



# TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter  
Izaak Walton League  
October 2022

[www.breckenridgeikes.org](http://www.breckenridgeikes.org)



## Coming Events October 2022

- 11 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 25 Social/Educational meeting 7:30 pm  
Don Arnosti: Effective Conservation in Our Era: Democracy Under Siege

## November 2022

- 8 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 22 Social/Educational meeting 7:30 pm

## December 2022

- 13 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 27 No Social/Educational meeting

## January 2023

- 10 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 22 Annual Holiday Party 4 pm

Social Educational Meeting:  
**Tuesday October 25, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Don Arnosti:**  
**Effective Conservation in Our Era: Democracy Under Siege**

Don Arnosti, long-time policy advocate for environmental organizations (including the Ikes) will present our October talk titled Effective Conservation in Our Era: Democracy Under Siege.



Having watched bi-partisan environmental legislation, both nationally and in Minnesota, become almost a thing of the past in this age of political polarization, it can be dispiriting to those of us on the frontline of causes to protect our air, water, soil, woods and wildlife. Don Arnosti's decades of experience working on these important causes with intimate knowledge of the political process of passing bills makes him a great analyst of paths that will work best in the future to achieve our goals in a natural world in crisis.

Stay afterward for light refreshments, beverage and socialization with others and the speaker.

**We are seeking new Breckenridge Chapter members as well as candidates for three open spots on the Board. Please let any Board member know if you are interested in helping us maintain our legacy of conservation.**

# Banfill Island Buckthorn Mop Up

Last year we and our friends from the National Park Service were able to walk across a dry riverbed to reach Banfill Island to apply a selective herbicide to an area seriously infested with the highly invasive non-native buckthorn. This year we needed to wade the calf-deep channel to reach the island and apply a final treatment. Approach by boat was not possible due to low river levels.



*Figure 1 NPS staff wading the Banfill channel carry back an inflatable boat abandoned on the island*

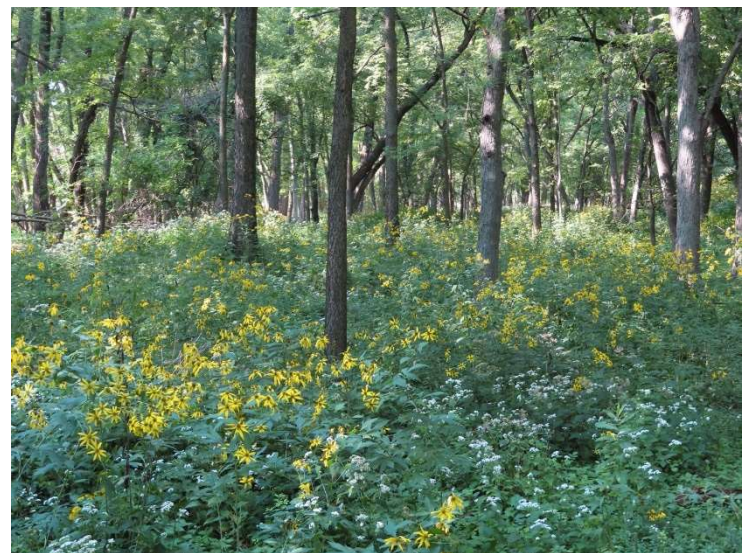
Areas of the island which submerge on an annual basis are free from buckthorn but the higher areas, which may only be submerged during extremely rare highest water levels, have buckthorn. The area we treated last year and went over again this year was completely dominated by buckthorn and covered about a half of an acre where the canopy was opened by the fall of large trees a decade or so ago.

Neil Smarjesse of the NPS was impressed with the amount of deer browse on our buckthorn which he is not used to seeing on other islands in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. This may be due to our large deer herd over-browsing and eliminating completely the plants they usually prefer. For example, once again we did not observe any cottonwood or silver maple saplings anywhere on the island even though they are part of the existing climax forest on the floodplain areas.



*Figure 2 Neil Smarjesse applies selective herbicide to the buckthorn we missed last year.*

Taking over from the buckthorn killed last year by the treatment is a dense growth of native snakeroot. If volunteers can make sure no buckthorn shrubs/trees on the island mature enough to produce fruit, we may be able keep the spread in check and allow the regrowth of native forbs which our increasingly threatened native pollinators require.



*Figure 3 Native cut-leaf coneflowers and snakeroot blooming in early September on Banfill Island adjacent to the treated buckthorn patches.*



# Izaak Walton League Files Legal Petition with Minnesota DNR to Protect Native “Rough Fish”

Earlier this month, the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League filed a legal [petition](#) requesting that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sustainably manage all native fish, both game and “rough” fish.

Native “rough fish” have been traditionally considered less desirable to eat and consequently are unprotected from over-harvest. Minnesota’s native “rough fish” are in rough shape—and the Izaak Walton League is leading the effort to change that.

The Izaak Walton League of America has been a leader in conservation since its founding in 1922. At its national centennial celebration earlier this year in East Peoria, Ill., the League passed a resolution calling for comprehensive fisheries management to sustainably manage all native fish, both game and non-game.

