



November 10-12, 2017

Deep Portage Learning Center

Hackensack, Minnesota

# MNA Annual Conference 2017

Welcome to the 2017 MNA Annual Conference! I am excited to present this year's theme: Walk the Walk.

As naturalists, we recognize that nature is something to be enjoyed and appreciated by everyone, and that it is also important for people to be well-informed citizens of the world who are able to make responsible decisions and be good stewards of the earth. These two things are key to the success of MNA's mission: to advance natural and cultural resource interpretation for the purpose of fostering wise stewardship of all resources.

Those things, however, are easier said than done. In recent years we, on a global scale, have been having more and more conversations concerning human rights, climate change, and the intersection of the two. Amid those conversations it is becoming clearer and clearer that we can be more effective in accomplishing our mission: we can do better at making nature accessible to everyone. We can do better at being inclusive of more races, religions, abilities, ages, languages, sexualities, and genders. We can do better at teaching people about alternative sustainable energy sources and leading a less wasteful life. We can do better at teaching about the environmental consequences of the choices we make as individuals and as a society. We can do better; we can always do better.

Our conference this year is about celebrating and sharing our accomplishments. It is about seizing new solutions and ideas to bring home. It is about brainstorming new ideas on how to tackle an issue. It is about gaining new information so that you are better equipped to make good decisions in the future. **It is about making sure that we not only talk the talk, but that we also walk the walk.**



Ashley Smith  
Conference Coordinator

A huge thank  
you to Deep  
Portage Learning  
Center for  
hosting us!



**Deep Portage**  
LEARNING CENTER  
*Exploring Woods • Water • Wildlife*

## Conference Planning Committee

Mary Morris	Amy Flatten
Patty Riley	Anna Toenjes
Laurel Sundberg	Miriam Turnbull
Oakley Beizanz	Tara Rogness

## MNA Board of Directors

Kirk Mona	Eric Vehe
Lisa Gilliland	Alisha Paplow
Julie Grecian	Sharon Stiteler
Victoria Thompson	Cody Rosseti
Ashley Smith	Mary Burch
Meagan Keefe	

# Conference Schedule

## Friday

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm - Dinner

6:45 pm - 7:45 pm - Keynote

8:00 pm - 12:00 am - Social Time

## Saturday

7:00 am - 8:00 am - Breakfast

8:15 am - 9:15 am - Concurrent Session A

9:30 am - 11:00 am - Discussion Session

11:15 am - 12:15 pm - Concurrent Session B

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm - Lunch

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm - Member Meeting

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm - Site Tours/Informal Networking/Break

3:45 pm - 4:45 pm - Concurrent Session C

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm - Concurrent Session D

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm - Dinner

7:00 pm - 12:00 am - Social Time

## Sunday

7:00 am - 8:00 am - Breakfast

8:00 am - 8:30 am - Packing Time

8:45 am - 12:15 pm - Workshop Session

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm - Lunch

# Keynote Speaker



## The Importance of Fun

### Great Hall

Having fun as a Naturalist. It seems easy. That's what most people view us as: "Those people that play outside all day." Being a naturalist is an amazingly fun job, but fun doesn't always equate to easy. Sharing our passion for the environment in an energetic and enthusiastic way day after day takes a lot of work. Some days are just a walk in the park, others not so much.

Easy or not, the work of a naturalist is work that is important. It's important to every single person we come in contact with while on the job. From program participants, to administrative staff, to other naturalists (yourself included), *having fun matters*. Because if we're not having fun in nature, who will?



Friday 6:45-7:45

## Brett Sieberer

Brett has been a Naturalist for over 15 years and hasn't worked a single day over that entire period. Like most in this field, his journey has included many stops along the way (Wood Lake, Dodge, Westwood Hills, Richardson, Lebanon Hills, then Dodge again) to where he currently spends his days: at THE Lowry Nature Center. From pirates to superheroes to mythical creatures he finds unique ways to connect people to nature that is often unexpected. He strives each day to make "work" fun; for his program participants as well as for his coworkers. He strongly believes that having fun at work is the single most important thing we can do.

# Evening Entertainment

## FRIDAY NIGHT ONLY

### People Bingo —

**8:00-8:30 Room 4**

Are you someone, or do you know someone, who has worked in the outdoor field in a foreign country? What about someone who does a great woodcock impersonation? Find out during People Bingo! Whoever gets black out bingo first will win a prize.

