



2008 Conference

The Darker Side of Nature:

Exploring the Seamy Underbelly of the Natural World

Luther Crest, Alexandria, Minnesota

November 21 to 23, 2008

Keynote Presentations

Torrid, Tornadic and Traumatic: Dissecting Trends on Minnesota's Weather & Climate Patterns

Dr. Mark Seeley, Climatologist, University of Minnesota

Remarkable Reptiles: Minnesota's "Secret" Snakes & Live Rattlesnake Presentation

Jim Gerholdt, Naturalist and Photographer

Fieldtrip Options

Geocaching at Lake Carlos State Park
Teambuilding and Faith-based EE at Luther Crest
Inspiration Point Hike
Kensington Runestone Museum

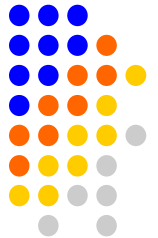
Concurrent Session Tracks

Natural History, Teaching & Interpretation
Administrative Skill Building, Hot Topics

Music, Receptions, Silent Auction & Share Fair

www.mnnaturalists.org

San Souci Quartet
Depot Creek String Band



Conference Overview

Welcome

The Minnesota Naturalists' Association is excited to invite you to its annual conference **November 21-23 at Luther Crest**, a retreat center nestled among the majestic maples and beside the dancing waves of Lake Carlos in **Alexandria, Minnesota**.

The conference will delve into the "Darker Side of Nature". This year's keynote and concurrent sessions fall into four strands: Natural History, Teaching & Interpretation, Administrative Skill Building and Hot Topics.

Conference Highlights

- Keynote address by **Dr. Mark Seeley**, University of Minnesota Climatologist, author of the *Minnesota Weather Almanac* and weather commentator on Minnesota Public Radio's *Morning Edition*. Dr. Seeley's presentation will discuss climate change's effect on severe weather.
- Keynote address by **Jim Gerholdt**, renowned reptile naturalist and photographer. Jim's keynote will focus on Minnesota's two venomous snakes: Timber Rattlesnake and the Eastern Massasauga.
- Fieldtrip choices: **geocaching** at Lake Carlos State Park, hiking to **Inspiration Point**, visiting the **Kensington Runestone Museum**, or Luther Crest's **teambuilding low-ropes course** and discussion of incorporating faith into environmental education programs.
- Our annual **silent auction** offering an eclectic mix of funky animal artifacts, great books, wine, and whatever YOU BRING!
- Two days of information packed, intriguing **concurrent sessions**.
- Two nights of **live music**, the San Souci Quartet and the Depot Creek String Band.
- The annual **MNA business meeting**.
- **Lively, engaging discourse** with naturalists and nature center directors from around MN!

Check-in, Lodging, Meals, Carpools

Check-in for the conference will start at **2:30 p.m. at the Program Center**. At check-in, you can choose your room and roommates. Lodging at Luther Crest is included in your registration fee.

All meals, from Friday night's dinner to Sunday's lunch are also included in your registration fee. **Vegetarian meals** are available; please note this preference on your registration form.

Please use the MNA member forum at mnnaturalists.org/forum/index.php to arrange **carpools** with other participants.

Share Fair

This year we are going green for the share fair. If you have a job, volunteer opportunity, curriculum to share or want to show off your organization or upcoming program/event, create a poster board to display at the conference. Instead of making multiple copies of your information, list a website or email address where interested participants can get further information.