The petition requests three basic changes to the fishing regulations governing native “rough fish.”

- Create a daily possession limit, along with any regulations necessary to ensure sustainable populations of all native fish.
- List the species by their scientific names. Presently, entire groups of native “rough fish” are listed by common names. This prevents confusion when interpreting regulations.
- Close seasons for any native “rough fish” species listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern in Minnesota Rules until the species has recovered.

The League filed the legal petition in partnership with The Sierra Club North Star Chapter, Friends of the Mississippi River, CURE (Clean Up River Environment), MN350, the Minnesota Conservation Federation and Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas.

Minnesota law requires the DNR to provide the petitioners with “specific and detailed reply in

writing” within 60 days. In the meantime, we urge all Minnesotans to contact the Minnesota DNR in support of the petition: MN DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155 or [commissioner.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:commissioner.dnr@state.mn.us)

The complete petition text can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/iwlafishpetition>.

## Background on Rough Fish

Minnesota is home to 143 species of native fish, 27 of those native species are designated as “rough fish,” a pejorative term assigned to native species such as buffalo fish, freshwater drum, goldeyes, quillback and redhorse, without scientific or practical justification. Yet, this unscientific term is still used by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Our current fishing regulations, which allow unsustainable and, in most instances, unlimited harvest of native “rough fish” are an unscientific relic of the 1950’s.

The League’s legal petition reflects the current scientific understanding that all native species provide important benefits to ecosystems. Historically, fisheries managers sought to minimize populations of “rough fish.” This simplistic management strategy ignored the ecosystem services provided by all native fish. They are prey for birds, otters and even wolves.

Many of these species, such as the shorthead redhorse, prey on invasive zebra mussels. The freshwater drum is host to 11 species of native mussels. Mooneye and goldeye are the only host of the endangered spectacle case mussel. Bigmouth buffalo, which can live to more than 100 years, compete directly with invasive Asian carp. These valuable fish face the same threats as game fish—along with the additional threat of increasing and, in some instances, unlimited harvest. Native “rough fish” are clearly a resource for bald eagles, but they are also a resource for people.

*Tyler Winter, [TylerJWinter@gmail.com](mailto:TylerJWinter@gmail.com)*

Tyler Winter is the spokesperson for the MN Division of the Izaak Walton League of America.



An excited boy holding a shorthead redhorse.



A girl with a large freshwater drum.



Mooneye are host to the endangered spectaclecase mussel.



An angler admires a bigmouth buffalo.



## Senator Hoffman Answered Questions on the Environment



Speaking at our September Social/Education meeting, Sen. John Hoffman (who currently represents the Breckenridge Chapter area) covered his years representing our community on the Anoka Hennepin School Board and Minnesota Senate. He described the key role our members (especially Rep. Darby Nelson and DNR Commissioner Gene Merriam) had in encouraging him to serve on the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. Now serving in the minority, he has been disappointed in being removed from that committee by the Republican leadership despite his record of reaching across the aisle to sponsor bipartisan bills. If he is reelected and his party regains the majority, he hopes to return to serving on one of the Environment committees.

He also spoke of some of the steps forward by the current Minnesota administration in dealing with the threats from climate change, including the zero-emission vehicle standard that requires automobile manufacturers to deliver more vehicles with ultra-low or zero tailpipe emissions for sale in Minnesota, including electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid models.

On the down side, Hoffman lamented the Senate majority's lack of support for what an audience member termed "no-brainer legislation to end the use of toxic lead hunting ammunition and fishing tackle". He also criticized the shabby treatment Republican Sen. Carrie Ruud received from her leadership due in part to her support of environmentally friendly bills. Hoffman had worked closely with Ruud and considers her a friend that Senators will miss after her party voted not to endorse her for the Senate in 2022 representing the Brainerd Lakes area.

As a tax-exempt organization, the Ikes do not endorse political candidates and have not picked a candidate in the upcoming new Senate District 34 which now includes Rogers, Dayton, Champlin and parts of Brooklyn Park and Coon Rapids. These communities have in common the Mississippi River and as protectors of our waters, our Chapter urges its members to consider the candidates' stands on environmental issues when they vote in this next month.

*Reported by Tim Johnson*



# Fireweed

On our recent trips to Alaska, both Wendy and I were impressed with the stunning fireweed that one finds everywhere in its different stages. Fireweed is a native plant that's found throughout the temperate northern hemisphere including some areas in the boreal forests. It earned its name because this plant is the first colonizer in the soil after forest fires. In Great Britain it also earned the name bombweed due to the rapid colonization of land that was bombed during WWII. Fireweed is also an important plant for honey producers as it attracts the bees and hummingbirds as well. Most parts of the plant are edible and it is also used as an herbal remedy for migraine, stomach ulcers, wound healing, enlarged prostate (benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH) and the common cold. This beautiful plant is a member of the Evening Primrose family (Onagraceae).



The blossoms work their way up the stalk starting in mid-summer, reaching the top of the stalk in early autumn, usually right before the weather turns truly cold, a sure sign that winter will follow soon. In the center of the flower, there are up to 8 long white filaments with large magenta anthers; these anthers eventually shrivel and turn brown.