### Night Games —

**8:30-9:30 Meet at the Dining Hall**

Throw it back to childhood nights. Join us for some playtime in the backyard with some good old fashioned night games, like Kick the Can, Sardines, or some Ghost in the Graveyard.

### Climbing Wall —

**8:30-9:30 Rock Wall Room**

Try your hand at rock climbing at Deep Portage's indoor climbing wall. Do you think you can reach the top?



## SATURDAY NIGHT ONLY

### Maple Syrup Contest —

**7:00-8:00 Great Hall**

Last year Wolf Ridge won the Maple-Leaf trophy. Will you be the winner this year? Bring your maple syrup samples to compete. Everyone is welcome to taste the samples and vote for their favorites!

### Puppet Show Challenge —

**8:00-9:30 Great Hall**

Sign yourself (or a group) up for our Puppet Show Challenge. A puppet stage will be provided, BYOP (Bring Your Own Puppets), and you will get a MAX of 5 minutes to include all pieces of *one* of the scenarios printed in the Registration Packet or posted at the conference.



## BOTH NIGHTS

**Great Hall**

### Board Games —

Grab some friends, grab some people you've never met, and play some board games!

### Photo Contest —

Check out the Photo Contest submissions and vote for your favorite in each category.

### Book Share —

Bring your favorite books and resources to share. Peruse the books and write down the ones that look worth buying or borrowing.

### Bad Taxidermy Gallery —

Bring pictures of your (or your site's) worst taxidermy. Enjoy the worst of the worst and add some captions for a laugh.

### Silent Auction & Raffle —

Help support our scholarship and grants program by buying raffle tickets and bidding for items at the Silent Auction. Raffle tickets can be bought at meal times. The drawing will be on Sunday at lunch. Silent Auction will close Saturday at 9 pm .

**Fri. & Sat. 7:00 - 12:00**

# Overview of Tracks

 <b>Tracks</b>	<b>Concurrent Session A</b> 8:15-9:15am	<b>Discussion Session</b> 9:30-11:00am	<b>Concurrent Session B</b> 11:15-12:15pm
<b>Administration</b>	<b>How Can WE Help US? Exploring Partnerships</b> Allison Neaton, Patty Maher & Amanda Fong Room 1	<b>Volunteer Recruitment and Management</b> Julie Grecian Room 1	<b>Sponsorships: Enhancing Your Events Through Community Engagement</b> Karl Huemiller Room 1
<b>Sustainability and Climate Change</b>	<b>Renewable Energy and Your Center</b> Dale Yerger Room 2	<b>Renewable Energy Curriculum Discussion</b> Victoria Thompson Room 2	<b>Recycling and Waste Reduction Activity Training</b> Angie Ziobro Room 2
<b>Inclusivity and Accessibility</b>	<b>Equitable Community Engagement: Intentional Program Design</b> James Taborda-Whitt Room 3	<b>Creating Spaces for a Diversity of Groups</b> Heidi Matheson Wolter Room 3	<b>Risk and Resilience: Getting Everyone Outside</b> Abigail Lucas Room 3
<b>Natural History</b>	<b>Interpreting Mammal Skulls: Moving Beyond Identification</b> Mick Garrett Room 4	<b>Animal Care Conversations</b> Pam Welisevich Room 4	<b>Bat Threats and Supports</b> Jay Ritterson Room 4
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Working with Paras to Increase Program Effectiveness</b> Liz Sheppard Theater	<b>How to be a Freelance Naturalist</b> Sharon Stiteler Theater	<b>Pollinator Education Assessment: How Did We Do?</b> Kayla Wolfe, Oakley Biesanz, & Ann Hutchinson Theater

