Celebrating the Avon Hills

A conference for the whole family

Saturday, January 27, 2024
Saint John's University
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

-Schedule-

8:30-9:00	Registration & Check In
9:00-10:00	Keynote: Heather Holm
10:00-10:30	Break/Exhibit Hall
10:30-11:15	Live Raptor Presentation
11:15-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:15	Breakout Session I
1:15-1:45	Break/Exhibit Hall
1:45-3:45	Breakout Session II

Exhibit Hall Open from 8:30-3:30

-Registration-

$30 Sponsor Members
$40 Non-Members
$10 Children ages 5-15
**kids sessions for ages 5-10*

Registration fee includes:

Keynote, all sessions, class materials, exhibit hall access, lunch and refreshments.

-Registration Deadline-

Sunday, January 21

**kids sessions limited to 25 participants*

A Special Thank you to our sponsors:

Saint John's Outdoor University
MFA Minnesota Forestry Association
Avon Hills Initiative
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
Minnesota Women's Woodland Network
University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District SWCD
Minnesota State Horticultural Society

-Presentation descriptions-

Kids Track - All Day

max. 25 participants - for ages 5-10

Bring snow gear for the afternoon: jacket, snowpants, hat, mittens, and boots. Contact us if you need assistance.

9:00-9:45 Winter Animals
Caitlynn LaSota and Ruari O'Naughton, Saint John's Outdoor University
Interested in how animals live outside throughout winter? Learn different strategies animals use to survive freezing weather. Put your imaginations to work to create an animal with unique adaptations to thrive in Minnesota winters.

9:45-11:15 Craft Stations
Caitlynn LaSota and Ruari O'Naughton, Saint John's Outdoor University
Choose from a variety of craft stations. We will provide supplies for making friendship bracelets and personalized buttons as well as paper, markers, and art supplies for kids to get creative. Quiet activities including marble run, coloring sheets, Heads-Up, matching games, building blocks, and books will also be available.

11:15-12:30 Lunch
Parents and guardians will pick-up their kids for lunch.

12:30-1:15 Raptors of Minnesota - A Live Raptor Presentation for Kids
University of Minnesota Raptor Center
Learn about raptors with live raptor ambassadors from the Raptor Center. The presentation features four raptors (typically an owl, hawk, falcon, and bald eagle) to help you learn about what makes them raptors and what makes them standout amongst other birds.

1:15-3:45 Outdoor Winter Activities
Caitlynn LaSota and Ruari O'Naughton, Saint John's Outdoor University
Time to have some fun in the snow! Kids will have the opportunity to explore the woods on a nearby trail, build a snow fort, and enjoy the fresh winter air. We will split into teams to try to build a shelter best equipped to brave the elements. If the weather is inclement, we will play nature-themed games in the gym.

Keynote 9:00-10:00

Attracting Bees and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants

Heather Holm

Most insects have a positive impact in our landscapes. Native plants can be selected to attract specific bees and beneficial insects including predatory and parasitic wasps, beetles, flies, true bugs, and lacewings. Learn about the predator-prey relationships of these beneficial insects and how they help balance populations of problem insects. Discuss life cycles, diversity, and nesting habitat as well as examples of native plants for different site conditions.

Heather Holm is a pollinator conservationist and award-winning author of four books: Pollinators of Native Plants (2014), Bees (2017), Wasps (2021), and Common Native Bees of the Eastern United States (2022).

Live Raptors 10:30-11:15

Raptors of Minnesota

University of Minnesota Raptor Center

Learn about raptors with live raptor ambassadors from the Raptor Center. The presentation features four raptors (typically an owl, hawk, falcon, and bald eagle) to help you learn about what makes them raptors and what makes them standout amongst other birds.

Our mission is to ensure the health of raptors and the world we share. We specialize in the medical care, rehabilitation, and conservation of eagles, hawks, owls, falcons, osprey, and vultures.

