



# The REDHEAD



## Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Winter 2018

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 12 No. 1

### RHOWO NEWS

### A Note from the Chair

#### RhWR to Reorganize

After about 11 years the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) has grown to the point where we have decided to reorganize our organization to better fit with our activities. This reorganization will coincide with Chet Meyers stepping down as Chair for family reasons. Chet will continue to work in the RhWR at a reduced level.

At our January 24th meeting, a proposal was presented to the organization to form two teams that will represent our two main activities - an Education and Habitat Team and a Research Team. These two teams will be supported and guided by a Steering Committee composed of seven members. The Committee will consist of a Chair, who will call, chair and set the agenda for the Committee meetings. The remaining members of the Committee will be a Treasurer, who will coordinate financial matters with the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis Treasurer and propose budgets for the organization; Membership representative, who will coordinate membership recruiting and retention and keep membership records; Communications Representative, who will oversee the newsletter publication and content on the website and Facebook page; a representative of the Education and Habitat Team, who will coordinate its activities with the organization; a representative of the Research Team, who will coordinate its activities with the organization; and a liaison with the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, who will coordinate activities of the organization with the Chapter and act as an advocate for the RhWR to the Chapter Board.

The RhWR chose Siah St. Clair to be the Interim Chair for a period of about 6 months, during which time the RhWR would recruit a Chair. The organization also appointed Jerry Bahls as Treasurer, Tom Beer as Membership coordinator, Chet Meyers as representative for the Education and Habitat Team, Keith Olstad as representative for the Research Team, John Arthur as liaison to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, and the Communications representative is open. Sue Keator has agreed to help with the Facebook page. Jerry Bahls will continue being *The REDHEAD* Editor, but would like to pass that duty onto someone else. A website expert will look at our website and make suggestions on how it can be improved. A dedicated webmaster is needed to make sure its content is up-to-date. Anyone will continue to be welcome to attend any of the RhWR meetings and are encouraged to do so. Bring a friend!

*Continued on Page 2, Reorganization*

Winter 2018

Well, time does fly when you are having fun. I can't believe I have been chair of our RHOWO recovery project for ten years. And, in the process, I have had the pleasure of working with some of the most dedicated birders in the Midwest. This will be my last "Note from the Chair" as I am stepping down, though I will remain very actively involved. But now it's time for a little reflection.

We began our recovery project in 2007 by surveying the entire state of Minnesota for colonies of red-headed woodpeckers (RWHO) and trying to understand what makes for good breeding habitat. Early on we fortunately (with the help of Bob Jansen's scouting) made a connection with the University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve (CCESR). Since 2008 it has been our home base for research. We never could have accomplished all we have without the whole-hearted cooperation of the Cedar Creek staff. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Through our surveys at CCESR, and across the state, we came to understand the centrality of oak savanna habitat to RHOWO breeding success. We learned about the importance of an open understory and regular burning to keep that understory clear. We know that types of trees that RHOWO prefer for their cavity nesting. We better understand brood size and success. And we have shared our findings with a number of state, federal, and local environmental agencies that are working to expand oak savanna habitat. We call these our *Habitat Partners* and they include Sherburne NWR, Minnesota River Valley NWR, Nerstrand Big Woods State Park, the Belwin Conservancy, St. Croix State Park, Camp Ripley National Guard, and a few bird-friendly golf courses.

Four years ago we began banding RHOWO to understand their fidelity to nesting areas and nest trees. The past two years we have attached small radio transmitters and GPS devices in order to track RHOWO movement throughout the seasons. During our first five years of surveying and identifying nest trees our average annual budget was under \$800.00 each year. Doing surveys and measuring trees doesn't cost much, thanks to our wonderful team of volunteer surveyors. Our present research, with radio transmitters and geo locators, has upped our annual budget to over \$25,000, research grants make up the bulk of that funding.

We have received much statewide recognition through

*Continued on next page, CHAIR*

## Note From the Editor

First I want to thank Chet Meyers for his many years of service to the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) as its Chair. After convening the first few meetings of the RhWR, I asked for a volunteer to take over for me. Chet eagerly volunteered and I turned it over to Chet. That was the best decision I have ever made.