# and Presentations

<p><b>Saturday Afternoon</b></p> <p>1:30-3:30pm</p>	<p><b>Concurrent Session C</b></p> <p>3:45-4:45pm</p>	<p><b>Concurrent Session D</b></p> <p>5:00-6:00pm</p>	<p><b>Workshop Session</b></p> <p>8:45-12:15pm</p>
<p><b>Member Meeting</b></p> <p>1:30-2:30 Dining Hall</p> 	<p><b>The Sally Manzara Interpretive Nature Center</b></p> <p>Tony Manzara &amp; Connie Kirk Room 1</p>	<p><b>Evaluating Naturalists: Developing Best Practice Protocols</b></p> <p>Stephan Carlson &amp; Molly O'Connors Room 1</p>	<p><b>Researching, Cultivating and Soliciting Successful Grants!</b></p> <p>Gary Kelsey Room 1</p>
	<p><b>Get Dirty with Lake Mud</b></p> <p>Tommy Rodengen Room 2</p>	<p><b>Plan Your Own Community Climate Convening</b></p> <p>Kristen Poppleton Room 2</p>	<p><b>Integrating, Interpreting and Acting on Climate Change</b></p> <p>Kristen Poppleton Room 2</p>
<p><b>Site Tours</b></p> <p>2:30-3:30 Great Hall</p> <p><b>Informal Networking</b></p> <p>2:30-3:30 Anywhere!</p>	<p><b>"Back in My Day...": Encouraging Seniors to Open Up and Share Their Nature Stories</b></p> <p>Christa von Wald &amp; Noelle Roden Room 3</p>	<p><b>Connecting City Kids to Nature</b></p> <p>Josh Leonard Room 3</p>	<p><b>Engaging Teens as an Inclusion Strategy</b></p> <p>Amanda Fong Room 3</p>
	<p><b>Minnesota: Birthplace of Modern Ecology</b></p> <p>Caitlin Potter Room 4</p>	<p><b>Getting Excited About Dragonflies!</b></p> <p>Curt Oien Room 4</p>	<p><b>Reading the Landscape</b></p> <p>Bryan Wood Room 4</p>
<p><b>Break</b></p> <p>2:30-3:30 Anywhere!</p>	<p><b>Trainings, Certifications, Publications and More! Find Out What NAI Can Do For You!</b></p> <p>Jeff Boland Theater</p>	<p><b>#SocialMedia4Nature Centers</b></p> <p>Kelly Amoth Theater</p>	<p><b>Paint and Sip, MNA-Style</b></p> <p>Laurel Sundberg Great Hall</p>

# Concurrent Session A

Saturday 8:15 - 9:15

## Interpreting Mammal Skulls: Moving Beyond Identification

Mick Garrett, Naturalist, Dodge Nature Center

Room 4

Skulls present an amazing interpretive opportunity, no matter if they are found on the trail, in a visitor center, or being brought on an outreach visit. The public's fascination with skulls allows you, the interpreter, to captivate your audience and encourage scientific inquiry. By moving beyond identification to the interpretation of the skull, you increase the engagement of your audience. During this presentation you will learn the basics of skull interpretation; dentition patterns, muscle dominance and attachment, eye location, and mandible shape, all of which will be used to interpret a skull and the life of the animal to which it belonged.

## How Can WE Help US? Exploring Partnerships

Allison Neaton, Patty Maher & Amanda Fong,  
Outdoor Education Supervisors & Community  
Engagement Coordinator, Lowry Nature Center,  
Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park & Three Rivers  
Park District

Room 1

Join us for a panel discussion about creating and maintaining partnerships. We will explore examples of partnerships with schools, community groups, and other agencies. What has worked well and what has not. How to meet the needs of all partners involved and have a high-quality outcome for all participants.

## Renewable Energy and Your Center

Dale Yerger, Director, Deep Portage Learning  
Center

Room 2

Learn how to make your center more energy efficient! We will tour solar PV arrays, lighting upgrades, and biomass utilization to learn ways to green up your center and become more energy sustainable. Share your ideas and experiences as we tour the Deep Portage campus.

## Equitable Community Engagement: Intentional Program Design

James Taborda-Whitt, Program Manager, East  
Side Neighborhood Services

Room 3

“Community Engagement” is a hot button, albeit ambiguous, phrase across park settings and youth programs alike. However, achieving a true sense of engagement isn't always successful at first. Especially when the communities we seek to engage are unlike us or unlike those we typically serve. In this talk we will address “community engagement” as nature learning and experiences for youth and families of primarily urban, lower socioeconomic backgrounds. We will discuss the importance of anticipating and planning for different sorts of learning and experiences, the way students may respond to risk-taking, and the natural arc youth with little to no exposure to nature may typically take. The goal of this talk is that you walk away with practical strategies for making bugs, muck, and risk-taking equitably engaging experiences for the eclectic communities surrounding our park system.

