

# Carver Current

Volunteer Newsletter of Lowry Nature Center



## Summer 2024

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The **mission** of Three Rivers Park District is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system.

## Volunteer Excursions & Events

We are planning ahead! Please save the date for these upcoming volunteer gatherings. All gatherings include time to eat. Bring your own bag lunch/dinner. All of these are at Lowry unless otherwise indicated.

- Spring Wildflower & Photo Walk Thursday May 9 , 6 -7:15pm
- Volunteer Potluck Thursday, Sept. 26 at 6pm.
- Owl Banding in Carver Park Thursday, Oct. 17, 8:30 10:30pm Location will be announced in the fall but will be in Carver Park Reserve.

## Re-dedication of the Grimm Farm By Zack Mohlis

100 years ago this June, hundreds of people gathered on the farm of Ferdinand Thurke, which is now part of Carver Park Reserve. There was picnicking, celebrations, speeches, and a young girl tugged at an American flag, revealing a large bronze plaque to the crowd. Years before Thurke bought the old farm, it had belonged to Wendelin Grimm, who settled here with his family after immigrating to Minnesota from Kùlsheim, Baden, Germany. In one of the trunks the family packed across the Atlantic, Grimm had packed a sack of alfalfa seeds, which he planted on his new farm in 1858. After one winter, his crop experiences heavy winter-kill, but he saved seeds from the successful plants and sowed those. Each year, more and more plants survived until he had developed a winter-hardy variety of alfalfa –the first alfalfa that could survive the cold northern winters.

Grimm’s neighbor, Henry Gerdson, noticed Grimm’s fat and healthy cows and asked him where he got his corn feed. Grimm replied “Kein Kornchen, nur Ewiger Klee!” Not one kernel of corn, only alfafa. Word spread that Grimm had high-producing cows fed on his protein-rich alfalfa. He bartered with neighbors and supplied seeds to surrounding farmers. In time, Carver County was known for its dairy cows, but especially for its large stands of winter-hardy alfalfa, which supplied feed to the region.

By the time the last Grimm left this farm and Wendelin Grimm had passed away, Grimm’s alfalfa seeds and his name were spreading. The University of Minnesota and the U.S. Department of Agriculture took notice and began studying and writing about Grimm Alfalfa. Eventually, just about every seed company was selling Grimm seed as Grimm Alfalfa became the preferred variety throughout the Midwest and Canada.

By 1924, the Grimm Alfalfa Growers’ Association wanted to honor Wendelin Grimm’s contributions, which had made Minnesota’s successful dairy industry possible. On that day in June, 100 years ago, they erected a monument with a bronze plaque in honor of Wendelin Grimm, a stones throw from where he first planted his seeds in 1858.

This Summer, on Saturday June 8th, Three Rivers is hosting a Re-Dedication of the Grimm Farm Historic Site at the Grimm Farm. Visitors can try their hand at butter churning, meet a dairy cow, and tour the historic house. I invite you to join us and volunteer at this event and other programs at the Grimm Farm as we continue to honor and celebrate Wendelin Grimm, his tenacity, neighborly spirit, and his alfalfa which made Carver County the Home of Grimm Alfalfa.



# Summer Volunteer Opportunities

## Monarch Larval Monitoring

If you're looking to contribute to citizen science and enjoy exploring the prairie, "The Monarch Larva Monitoring Project" could be for you. You'll track monarch eggs, larvae, and milkweed within Carver Park Reserve. Basic plant and insect identification experience is helpful.

Training is included.

Volunteer Shift: 1 hour/once per week June - Aug.

Requirements: Commitment to years of weekly independent observations and data collection through late Spring and early Fall.

Physical Activity: Able to walk off trail in uneven terrain and exposure to the natural elements.

## Summer Camp Volunteers

Required Training: Wed., June: 5 - 3:30 - 6:45pm

Volunteer Shift: half/whole weekdays- 2, 3 or 4 days/week

Duration: 3.5 hours or 7 hours per day

Location: Lowry Nature Center

Types of Volunteer positions:

- Summer Camp assistant  
Physical Activity: Some.
- Returning volunteers go to this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090E4AA9AC2AAFA7-47922715-2024#/>

New summer camp volunteers email Kirk to get more information at

kirk.mona@threeriversparks.org.

