



TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League
October 2024

www.breckenridgeikes.org



Coming Events October 2024

- 8 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 22 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
Lee Ann Landstrom, Interpretive Naturalist: Wildlife and Culture of Costa Rica

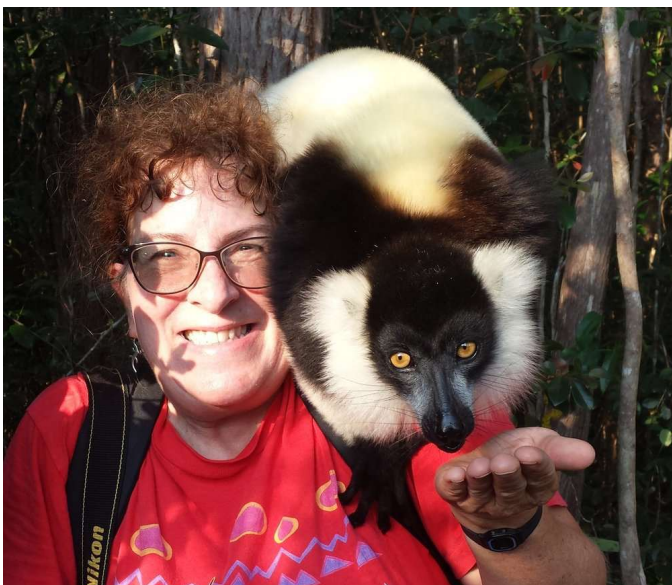
November 2024

- 12 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 26 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
David McNary
Assistant Director at Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services: Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC)

December 2024

- 10 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm

Lee Ann Landstrom and lemur



Social Educational Meeting:

Tuesday, October 22 7:30 pm
Lee Ann Landstrom, Interpretive Naturalist: Costa Rica

Lee Ann Landstrom has been an interpretive naturalist and environmental educator since 1980. She is now retired from the directorship (27-years) of Eastman Nature Center with the Three Rivers Park District. She supervised a staff of 12, and oversaw trails, habitat, and exhibits, as well as taught school and public classes. In 1998 Lee Ann was awarded their annual Excellent Employee award. She was also a part-time youth class instructor at the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul for nearly 20 years.

Lee Ann served ten years on the Minnesota Naturalists' Association, and was a board member and past president of the Minnesota Association for Environmental Education. She gave presentations at regional education conferences and wrote frequent columns for employee and association newsletters.

Lee Ann has a BA in biology from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, and a master's in biology/ecology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

In her leisure time, she likes to travel, garden, bird watch, and take photographs. She has led numerous nature tours to Costa Rica, where she co-owns a dairy farm in the cloud forest.

Breckenridge Chapter Board Meeting Highlights September 10, 2024

Deer Hunt on Banfill Island will not take place this 2024 season.

Conservation Issues/Legislative Update

A Big Mouth Buffalo Fish Study by Alec Lockman shows no successful spawn in 60 years. DNR is listening.

Membership Dues Recipient Karen Ostenso reminded members to return membership renewals for 2025.

Chapter House Rental Rates*

Current Members who are in good standing only
(damage deposit: \$200.00; \$100 for previous renters)
Monday through
Thursday.....\$150.00
Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays.....\$200.00
Scouts: (damage deposit \$50.00)
Overnights.....\$50.00

*Rates and terms subject to change without notice; please contact the Chapter for special circumstances. The Rental Agreement and Renters Checkout List are available on our website by clicking [here](#).

For availability, please contact Tim Johnson by email johns860@mac.com

Dick and Vera Brown Celebrate 75th Anniversary

It was a very nice turnout and very heartfelt gathering for two of our oldest members.

Congratulations, Dick and Vera!



Opinion: Wetlands Not a Problem But Beneficial

On Wednesday, August 28, 2024, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* printed an article by reporter Greg Stanley on the loss of wetlands in the U.S. and particularly in Minnesota. Environmental conservationists thought we had the problem licked with the passage of the no-net-loss rules. However, according to Stanley and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it takes more than “replacing” a wetland to offer protections to humans and wildlife. The quantity of replaced wetlands does not come anywhere near equal to the quality of the original.

Stanley mentions clear-cut timbering in boggy-type wetlands (I presume black spruce, green and black ash, and tamarack as merchantable timber, mostly) which shade the area and keep the moisture from warming and evaporating, as problematic. Removal of brush like red osier dogwood, highbush cranberry and such removes nesting cover and food for many species. Cattails and “weeds and brush,” as many see them, make up a sodden matrix like an absorbent sponge which keeps water from “running through” and thereby keeps the land from erosion and flooding and helps to keep drought from occurring.

Minnesota is estimated to have lost approximately 140,000 acres of wetlands in the last 18 years, and much more before that.

Developers often drain, fill or dredge a wetland for development and then create a shallower “beauty pond” for surrounding development. These ponds are generally void of most important species that develop and maintain the ecosystem.