## Working with Paras to Increase Program Effectiveness

Liz Sheppard, Naturalist Assistant, Staring Lake  
Nature Center

Theater

Paras are a wonderful resource that can help us plan and appropriately execute accommodations for individuals with special needs. I have spoken with paras in the Eden Prairie area about this topic. I would love to share ideas with you for working with the paras in your area and, in particular, the ones that visit your centers. It is my hope that this will help make your programs more effective and inclusive for individuals with special needs.



# Discussion Session

## Creating Spaces for a Diversity of Groups

Heidi Matheson Wolter, Interpretive Naturalist,  
Richardson Nature Center

Room 3

Nature centers, environmental learning centers, and visitor centers at parks all want to be welcoming to their communities. But these communities are incredibly diverse in ages, abilities, languages, sexualities, nationalities, religions, genders, you name it; and that can make creating a welcoming environment to the entire community challenging. In this session we will be discussing some of the things; both large and small, we can do to create welcoming, inclusive, and accessible spaces for everyone in the diverse communities we serve. So bring your ideas and experiences for a great brainstorming session.

## Animal Care Conversations

Pam Welisevich, Naturalist and Animal Care  
Coordinator, Dodge Nature Center

Room 4

Many nature centers and environmental learning centers use animals as a part of their curriculum. Live animals are an amazing way to capture the attention and hearts of our students. We often get busy and continue to do things the same way year after year because we do not have the time to research and reflect on better ways to care for these animals. This hour and a half will be an opportunity to share ideas and compare practices, to be able to better ourselves and our abilities to give these animals the best life we can give them.

## How to be a Freelance Naturalist

Sharon Stiteler, Interpretive Ranger & Birdchick,  
National Park Service & Birdchick.com

Theater

How do you keep your skills sharp or earn money when you're not employed? Talk to naturalists who have forged nontraditional trails speaking with groups and festivals or harnessing the power of the Internet to share your mad naturalist skills and promote yourself. Learn how to determine pricing, discover different platforms you can use online to educate, and how to market yourself. Our field is rapidly changing and only those of us who can evolve with it will stay employed.

## Volunteer Recruitment and Management

Julie Grecian, Assistant Director, Warner Nature  
Center

Room 1

Many of us rely on volunteers in some way or another! They help with a range of activities, including site work, program support, office work, and public interactions. Volunteers can be an integral part of our everyday business and interact with both our visitors and staff. Topics for conversation during this session will be determined by the participants at the beginning of the session, and will focus on the nuances of volunteer recruitment and management. This session will be geared towards those professionals who work with, and manage volunteers, as well as those who volunteer at parks. Bring your thoughts about what works well, what doesn't, what challenges you are facing, what you appreciate as a volunteer, and any other questions or ideas you have about your volunteer programs and activities.

## Renewable Energy Curriculum Discussion

Victoria Thompson, Instructor, Science Explorers

Room 2

Renewable energy is of growing importance as it relates to climate change and the economy. This facilitated discussion session is for those who want to share and learn about effective ways to incorporate information about solar, wind, geothermal, and other renewable energy into their curriculum. We will be touching on effective strategies and activities, how to relate renewable energy to climate change and other larger issues, and other related topics.

Saturday 9:30 - 11:00

# Concurrent Session B

Saturday 11:15 - 12:15

## Bat Threats and Supports

Jay Ritterson, Volunteer, Minnesota Master Naturalist

Room 4

Minnesota bats have been a fascination in our evening skies for generations. Our bats have saved farmers billions otherwise lost in crop damage or spent on insecticides. But our bats, along with millions of others in North America, are facing devastating threats to their populations. What are those threats and what can we do to slow the decline and perhaps save these amazing mammals? We'll take a look at what naturalists and members of the general public can do to help save our bats.

## Sponsorships: Enhancing Your Events Through Community Engagement

Karl Huemiller, Volunteer and Donor Relations Supervisor, Three Rivers Park District

Room 1

Sponsorships are an important way to provide your programs and events with an additional revenue stream. They are also an important way to engage new segments of your community. In this presentation, learn about the philosophy and mindset of sponsorship as well as practical skills needed to secure sponsorships for your programs and events.