Please review the reorganization plans and look where you will fit in. One of the goals of reorganizing is to find members who can help without it being a big burden to them. On the back page of this newsletter is a list of volunteer opportunities that the RhWR has a need for. Please review them and volunteer to do one or two of them. Volunteer a friend! The tasks are rewarding!

Jerry Bahls, Editor

## 2018 Research Funds Needed "Naming Rights" to be Given

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) is continuing its research at Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve (CCESR) in the summer of 2018 and plans to again have two Ornithological Research Technicians to perform most of the heavy lifting. However this year we will need to supply ten pin point (\$500 each) and ten geolocator (\$150 each) bird tracking devices. The RhWR is asking its members and friends to consider donating \$500 for the purchase of one pin point tracking device or \$150 to purchase one geolocator device. The bird receiving the device purchased with their donation will be given the bird's "Naming Rights". For example the first male red-headed woodpecker that received the first color band at CCESR was named "Adam" and the first female was named "Eve". YOU can name the birds that will provide valuable information that will help in the long term survival of this iconic bird!

\*The RhWR reserves the right to reject a name if it is inappropriate.

Chair, *Continued from page 1*

Public Radio, newspapers, and our often-visited website. We also achieved national recognition in an article in *Bird Watching* magazine. So, from a small group of five hopeful 'dreamers', we have grown to become a focal point for advocacy of our red-headed friends. Stick with us and renew your membership. The best is yet to come.

With a fond adieu,

Chet Meyers, Chair

Reorganization, *Continued from page 1*

The Education and Habitat Team will consist of a minimum of 6 members and will meet as needed. They will maintain contact with "habitat partners" and seek additional partners. The Team will be the primary provider of red-headed woodpecker (RHWO) information such as behavior, habitat needs, etc. They will offer presentations and materials on RHWOs.

The Research Team will consist of 4 - 7 members and meet as needed. They will organize and train volunteers for citizen science projects. They will develop goals and guidelines for field research and search, hire and oversee research personnel. They will develop research summaries, reports and articles.

## Membership Dues

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) receives almost all its operating revenues from membership dues.

- 1) Basic memberships are \$20.00/calendar year.
- 2) Members who contribute more will receive other benefits along with the newsletter. Those contributing \$50.00 will also receive a handsome embroidered patch. Those contributing \$100.00 will receive the newsletter, a patch, and a personal tour of the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve.
- 3) The newsletter will be published for members.

Send your membership applications and renewals to -

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
RhWR  
PO Box 3801  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0801

Thank you for your continued support.

## RhWR Contact Information

### Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

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### Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

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## Fund Raiser

The Redheaded Woodpecker Recovery now has a fund raiser to help us get the money we need to continue our research efforts. His name is **Jim Stengel** and he can be contacted by email at [stheidiss@yahoo.com](mailto:stheidiss@yahoo.com) or by phone at **612 721-9083**. If you know of an organization that will donate money for research, please give him a call.

## Bison at Cedar Creek

The Bison are coming! The Bison are coming! The Bison are coming! In June this year Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve (CCESR) will have bison grazing on about 200 acres in the southeast section of the Reserve. This project is funded by Minnesota's Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund. CCESR has been burning portions of their oak savanna for over 50 years. While it does a good job of keeping the brush down, it is preventing the regeneration of oak trees and slowly the burned areas are becoming grassland. Because bison prefer to eat grass allowing the trees to remain and recover, the bison project will determine if bison grazing will restore more trees to the area. This could also reduce the cost of retaining the savanna by requiring less high cost controlled burning. Successful results from the project could benefit other areas that desire to restore and preserve savannas.