It is not only the decimation to wildlife that we should be concerned about (although that is what initially raised my concern), but the lowering of the underground water table, affecting private home and farm wells and irrigation, which is becoming tragic and is of a major concern in many areas.

Natural wetlands can also dissipate or dilute the harm that farm and lawn chemicals cause to our waterways. Flood plains such as our Banfill Island, if logged, should be done very selectively—if at all—to ensure vegetation and wildlife reproduction persists and that no erosion occurs.

What is to be done? For one thing, whatever we do will raise the ire of conservatives who are afraid of losing their freedoms or having their rights trampled on. What is worse? To lose a little freedom, or to ruin the ecology of our nation?

Some possible solutions could be:

- no logging or grazing in delineated wetlands or within 50’ of public or private wetlands;
- no cultivation within 75’ of delineated wetlands;
- curb many large irrigation projects;
- put a complete halt to dredging, draining or filling of delineated wetlands, lakes and streams.

One problem is many wetlands have not been delineated (boundaries marked or surveyed on a map).

The cost to farmers, landowners and speculators would be an important obstacle. Some farmers would object, but if they had not farmed the area heretofore or for several years, there is no real loss. Speculators are a different case. To speculate infers to gamble, and to gamble indicates a chance to win or lose. Only sympathy can be given to gamblers.

Do these measures sound socialistic? Yes, but as our nation’s population is overgrown, some forms of governmental control have been and should be implemented.

For the benefit of humans and wildlife, we need more control favoring our natural ecosystems.

Dick Brown
August 31, 2024

P.S. We can’t wait for God to straighten things out. He has been pretty slow to do so the past 2000 years.

Ag Committee Chair Rep. Samantha Vang Updates Chapter Members

Reported by Tim Johnson



A huge part of Minnesota’s economy is the agricultural sector and for the last biennium the Ag Committee in the House has been chaired by Rep. Samantha Vang who represents Brooklyn Center and parts of Brooklyn Park. She has always asked to be assigned to this committee during her six years of representing 38B. She was Vice Chair of the Committee in her preceding term.

Many thought it unusual that Vang should be chairing the Committee since she represents an urban district. But she had good reason to request the assignment. Her family and many Hmong refugees have been farmers for generations in their ancestral homeland but, after arriving in their new home, Minnesota, they found it difficult to carry on this occupation due the barrier of high capital requirement for farmland acquisition.

She is proud of the bill she authored in 2023 which helps “emerging” farmers gain access to capital. She answered audience questions on the details of the program but she spent more time talking about other issues in the Supplemental Ag Bill like nitrate water pollution in the southeastern Minnesota karst region which the federal EPA has required Minnesota to do more about.

Rep. Vang said there is no data to show that things are getting better on the issue of nitrate pollution and the politics of addressing the problem is difficult to navigate. Money was repurposed to help families who don’t have access to clean drinking water. Next session being a budget session will be important in making progress on keeping ag nitrates out of our waters.

In parallel to the Izaak Walton League’s Upper Mississippi River Initiative (UMRI) which seeks to help small groups of farmers switch to regenerative practices (making for cleaner water) the legislature appropriated funds for grants to improve soil health by helping farmers purchase equipment for no-till farming and planting cover-crops.

UMRI is currently seeking funds and for a regenerative agriculture project which includes:

- Three year accelerating educational curriculum
- Intense local mentoring
- Cohorts of farmers working together on success sharing AND problem solving (cohorts of 6-8 each) impacting several thousand acres
- Equipment sharing
- Technical support
- Social support - removing feeling of isolation

We asked for her help and leadership in bringing together the environmental community, farm community, BWSR, MN Dept of Agriculture, DNR, MPCA and Governor to create a vision and actualize that vision in ways that will transform food production systems in MN—a replicable model—for the common good of Agriculture, the greater community and our environment.

Vang is on record supporting what is called “regenerative” agriculture initiatives. In line with this, she widened the Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC) to include stake-holders for public health, water quality and sustainable ag., aspects which have received too little attention up to now.

Neonicotinoids are harming our ecosystems but they are also very controversial. Bills to ban their use in farming, as has already been done in some countries, have been introduced yearly but have not

passed. Vang said getting a bill passed will require us to keep trying and get more supporters involved.

The audience appreciated the Representative's support of issues our Minnesota Division is pushing for in the area of regenerative agriculture. She was asked to do what she can in the future to support farmers growing perennial and annual small grain crops. After a Q&A time, all indulged in more conversation and refreshments which included a cake honoring the Representative's commitment to conservation.



Newly Stained

The Chapter House has gotten newly finished (stained in front and painted in back) before the snow flies. Thanks to the House and Grounds Committee.

Before



After



Back



W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America
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If you would like to submit an article for the Timberlines, please send it to
Barbara Franklin at: bbfrankli@gmail.com
Deadline is the First Day of each month.

All articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Breckenridge
Board of Directors. The Editor reserves the right to edit material as necessary.

October Haiku

From: *one day and three lines at a time:*
a year of nature haiku
by John Moriarty

A yellow landscape
Maples, aspen, cottonwoods
Woodlands shade of fall