## Recycling and Waste Reduction Activity Training

Angie Ziobro, Environmental Educator and Communications Specialist, Hennepin County

Room 2

Experience a newly created (and free to use) curriculum resource for classrooms, community groups, and public programs/events. Topic areas include recycling and waste reduction. This training focuses on activities for elementary thru adult age groups. Come ready to have fun, meet other educators, and learn new and innovative ways to teach community members, students, and friends about waste reduction and recycling. Leave the workshop with printed copies of each activity, knowledge to conduct them yourself, and access to additional free online resources.

## Risk and Resilience: Getting Everyone Outside

Abigail Lucas, CTRS, Sea Kayak Program Manager, Wilderness Inquiry

Room 3

Wilderness Inquiry has been bringing people of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds together in outdoor adventures since 1978. Through the use of the Universal Program Participation Model (UPPM) each activity or trip is optimized for specific populations to achieve individual and group goals in a way that combines group interests, ability, and risk management. Through this presentation you will learn:

- Theories behind the Universal Program Participation Model
- Implementation strategies of UPPM
- Ways to provide outdoor experiences for individuals who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity.

## Pollinator Education Assessment: How Did We Do?

Kayla Wolfe, Oakley Biesanz, & Ann Hutchinson, Naturalists, Maplewood Nature Center

Theater

After three years of educating 4-8th grade on pollinators, it's time to take a hard look! Did we meet our educational goals and objectives? Maplewood Nature Center was a partner in a three-year pollinator grant; our goal was to educate K-12 students on pollinators at Fish Creek Natural Area. We handed out pre- and post-assessments and tallied the results using a Likert scale. Now it's TIME FOR TRUTH—we'll check out the data and see how effective our methods were. We will present the PowerPoint on native bees that we gave to the students; you will have the chance to take the assessment and share thoughts at the end. Please bring any assessment forms to share from your centers.

# Saturday Afternoon



MNA's mission is to advance natural and cultural resource interpretation for the purpose of fostering wise stewardship of all resources

## Annual Member Meeting

1:30 - 2:30 pm

Dining Hall

Join Kirk Mona, MNA President, for the annual member meeting. Kirk will present an overview of this year's organizational accomplishments and introduce the current, outgoing, and new members of the MNA Board of Directors. Afterwards, stay to help plan MNA's 2018 conference, professional development opportunities, and field trips.

Saturday 12:30 - 3:30

2:30 - 3:30 pm

## Site Tours

Go on a site tour of Deep Portage and learn about how they have accomplished their goal to go completely off the grid. Also, learn how they have taken those alternative energy sources and developed curriculum around them, all while seeing this beautiful campus.

Tours will leave from the Great Hall.

## Informal Networking

If you need a little mental health break, or you want to continue some of the conversations started during the discussion sessions, or if one of your sessions gave you a really good idea and you want to talk it out with someone, this is your time. Take a walk, see the campus, process all that new information—Enjoy some unstructured time!



MNA is on Facebook. Like the official MNA Page and join the MNA Discussion Group

# Concurrent Session C

Saturday 3:45 - 4:45

## Get Dirty with Lake Mud

Tommy Rodengen, MRM & PhD Candidate,  
Creative Scientific & Up River Field Stations

Room 2

This hands-on presentation will get outside on the lake and take a lake core. Lake cores provide a 50-10,000 year climate proxy, and participants will learn how to build a low-cost lake corer so that they are able to teach others about how lakes provide a climate record.

## The Sally Manzara Interpretive Nature Center

Tony Manzara & Connie Kirk, Board Members,  
Friends of Lake Elmo's Sunfish Lake Park

Room 1

We will describe the development of the new Sally Manzara Interpretive Nature Center in Sunfish Lake Park, Lake Elmo, Minnesota. From conception through negotiation, construction, program development, and exhibit evolution, it has been a real learning experience. We will show a set of slides describing the pathway to developing the nature center, and host a question and answer session for the rest of the hour.

## Trainings, Certifications, Publications, and More! Find Out What NAI Can Do for You!

Jeff Boland, CIG, CIT, History Education  
Coordinator, Eagle Bluff ELC

Theater

The National Association for Interpretation is a great resource for naturalists, educators at zoos, aquariums, museums, historic site interpreters, teachers, or anyone else looking to be a more effective communicator. This presentation will briefly cover the past and present of the organization and the resources available. Participants will learn and practice some of the basic principles of interpretation. Come and learn more about this organization and how it can help you!