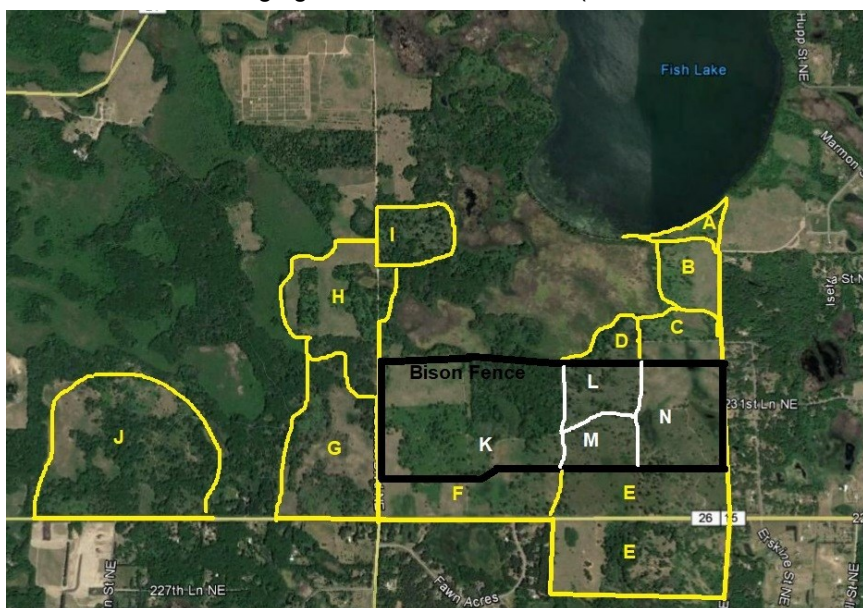
The bison will be provided by NorthStar Bison of western Wisconsin. NorthStar Bison also provides the bison for Belwin Conservancy in Afton. Initially there will be no more than 40 bison. This will allow



about 5 acres of grazing area for each animal. Only yearling heifers (young females) will be brought in and at the end of the summer they will probably be slaughtered and the meat sold in the area. Heifers are used because they are not aggressive like their male counterparts, thereby being less of a danger to handlers and researchers. They also are less likely to break through the fences that have been put up to retain them.

Recovery (RhWR) will be modifying our monitoring areas at CCESR. Jim Howitz has proposed the changes shown in the map below. The monitoring areas will include the Allison Savana, merging of BU106 with BU113 (BU113 hasn't had RHWO's there for many years), adding the far west area and separating portions of BU103 and 105 within the bison area reflecting the abundance of nesting there. It is not anticipated that the bison will have a significant effect upon red-headed woodpecker activity at CCESR. However the RhWR will be monitoring the dead trees in the bison area to determine if there are more trees lost. The only effect anticipated on animals will be upon the deer in the area.

Because of the presence of the bison, look for changes in our nest monitoring protocols to minimize effects on the bison and for the safety of our monitors. The RhWR will be working with CCESR to have the protocols ready for our annual training session that will be held on April 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am at CCESR.



## RhWR Volunteer Opportunitites

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) has a need for many volunteers now and over the summer. Here is a list of them in the order of priority and a very brief description of the duties -

- Communications Representative on Steering Committee - Oversee website, newsletter and Facebook page and be communications advocate on Steering Committee
- Newsletter Editor - Coordinate publication of newsletter
- Webmaster - Manage the RhWR website
- Facebook Page - Manage the RhWR Page
- Lead Citizen Science Projects - Recruit, organize and manage data of RhWR citizen science projects
- Do Citizen Science Projects - Monitor RhWR nest sites, Monitor roost sites, Monitor food eaten, Monitor mast
- Email rhwracm@comcast.net to sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities.

## Spring Issue Articles

Send your articles, photos, observations and references to Jerry Bahls (rhwracm@comcast.net) by April 15th. Have you been experimenting trying to attract red-headed woodpeckers? Let us know about your work!

## Next RhWR Steering Committee Meeting

The RhWR Steering Committee usually meets on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 7:00 pm. However, the next meeting will be on Feb. 17th at 11:30 at Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve before the 2:00 pm RHWO Volunteer Appreciation day. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please encourage friends to attend also. Check our website ([www.RedheadRecovery.org](http://www.RedheadRecovery.org)) for current information.

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery  
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
PO Box 3801  
Minneapolis MN 55403-0801

# Save that Snag!

Place  
Stamp  
Here

## Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program Membership Application

*I'd like to join!* Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) at the rate of \$20/year! Please send my membership information to the address below.

*I'd like to renew!* Renew my RhWR membership for \$20/year.

*Yes, I'd like to join Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis also!* Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (\$20) and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (\$12) at the rate of \$32/year. Please send my membership information and *Kingfisher* to the address below.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**Send this application and make check payable to:**

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
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PO Box 3801  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0801