on South San Padre Island, Texas.

"I have managed to do what I love for most of my life," she says. "Being outdoors, learning together with other people. Everyone knows something, and the fun is in sharing what we all know. I call it cooperative learning."

*-Martha Douglas, Cardinal Editor*

## Annual Budget Review and Board Elections

Our fiscal year 2020-2021 is drawing to a close, which means it's time to take care of chapter business that is required each year, in accordance with our bylaws. These business matters – budget review and board elections – are acted upon with the approval of our members and will be done electronically again this year.

A draft of the new budget, for 2021-2022, was approved by the Board on March 21 and is ready for comment by members. It is now posted on our website, with a link ([www.saintpaulaudubon.org/2020/04/annual-budget-review-and-board-elections](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/2020/04/annual-budget-review-and-board-elections)) to use for any comments or questions. The Board will vote to accept the budget at its meeting on May 3.

The second order of business is our annual board elections, and nominations are accepted for all positions, including current positions and additional directors. Officers are elected for one-year terms and all current officers are up for re-election, as follows:

President	Donn Waage
Vice President	Jane Braun
Vice President, Communications	Martha Douglas
Secretary	Kiki Sonnen
Treasurer	James Stout

Directors are elected for two-year terms, with one current director, Barbara Lindeke, due for re-election. There are also openings for additional directors on the board. If you would like to make a nomination, please send it to Donn Waage at [donnw@yahoo.com](mailto:donnw@yahoo.com). Nominations must be received by May 7 to be considered. The annual election of board members, including information about nominees, will be sent to members via email on May 14.

The 2021-2022 budget and a list of current board members with background information can be found at [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) in the "About" section.

## Group Events Remain on Hiatus

The Saint Paul Audubon Society Board of Directors continues to recommend that we do not schedule regular in-person group events for now, because of the continued need for protection against the spread of COVID-19. Meanwhile, Field Trip Coordinator Cathy Croghan reports that a full calendar of guided walks and field trips has been planned and "penciled in," in the event that we can begin them once again. If this happens before the next issue of the *Cardinal*, we will send an announcement via email to everyone on our email list. If you do not currently receive emails from us, please send an email to Ben Wilson at [ben@simpledesigns.biz](mailto:ben@simpledesigns.biz) and ask to be added.

## Modified Warbler Weekend May 8-10

As announced in the previous issue of the *Cardinal*, Warbler Weekend will take place this year, with the following COVID-19 precautionary modifications. Independent birding will be allowed in groups of 6 or fewer, with safety measures in place and without guides. The Hok-Si-La Park Dining Hall will be used to provide bird lists, maps, and return instructions, and all information will be set out on socially distanced tables. There will be no Friday talk or sit-down meals and the event will require no registration or costs. All recorded bird sightings will be used to compile the records for this year, continuing the 50-year record-keeping for our traditional Warbler Weekend.

## Environmental Review Required for High Density Plans

On February 10, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs (Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, Minnesota Citizens for the Protection of Migratory Birds, and Smart Growth Minneapolis) in their case against the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan. With its ruling, the court established that cities' comprehensive plans are not exempt from claims of environmental harm under MERA (Minnesota Environmental Rights Act), as the City of Minneapolis had claimed. The decision also sets precedent for all future city plans throughout the state to be subject to claims under MERA. The court recognized that the case has merit and may go forward to a district court trial to address likely environmental harm under the 2040 Plan. The Audubon Chapter and the other plaintiffs claim that Minneapolis' plan would cause environmental damage by placing high density development onto an infrastructure (streets, sewers, open space) which will not be able to handle the higher loads of traffic, waste, and overall carrying capacity. The City of St Paul and several suburbs had begun copying the Minneapolis 2040 Plan prior to this court case.

-Kiki Sonnen, Board Member