What to Bring

- Clothing appropriate for the weather
- Notebook, folder, pen, pencil, etc.
- Water bottle and/or coffee mug
- Towel and bath products
- Pillow and sleeping bag or bed linens and blankets
- Musical instruments
- Promotional materials for the Share Fair
- Auction item, to raise money for the MNA scholarship and environmental stewardship funds
- Money! The MNA silent auction accepts checks and cash only
- Evening beverages and snacks
- Work gloves and clothes appropriate for outdoor work during the "give back" site restoration session

Conference Schedule

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21

- 12:00 p.m. MNA Board Meeting (Adult Retreat Center-Cedar Room)
2:30 p.m. Check-in Begins (Program Center)
4:00 p.m. Luther Crest Informal Tour with Staff (meet at the Program Center)
- 4:30-5:30 p.m. **Metro Naturalist & Volunteer Training Planning Meeting** (Program Center)
Join your metro training coordinator, Katie Hoeschen, to look back on 2008 trainings, look ahead to 2009, and plan 2010! Bring topic, partnering, and hosting ideas. We will start off addressing challenges and identifying expectations in the spirit of building on a very successful program. The 2010 metro trainings will be scheduled at this meeting.
- 6:00-6:45 p.m. Dinner (Dining Hall)
- 7:00 p.m. Welcome & Keynote Address (Program Center-Gymnasium)
Torrid, Tornadoic and Traumatic: Dissecting Trends in Minnesota's Weather and Climate Pattern
Dr. Mark Seeley, University of Minnesota Climatologist
The implications for severe weather events and episodes are far more complex than a simple assessment of the quantified changes in climate measurements (rainfall, temperature, cloudiness, wind). There are seasonality considerations, character changes in climate, skewed shifts in temperature, and various ecosystem responses that come into play and affect the risk of extreme weather features. A scaled characterization of these features will be presented to provoke some thought and discussion about the complexity of understanding the potential consequences of climate change for severe weather occurrences.
- 8:00 p.m. Evening Reception with Live Music by San Souci Quartet (Program Center-Theater)
Silent Auction Begins
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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22

- 6:45 a.m. Morning Hike (meet at the Adult Retreat Center)
8:00-8:45 a.m. Breakfast (Dining Hall)
- 9:00-10:00am Keynote Address (Program Center-Gymnasium)

Remarkable Reptiles: Minnesota's "Secret" Snakes,
Jim Gerholdt, Naturalist and Photographer

Although Jim doesn't see rattlesnakes as a part of the "darker side of nature", many feel that they are. He will discuss the distribution and natural history of MN's two species, the Timber Rattlesnake and the Eastern Massasauga. Jim has spent a fair amount of time in the field, primarily with the first species and a limited amount of field time with the latter, in Wisconsin. He'll use a mix of captive and field slides and at least one live Timber Rattlesnake to illustrate how the coloration and pattern can vary and to show habitats.

Continued on next page

Conference Schedule

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22 (continued)

10:15-11:15 a.m. Concurrent Sessions

Biological Pollutants-Exotic Introductions-*Howard Fullhart, Minnesota DNR*

Hot Topics

Adult Retreat Center—Cedar Room

“Exotic” species – organisms introduced into habitats where they are not native. Exotics are agents of habitat alteration and degradation and are a major cause of biological diversity loss throughout the world. Introducing species, accidentally or intentionally, from one habitat into another, is risky business. Freed from the predators, parasites, pathogens, and competitors that have kept their numbers in check, species introduced into new habitats often overrun their new home and crowd out native species. Once established, exotics rarely can be eliminated.

The Secret Insides of Fishes-*Roland Sigurdson, Minnesota DNR*

Teaching & Interpretation

Lodge

Fish guts! Words that make some folks queasy, gardeners euphoric and anglers smile. Ever wondered what makes the inside of fish different from your own? Join us while we discover some of the amazing adaptations of both the external and internal anatomy of Minnesota’s most successful aquatic organisms.

Nature's Yucky!: A Popular Concept and How to Write a Picture Book on this Delicate Subject-*LeeAnn*

Landstrom, Three Rivers Park District

Teaching & Interpretation

Program Center-Theater

One of interpretation's challenges is explaining, in an acceptable way, the yucky, gross, and disgusting things that happen in the underbelly of nature. Karen Shragg and Lee Ann Landstrom took that challenge and have written two award winning books: *Nature's Yucky!: Gross Stuff That Helps Nature Work* and *Nature's Yucky! 2: The Desert Southwest*. See the step-by-step process in writing these books, learn some gross behaviors and facts, and look at some artifacts.