**Grimm Farm Event Volunteers** - see article on right



## Second Saturdays at Grimm Opportunities

Volunteers wanted for Second Saturdays at Grimm Farmhouse this summer! We are partnering with Gale Woods Farm again to host our monthly series of events at the Grimm Farm in Carver Park! We are seeking volunteers for each of the three sessions who can assist with setting up and taking down the event, counting visitors, leading an activity such as pioneer games, and assisting as needed to ensure the event runs smoothly. Events will run from 1:30-4:00 PM, but volunteers should plan to be there from 1-4:30 PM to assist with set-up and takedown. Some lifting is required. The house is climate controlled, but volunteers are often outside in potentially high temperatures, humidity, and even rain.

The dates and themes are listed below. If you have questions or would like sign up for a shift, please reach out to Zack Mohlis at [zachary.mohlis@threeriversparks.org](mailto:zachary.mohlis@threeriversparks.org).

- June 8th: Re-Dedication of the Grimm Farm Historic Site: 100 More Years
- July 13th: Insect Invasion at the Grimm Farm!
- August 10th: Life on the Farm (after The Grimms)

## Summer Camp Opportunities (see above)

Age 4-6 9:30am - Noon

- Muddy Messy Mayhem Camp - Wed. 6/12 - Fri. 6/14
- Flutter, Buzz, Chirp Camp - Mon. 7/1 - Wed. 7/3
- Young Pioneer Camp - Mon. 7/22 - Thurs. 7/25
- Hungry Caterpillar Camp - Mon. 8/19 - Thurs. 8/22

Age 6-9 9:30am - 3:00pm

- Forts & Forests Camp - Wed. 6/12 - Fri. 6/14
- Grand Friends Camp - Mon. 6/17 - Tues. 6/18
- Laura Ingalls Outdoor Adv. - Mon. 7/8 - Thurs. 7/11
- Forest Fellowship Camp - Mon. 8/5 - Thurs. 8/8
- Guardians of Lowry Camp - Mon. 8/12 - Thurs. 8/15
- Pirates of Carver Park - Mon. 8/19 - Thurs. 8/22

Age 8-11 9:30 - 3:00pm

- Naturecraft (Survival Skills)- Thurs. 6/20 - Fri. 6/21
- Force of Nature (Star Wars) - Mon. 6/24 - Thurs. 6/27
- Nature Art Camp - Mon. 6/24 - Thurs. 6/27
- Treegoji (Jumanji) Camp - Mon. 7/15 - Thurs. 7/18
- Nature Girls - Mon. 7/22 - Thurs. 7/25
- Goodrich Wizard Camp (Hogwarts) - Mon. 7/29 - Thurs. 8/1
- Lowry Lumberjack Camp - Mon. 8/5 - Thurs. 8/8

Age 8-12 1:00 - 3:00pm

- Autism Outdoors Camp - Mon. 7/15 - Thurs. 7/18

Age 9-12 9:30am - 3:00pm

- Young Birders Field Camp - Mon. 7/1 - Wed. 7/3

Age 11-15 9:30am - 3:00pm

- Nature Journal Adventure - Thurs. 6/20 - Fri. 6/21
- Bike, Hike, Fish & Canoe Camp - Mon. 7/8
- Bushcraft Camp - Mon. 7/15 - Thurs. 7/18
- Naturalist in Training Camp - Mon. 7/29 - Thurs. 8/1
- Advanced Nature Art Camp - Mon. 8/12 - Thurs. 8/15

Age 13-18 9:30am - Noon

- Autism Outdoors Camp Mon. 7/15 - Thurs. 7/18



## Thanks for Helping with the Hopkins Family Fun Day!

79 people attended this free event, offered through Hopkins Community Ed. and the Park District.

Thanks so much to Michelle Cook, Betty Magnuson, Becca Campbell, Carol Chapple, Ashley Griffin and Kathryn Carlson for making this a wonderful event for those who attended!

Ashley and Becca helped families scoop up pond insects and other animals on the dock. It was so interesting some folks never left this area. They could not wait to come back and check out a pond backpack and scoop more.