## "Back in My Day..." - Encouraging Seniors to Open Up and Share Their Nature Stories

Christa von Wald & Noelle Roden, Arts  
Programmer & Naturalist, Silverwood Park

Room 3

Learn to connect with seniors on a deeper level through programming. Participate in a unique project designed to help you understand the sensory decline that some seniors experience with aging. Questions to be addressed in this workshop:

- How can I better reach out to the local senior citizen community?
- How do I differentiate between senior groups (active, assisted, memory, etc..), and tailor my program for each one?
- How do I receive positive responses through conversation and interactions?
- And more!

## Minnesota: Birthplace of Modern Ecology

Caitlin Potter, Education and Outreach  
Coordinator, U of MN—Cedar Creek Ecosystem  
Science Reserve

Room 4

The field of ecology was born in an inconspicuous lake in East Central MN in the late 1930s with research conducted by Ray Lindeman. Over the last 75 years, Lindeman's field site—now 5600 acres of land called Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve—has been home to numerous breakthroughs and advances in ecology, conservation, global change research and natural history. It is perhaps the single most famous site in the field of ecology, and yet completely unknown to most Minnesotans. In this presentation we will discuss the site's significance in the field of ecology as well as sharing current and future opportunities to get involved with research, education and data analysis.

# Concurrent Session D

## Getting Excited About Dragonflies!

Curt Oien, Board Member/Research Committee Chair, Minnesota Dragonfly Society

Room 4

One short hour to learn some cool stuff about dragonflies and damselflies and just how amazing they are. Learn about their place in nature and some of the threats that Odonata face in Minnesota. We will discuss both adults and aquatic nymphs and also give some tips on raising them and using them in educational programs.

## Evaluating Naturalists: Developing Best Practice Protocols

Stephan Carlson & Molly O'Connors, Professor/Extension Educator & Graduate Student, U of MN

Room 1

Nature Centers and RELC's spend time, effort, and money on evaluating seasonal and permanent staff. The challenge is matching the naturalist skills with what supports "Best Practices" from the literature. Using focused observation and assessments ensure increased effectiveness in the evaluation outcomes. The Best Practices for Field Days (BPFDD) observation tool provides a systematic method to evaluate naturalists and educators. New to using the tool is a Qualtrics app version on a notebook that records the data in real time and hold the data in the cloud for instant feedback and comparison across the profession. This session will include using the observation tool and assessing videos with the app on a notebook, and a discussion on how this could be applied across the profession.

## Plan Your Own Community Climate Convening

Kristen Poppleton, Director of Education, Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy

Room 2

Learn more about Climate Generation's Climate Convenings Toolkit and how you can plan a convening in your community, church, nature center, etc. Climate Generation's convening model emphasizes the importance of elevating personal stories, local resources, and tangible solutions to build a resilient community and take climate action.

## Connecting City Kids to Nature

Josh Leonard, Education Director, Belwin Outdoor Science SPPS

Room 3

"What do you do when they attack?" - students ask as they unload off the bus into the pine forest near Afton, MN. Despite reassurances to the Saint Paul Public School (SPPS) students that we are very safe, and perhaps that *we* are the scariest things in the forest, many persist in fearing an animal attack. Many city kids can experience anticipatory anxiety during a nature-based field trip which can present challenges for a successful day. SPPS is 78% students of color. Statistically, kids of color get fewer opportunities to connect to nature than their white counterparts. DNR Parks and Trails found that only 2% of their visitors are people of color, while 16% of Minnesotans have black or brown skin. Let's discuss how to help transition kids from anxiety to excitement during a field trip. I hope to facilitate a courageous conversation towards greater inclusion among participants. In addition, I will share some strategies for enabling physically challenged kids to explore nature, even in the winter!

## #SocialMedia4NatureCenters

Kelly Amoth, Naturalist, Warner Nature Center

Theater

Like! Follow! Share! Tweet! Snap! #!

Navigating the world of social media can be tricky. Using social media at nature centers is a great way to connect (and stay connected) to visitors. In this round table session, we will discuss how and when we use social media to reach our audience and visitors. Come ready to share how your site uses social media and which platforms you use. What are your most successful and engaging posts? Have you found that your audience is drawn to a certain type of post? Has your site had any struggles with social media and, if so, how have you overcome them?