## *Perilous Bounty*

By Tom Philpott

Tom Philpott published *Perilous Bounty: The Looming Collapse of American Farming and How We Can Prevent It*, a scathing expose of our current farming practices and the commercial processes surrounding it, in 2020. He covers three primary topics; the depletion of water resources in parts of California, the depletion of soil in the corn belt, and the huge companies that farmers rely on to purchase what they need to grow their produce and market their harvests.

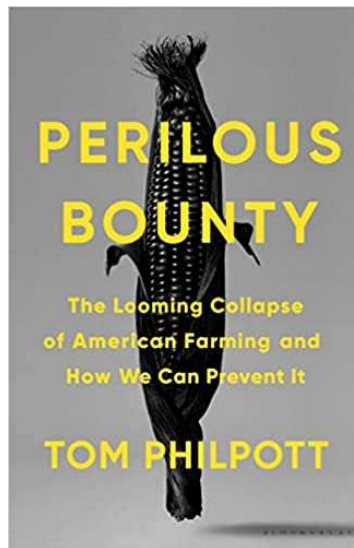
We have heard a lot about the drying western aquifers, the huge amount of water needed for some California crops, as well as the loss of topsoil and the use of chemicals in our part of the country. I choose to focus on some of the conglomerates that produce farm machinery, seed, and chemicals, and their role in what happens to harvested crops.

Our corn belt grows about 90% of the US output of corn and about 80% of the soybean output. The replacement of small and medium size farms with bigger ones skyrocketed in our lifetimes. In 1940 Iowa had 213,000 farms. By 2007, it was 92,656. Between 1982 and 1997, the median size of farms in Iowa increased from 395 acres to 869 acres!

Corn and soybean farming require billions of dollars of governmental support. This author argues that a lot of the profits from farming accrue, not to the farmers, but to several enormous firms that provide equipment, seed, pesticides and fertilizers. And when the harvest is done, these same companies manage their marketing.

His research shows that John Deere sells 63% of the combines sold in the US, and 53% of the tractors. There are regulations that only certified Deere mechanics can repair these machines, so farmers can't work on them themselves. Instead, they pay big bucks to John Deere to repair what they sell.

Monsanto, the original producer of Roundup, bought Asgrow, a big soybean seed company, and



Dekalb, a big vendor of corn seed, in 1996. And in 1999, Dupont bought Pioneer Hi-Bred International, another big seed producer. Eventually, they all merged into 3 companies: Corteva Agriscience, Syngenta (Chinese owned), and Bayer which took over Monsanto in 2018.

In addition to selling seed, they produce fungicides, pesticides, and insecticides. These 3 companies control 80% of the corn seed market, 75% of the soybean seed market and 60% of the pesticide trade. It is described as a closed loop system of “proprietary seeds engineered to resist herbicides made by the industry, coated with insecticides and fungicides also made by the industry.” Of course, resisting herbicides does not mean immune to them.

There are 4 conglomerates that buy commodities and then sell them here and abroad: Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge (prominent in Brazil), Cargill, and Louis Dreyfuss Company (in the Netherlands). Two of these companies, ADM and Cargill, also process the harvested crops for use in foods and ethanol.

Cargill also buys and slaughters animals, which are fed copious amounts of soybeans and corn, then sells them overseas. Three companies, Tyson, based in Arkansas, JBS, based in Brazil, and National Beef control 85% of the US beef market, 70 % of the hogs, and 25% of the chickens.

I did not know the extent of influence wielded by a few incomprehensibly huge firms but it is frightening. They all have extensive lobbying groups. The only action I could think to take is to make sure none of my investments involve any of these companies.

There is also a hopeful section on the attempts of some farmers to decrease the effects on water and soil. In the final chapter, the author finds promise in the work of some small farmers who use regenerative techniques. I hope their methods continue to expand.

*Reviewed by Karen Ostenso*



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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](mailto: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.

## No Mow May in Brooklyn Park



Jerry Steele brought this issue to our Chapter, which then brought this suggestion to the City of Brooklyn Park in April of 2021. At that time Jason Newby, RS Inspections & Environmental Health Manager informed us that allowing a turf grass lawn to grow to a height greater than 8 inches at any time would be in violation of the City ordinance. Council member Susan Pha then took the initiative to change the ordinance.

*ccxmedia.org posted this notice:*

Brooklyn Park is joining a growing list of cities to support “No Mow May,” a campaign not to cut grass during the month of May for environmental reasons. No Mow May has grown over the last decade in an effort by scientists to increase the population of bees and other pollinators, which

experts say have experienced severe declines globally.

In Appleton, WI, one study showed the bee population was five times higher at participating homes compared to nearby parks that had been mowed. “More food is needed for bees in the spring as they come out of hibernation,” said Ashley Kennedy, founder of Zero Waste Advocates of Minnesota.

Experts say there’s also evidence it helps the bird population by cutting down on lawn mower noise, which they say hinders spring mating.

No Mow May would be entirely optional for Brooklyn Park residents. The cities of Crystal and Edina are others that have supported the campaign.