The Bug Show: Close Encounters with some of Nature’s Least Loved Creatures, *Bruce the Bug Guy, The Bug Zone*

Natural History and Teaching & Interpretation

Program Center-Gymnasium

Using an assortment of living insects, spiders, scorpions and other related arthropods, along with displays of unusual and spectacular insects from around the world, “Bruce the Bug Guy,” attempts to reconnect people with the arthropod part of the natural world. In this session, Bruce will introduce you to some of nature’s least liked, and most misunderstood, creatures. Since the “BUG Show” is hands-on and interactive, you’ll have the opportunity to use all your senses to learn about the mysterious world of arthropods. You’ll get to examine close up, or even handle, an assortment of live arthropods (mouse-sized hissing cockroaches, large millipedes, and hand-sized tarantulas and scorpions). You’ll learn about some unique, and comical, insect defenses. Perhaps you’ll even sample one of the authentic bug snacks he offers at many of his shows!

11:30-12:30 p.m. Lunch (Dining Hall)

12:30-1:15 p.m. **MNA Annual Business Meeting** (Program Center-Gymnasium)

Join MNA president Jamie McBride for our annual business meeting. Voice your opinions and ask questions about MNA and thank outgoing board members.

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Conference Schedule

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22 (continued)

1:30-2:30 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

Evaluating Seasonal, Intern & Temporary Employees-*Katie Hoeschen, Dakota County Parks*

Administrative Skill Building

Adult Retreat Center-Cedar Room

These are worker bees and the most important, visible people, in our organization. We'll begin the session with break-out groups addressing challenges and conclude with a large group discussion addressing tools to assist supervisors in evaluations, meaningful trainings, and positive work experiences for our future professionals. Specific focus will be given to the Millennial generation.

Effective Interviewing: Avoiding the Dark Side-*Diane Klinefelter, Pam Welisevich, and Brett Sieberer,*

Dodge Nature Center

Administrative Skill Building

Lodge

Learn to avoid common pitfalls: interviewing too many candidates, failing to put the interviewee at ease, wasting time in the interview, talking too much, and asking the wrong questions. We'll do some role playing and provide tips for conducting effective interviews. Our format will include time to share experiences and ask questions. Presenters are experienced interviewers from Dodge Nature Center: Diane Klinefelter, *Director of Environmental Education*, Pam Welisevich, *Naturalist*, and Brett Sieberer, *Naturalist and Intern Coordinator*.

Wolf/Human Interactions in the 21st Century-*Bob Ebsen, Wildlife Science Center*

Hot Topics

Program Center-Theater

"Wolves in North America have never attacked people!" is a common statement made in most wolf programs that I have attended in the past few years. How factual is this statement in 2008? Attend a session concentrating on recent wolf/ human interactions along with an update on the status of Minnesota grey wolves.

Deformed Frogs-*Becky Pollack, Ney Nature Center*

Natural History

Program Center-Gymnasium

In 1995, deformed frogs were brought to everyone's attention when discovered by students from the Minnesota New Country School (MNCS), in Le Sueur, MN. Join me as I present an illustrated history of the Deformed Frog Project, led by students at the MNCS from 1995 to 2000 and other more current research.

2:30-5:00 p.m. Field Trips (Select 1 of the 4 trips during check-in, all meet at the Program Center)

Lake Carlos State Park Geocaching

Geocaching is becoming more and more popular as a form of outdoor recreation. Many parks and centers are starting to develop geocaching programs and opportunities. Come learn from two state park naturalists (Kathy Beaulieu and Kacie Carlson) to see how it is done.

Luther Crest Teambuilding

Teambuilding is becoming more popular as a program option at environmental education centers. Come explore the Luther Crest challenge course as you are led by the Luther Crest staff in some teambuilding exercises. The Luther Crest staff will also explain how they integrate faith into this type of programming.