Betty did a wonderful job greeting everyone and answering questions about the event as well as any other questions that might come her way.

Michelle talked to guests and showed them the Red-tailed Hawk. She told about the bird and answered folk's questions.

Carol Chapple passed out binoculars and encouraged folks to look at birds nearby. The osprey did not appear on its nesting platform Thanks so much for doing a great job and making it a great day!

Allison Neaton

## News from Lowry

While 2024 is well underway, we wanted to share with you a little snapshot of 2023. Lowry connected with nearly 46,000 guests in 2023 through programs, rentals and visitor services. There were 936 programs taught by Lowry educators at Lowry and in schools accounting for more than 50,000 hours of time interacting with students aged preschool to senior. In 2023, Lowry was supported by 71 long-term and 76 short-term volunteers for a total of 2,620 volunteer hours! It was a busy but rewarding year and we couldn't have done it all without your support! Here are some other fun facts from 2023. We rented 231 snowshoes and 507 in sleds in 2023, all in January, February and March and none in December. We did 96 free programs for more than 3,000 participants and gave more than \$8,000 in program fee discounts. We received an \$80,000 grant to fund an Dakota Perspectives Trail in collaboration with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community which should be completed at the end of 2024.



## Spring Earth Day Event

Thanks to many wonderful volunteers our first annual Earth Day event was a huge Lowry success. Even on a chilly grey spring day, we had over 120 attendees! Visitors got to see wild songbirds banded and learn about banding research. They also got to visit the enchanted trail searching for camouflaged animals and hidden painted rocks. Some participants got in extra steps by trying out the challenge trail or joining one of the many naturalist guided hikes. The frogs were singing, wildflowers were found, bigfoot clues were hunted down, and the osprey devoured fish on the new platform. Families also planted alfalfa seeds while learning about the Grimms, took home native wildflower seeds and even a free tree. There was so much learning and fun celebrating our planet earth! Thanks again to all of you for making Lowry events so special. The event would not have been possible without these folks.

Pictured below: upper left Wayne Olson, upper right Lisa Torfin, lower left Jennifer Wood. Not pictured: Michelle Cook, Anthony Pini, Kathryn Carlson, Jill Sweet, and Maddie Sullivan.



## Thanks Maple Syrup Volunteers

The 2024 syrup season was unlike any we've seen before. An earlier start, two stints near 70° that didn't end the season and a forest with a severe lack of snow cover. In the end we produced just over 22 gallons of syrup. We battled frozen lines, skunky sap in the tank and trees that were unpredictable. In the end, we couldn't have done it without the help of many volunteers, including the Chapple family, Wayne Olsen, Larry Pokorny, Todd Bollig, the Sieberer kids and Larry Kurzeka and his grandsons, James and Lucas. In July we'll sit down and decide which bottles will go to the State Fair. Fingers crossed this is the year we return to the top of the ribbon stand!

## Lowry Nature Center

Carver Park Reserve, Victoria, MN 55386 | 763.694.7650

### Summer Phenology

#### June

- White-tailed Deer give birth to fawns, typically two, in June or July. These fawns keep their spots for 3 or 4 months. Adult deer can be seen eating acorns, grasses, mushrooms, wild grapes, apples, shrubs and tree leaves of many kinds. Male deer grow their antlers in the spring and summer. Like the photo, deer antlers are fuzzy when they are growing due to the blood vessels present just under the fuzzy outer coating.

#### July

- Dog-day Cicadas hatch in Minnesota and begin buzzing in trees. These large bugs, closely related to leafhoppers, hatch annually. Periodical cicadas spend 13 or 17 years underground before hatching. Both the 13 and 17 year cicadas will hatch this year in areas to the south and east of Minnesota. Trillions of cicadas are expected to be seen in May and June.
- Both adults and young Canada geese begin trying their new flight feathers. The adults have been flightless since about mid-June and so now whole families become airborne.

#### August

- Painted Turtles begin hatching from nests in the ground around mid-August. If they hatch later in the season, they will stay in the ground over the winter and emerge in spring. If the summer is warm and has days above 84F, more of the eggs will be female. If the summer is cooler, more of the eggs will be male. One reason for this is that these turtles do not have sex chromosomes.

