



Osprey Wilds

Environmental Learning Center

Formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods

These are unprecedented times.

Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods) has weathered many storms over the last 50+ years, but none like COVID-19. Our mission is connecting children and adults to nature through experiential learning, so school closings and restrictions on gatherings are having a devastating impact.



On March 16, we received our first school cancellation due to COVID-19.

This was the first of what will likely be 51 more school cancellations through the end of the school year. This sudden loss of K-12 learners not only means thousands of children will miss out on life-changing experiences in nature, it

also means we are suddenly faced with a K-12 revenue shortfall of more than \$225,000.

Unfortunately, the projected losses aren't limited to K-12 school visits. We have growing college, adult and community program cancellations as well, pushing our projected program revenue shortfall for the rest of our fiscal year (June 30) over \$300,000, representing 20% of our budget.

This leaves us having to make incredibly difficult choices. Beginning March 28, our staff will see their hours reduced by 50% or more, with some being laid off entirely. Our incredible team of dedicated, passionate individuals are our organization's greatest asset, and we are trying our best to keep them employed at some level during this stretch. Even with these severe staff cuts and other expense reductions we are enacting, we are still facing a huge budget deficit.

We hope you will consider making a special donation above and beyond your normal giving to help us navigate the financial repercussions of COVID-19. Your support means the world to us, and with your help, we know we will make it through this as we have with every other challenge we've faced over our 51 years.

It is easy to feel that everything in the world is upside down right now. But it is important to remember that nature continues on, with its familiar rhythms and patterns, independent of all the craziness we are currently experiencing.

You step outside and hear robins and cardinals chirping, feel the warmth of the Sun on your face, look overhead and see the familiar v's of Canada geese, and not everything seems wrong.

Yesterday as I left work and walked to my car, I heard a guttural, gravelly call and looked up to see a flock of Sandhill cranes gracefully flying overhead. As I stopped and enjoyed a 30-second respite from all that is going on, I suddenly felt... centered, grounded, reassured. As I stood there admiring these majestic birds retracing ancient migration routes, I thought of the 9 million-year-old Sandhill crane fossils that have been found near the Platte River in Nebraska. I marveled that birds like the ones I was observing have been around 45 times longer than our species.

To think that they have survived every obstacle between then and now, and that during this spring when everything feels like a bad dream, they are still carrying on, still migrating, still returning to prehistoric nesting grounds, comforted me.



Nature's infinite capacity to inspire, to heal and to teach us is a gift we all would be well served to remember, and get outside and experience now more than ever. Thank you for being part of our Osprey Wilds community and believing in us and what we do. We wish you and your family good health and safety during this time, and are so very grateful for your support. Take Care.

Sincerely,

Bryan Wood
Executive Director

P.S. Consider using a portion or all of your federal check from the Coronavirus Rescue Package to make your donation.

Thank you for considering a gift to help us emerge from this challenging time ready to again bring life-changing encounters with nature to children, young people, and adults of all ages.

Give Now

Make an immediate gift by credit card or bank transfer.

Become a Sustainer

Your budget-friendly monthly gift means reliable, ongoing support for Osprey Wilds.

Make a Pledge

Let us know about a gift you plan to make before the end of our fiscal year (June 30).

More updates from Osprey Wilds



Osprey Webcam Takes Flight!

We are fortunate to have had nesting ospreys at Osprey Wilds the past several years. They have served as a great teaching tool for our K-12 and adult learners on-site. Up until now, the best view we could get of them was setting up our spotting scope on the grass in front of the barn. But thanks to an Operation Round-Up grant from East Central Energy, you can now observe them up close with a pair of live-streaming webcams!

An osprey has served as our mascot since our inception, and as of January 1, is at the forefront of our new name. We are thrilled to now be able to make our resident ospreys accessible to anyone with an internet connection. Though they haven't returned yet this spring, it should be soon in the coming weeks. We can't wait to watch, learn and enjoy them with you all!

Watch our osprey webcam [here](#).

Seeds of Promise

This spring will begin the gradual transformation of Trapp Farm from conventional row crops to a regenerative, sustainable farm. Using a no-till drill, we will be seeding 43 acres with pasture and prairie grasses, and 2.5 acres with native prairie wildflowers, which will serve as pollinator habitat. There will likely be more done as well. Stay tuned and feel free to drive by and see the farm as it grows.





Maple Syrup Season

The trees are tapped, the sap is flowing, and the evaporator is cookin'! Maple syrup season is in full swing and we wish we could share it with you in person. Last year, we set an organizational record with 220 gallons made. While we aren't sure where we will finish this year, we enjoy the process no matter the outcome as time spent in the sugarbush is a wonderful ritual we look forward to every spring.

If you'd like to support us by purchasing a bottle or two (it makes a great gift) of our maple syrup, please contact our front desk at **320-245-2648** or frontdesk@ospreywilds.org and we can arrange to ship it to you!

This is the syrup that was voted #1 at the 2019 Minnesota Naturalists' Association Annual Conference, by folks who know a thing or two about syrup.



CONTACT US
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