-Presentation descriptions-

Session I 12:30-1:15 indoor classroom presentations

A. Stewarding a Climate-Ready Woodland

Eli Sagor, University of Minnesota Extension

Want to be proactive about climate change in your woodland? Learn about Extension's new climate-ready woodland resources to enable climate-resilient trees and other plants that benefit wildlife.

B. Financial Assistance Programs for MN Woodland Owners

Jennifer Teegarden, MN DNR

There is a variety of financial help available to Minnesota's woodland owners. Most programs are for landowners with 20-acres or more, but cost-share assistance is available to small woodlot owners as well.

C. Oaks, Fire, and Climate Change

Heather Holm

Gain an understanding of past and present ecological conditions of oak and grassland ecosystems to inform future restoration efforts. Look into the past and how Native Americans managed grassland systems with fire. Then look at ecological conditions today to understand the actions needed to achieve a functional, biodiverse, and resilient landscape in the future.

D. Life in Vernal Pools

Jenny Hengel, Saint John's Outdoor University

What are vernal pools and what role do they have in the landscape? Explore the fascinating diversity of life found in these temporary woodland wetlands.

E. Ask a Land Management Consultant

Nate Hylla, Kanati Land Management

From forest stewardship plans to timber sales, wildlife habitat, forest regeneration, and more - ask a local land management consultant your stewardship questions in this Q&A-designed session.

F. Collegeville and Abbey Arboretum Historical Tidbits

Peggy Roske, CSB+SJU Archives

The archivist is back with new images and historical details on Collegeville's weather station, historic greenhouses, Lake Sagatagan curiosities, and more.

Session II 1:45-3:45 tours with indoor and outdoor components

A. From Logs to Lumber

Jeff Thompson & Lew Grobe, OSB, Saint John's Abbey

See the process of transforming logs to lumber to a finished product. An outdoor demonstration of a portable sawmill will be followed by a tour of the new woodshop for Saint John's Abbey Woodorking and Organ Builders. Shuttle provided.

B. Introduction to Maple syruping

Con Brady, Saint John's Abbey

Understand the basics of making maple syrup. Begin with identifying maple trees and learn how to tap and collect sap outdoors. Spend time inside the sugar shack to learn about cooking and finishing your maple syrup. Shuttle provided.

C. Winter Animal Tracking

Jenny Hengel, Saint John's Outdoor University

Start indoors to learn some beginner animal tracks and signs. Head outdoors to explore the woods around the science center to find and identify tracks and signs around you.

D. Winter Tree Identification

John Geissler, Saint John's Outdoor University

Learn tips and tricks to identify native Minnesota trees in winter. Spend the first hour indoors looking at examples of tree species, then spend the second hour outdoors to test your skills in the nearby woods.

E. Minnesota Hothouse: Tips for Growing Native Plants

Zan Tomko, Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteer

Get tips and tricks for starting your own native plants from seed. Begin in the classroom before visiting the CSB+SJU biology department's Melancon Greenhouse. This session is all indoors.

F. Introduction to Cross-Country Skiing

Cassandra Simpson & Lucas Wade, Saint John's Outdoor University

An introductory session for skiers with little to no prior experience. Learn the basic skills to ski on a flat groomed trail and discover a great way to get exercise in winter. Skis, poles, and boots will be provided.

Saint John's OUTDOOR UNIVERSITY
2945 ABBEY PLAZA | P.O. Box 3000
COLLEGEVILLE, MN 56321-3000

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Saint John's University

Supported By:

MFA Minnesota Forestry Association
University of Minnesota Extension
Minnesota Women's Woodland Network
Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District SWCD
Minnesota State Horticultural Society
Avon Hills Initiative
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

Celebrating the Avon Hills
Register Today!

-Keynote Presentation-
Attracting Bees and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants

Heather Holm is a pollinator conservationist, environmental eduator, and award-winning author.

Saturday, January 27, 2024