Inspiration Point Hike

Come explore the highest point in Minnesota. This self lead hike will guide you in exploring some of the flora and fauna of the Lake Carlos area, the cultural history of Inspiration Point, and the geologic history of the area as well. Round out your experience with a discussion of discovery with the rest of the group.

Continued on next page

Conference Schedule

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22 (continued)

(2:00-5:00 p.m. *Field Trips, continued*)

Kensington Runestone Museum

Is it real? Is it fake? You be the judge. The Kensington Runestone is believed to have been from the Vikings and believed to prove that they were more far reaching in their travels and were the first "discoverers" of America. The museum also includes displays on other cultural history of the area.

5:00-6:00 p.m. Social Hour & 2009 Conference Brainstorming Session (Program Center-Theater)
6:00 p.m. Dinner (Dining Hall)
7:30 p.m. Evening Social Time, Music by Depot Creek String Band (Program Center-Theater)
Silent Auction Continues until the band's break.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23

6:45 a.m. Yoga with Lynette Anderson (location tbd)
8:00-8:45 a.m. Breakfast (Dining Hall)

9:00-10:15 a.m. Concurrent Sessions

The Sex Lives of Ospreys: 25 Years of Reproductive Research-*Judy Voight Englund, Three Rivers Park District*

Natural History

Adult Retreat Center—Cedar Room

Have you ever wondered if the birds nesting outside your window ever visited another nest for a little tryst? By monitoring banded Ospreys in the Twin Cities area, we have been able to determine that some nesting birds have been visiting neighbors for copulation (especially young females with older males), divorcing, participating in polygamy, and possibly raising chicks that aren't their own. How common is avian adultery? Attend this session and find out!

Administrative Skills Session-*Noreen Buhman, Three Rivers Park District*
Administrative Skill Building

Lodge

Spiders: The True Story about Their Venom-*Larry Weber, Author and Naturalist*

Natural History

Program Center-Theater

Spider bites and venom are frequently spoken, but exaggerated. In this session, we will take a look spider venom, spider anatomy, the nature of the venom and the danger to humans. We will concentrate on the local spiders.

Teaching with Snakes-*Jim Gerholdt, Naturalist*

Teaching & Interpretation

Program Center-Gymnasium

Jim will focus on captive care and handling of snakes, demonstrating tubing along with some of our harmless native snakes, to allow a closer view than at his keynote presentation.

10:30-11:45 a.m. Give Back Site Restoration Project (meet at the Program Center)
12:00 noon Lunch (Dining Hall)
12:15 p.m. Door Prizes Awarded (MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN!)



Luther Crest Directions to Luther Crest

Luther Crest is located just north of Alexandria. For directions from your location, see the camp web-site: http://www.luthercrest.org/index/page/map_and_directions

Map to Luther Crest Bible Camp
8231 County Road 11 NE, Alexandria MN 563608
Phone us at: (320)846-2431



Luther Crest is located north of Alexandria, Minnesota on County Road 11 NE, on the western side of Lake Carlos. Alexandria is a city of over 10,000 people, just north of Interstate 94 between Fargo-Moorhead and St. Cloud, Minnesota.

If you have questions regarding the facilities or directions, please contact:

Karl Breddin
Luther Crest Bible Camp
8231 County Road 11 NE
Alexandria MN 56308
320-846-2431

If you have questions about the conference or registration, please contact:

April Rust
651-259-5706
april.rust@dnr.state.mn.us

Thank You

Special Thanks to Luther Crest for hosting this year's conference and especially to Karl and Jody for their help in on-site planning.

Thank you to all our presenters and field trip leaders—we couldn't offer a great program every year with out your expertise, hard work and generosity!

And finally, thanks to the 2008 Conference Planning Committee for their hard work and ongoing dedication to MNA: April Rust, Becky McConnell, Beth Beuch, Bill Tefft, Brett Sieberer, Crystal Wold, Jamie McBride, Joel Light, Julie Grecian, Krista Prokosch, Misi Stine, Pam Welisevich, and Stacey Sigurdson.