Saturday 5:00 - 6:00

# Workshop

## Engaging Teens as an Inclusion Strategy

Amanda Fong, Community Engagement Supervisor, Three Rivers Park District

Room 3

Last winter, Three Rivers Park District gathered 30+ teenagers for a day of intentional brainstorming on ideas to engage teens throughout the Three Rivers Park District. As a regional provider of nature-based programming and recreation activities, Three Rivers welcomes more than 10 million visitors a year, but we've noticed a visitation and participation gap from a teenage audience. Building direct relationships with teens has begun to change the way our programming staff thinks about how we can better include and connect with this missing age group. Come hear what we've learned from young people and begin to apply these concepts to your own program site. You'll experience pieces of the Design Thinking Process as we brainstorm opportunities to initiate and strengthen connections with a teenage audience at your organization. You'll leave with specific ideas, connections to other educators embarking on this work, and motivation to try something new.



## Research, Cultivating, and Soliciting Successful Grants!

Gary Kelsey, Ed. D, Consultant, Gary Kelsey and Associates

Room 1

This workshop will focus on the important development (fundraising) steps of grant research, cultivation and solicitation. To be a successful grant-seeker, one must learn how to identify the most likely foundation prospects and strategies to cultivate a positive relationship with grant-makers. Completing the Minnesota Online Grant Application in a way that is professional, yet compelling to the grant-maker will also be addressed, and time will be given to working on the outline of the Minnesota Online Grant Application.



## Integrating, Interpreting, and Acting on Climate Change

Kristen Poppleton, Director of Education, Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy

Room 2

Nature Centers have the unique opportunity to act as leaders in climate change education through their programming, and use their physical settings as living laboratories of learning about impacts and solutions. This workshop will provide participants with a primer on current climate science and solutions through lecture and hands on activities; give time to practice talking about climate change; and offer participants the time to discuss different ways nature centers and naturalists can be part of the solution.



Sunday 8:45 - 12:15

# Session

## Reading the Landscape

Bryan Wood, Executive Director, Audubon Center of the North Woods

Room 4

Urban areas, where most students and teachers live, are often overlooked because they have been so heavily impacted that they “aren't natural”. All environments are impacted or disturbed: the only difference may be that the disturbance is “human caused” or “naturally caused”. Every environment reacts to disturbances. Between disturbance and the natural succession in plant communities, there are many options for interpretation. Interpreters are often asked "What happened here?" To answer that question you need to make observations, look for patterns, seek resources, and eventually put them together into a coherent story. Interpreters are storytellers. To tell the best stories, the interpreter needs to have a good base of knowledge, a sharp eye, and an inquisitive mind. Reading the landscape is a lot like detective work and if you've ever read any Sherlock Holmes you know that a master detective can pick up the subtle clues as well as the obvious ones in order to solve, or rather, interpret a crime. During this session we will learn to be better observers of the landscape, to put together pieces into coherent stories. These skills can be applied wherever the interpreter goes.

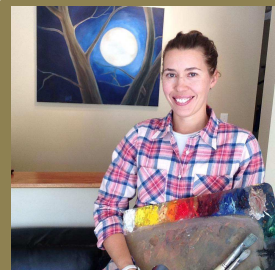


## Paint and Sip, MNA-Style

Laurel Sundberg, Interpretive Naturalist, Lowry Nature Center

Great Hall

Does “Art” seem intimidating? Don’t let it. Art takes years to perfect, but can be enjoyable no matter your skill level. It can be a great way to use your creativity, observation skills, and to create something with your hands. We’ll use an inspiration painting based on nature as our start point. You can follow along with Laurel as she creates a painting (copying experienced artists is a great way to learn). Or let your creativity inspire something new. We’ll paint with acrylics and explore color, value, and basic composition. Don’t forget to bring along a beverage of your choice, whether that be your morning coffee or a mimosa, it is late Sunday morning after all...



Laurel is a naturalist at Lowry Nature Center and an artist who has spent years drawing and painting from life, and letting it guide her imagination. Her favorite medium is oil paint. Her work can be viewed at [laurelsundberg.com](http://laurelsundberg.com).

*Your **talk** talks and  
your **walk** talks,  
but your **walk**  
talks louder than  
your **talk** talks*

*~ John C. Maxwell*



*Minnesota Naturalists' Association*

## **MNA Contact Information**

P.O. Box 9344

St. Paul, MN 55109

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

[mnamembership@gmail.com](mailto:mnamembership@gmail.com)