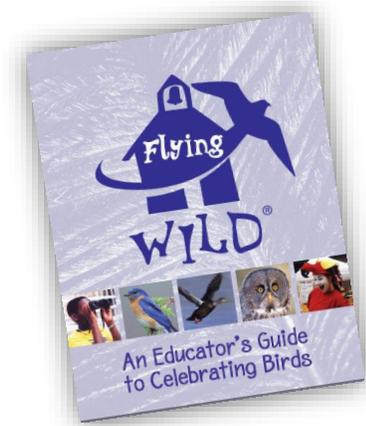


Flying WILD | MOU Savaloja Grant Report

IN MARCH 2015 the Minnesota Ornithologists Union granted Audubon Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the City of Saint Paul a \$1,960 Savaloja Grant to conduct *Flying WILD* curriculum workshops for educators.



“The focus of *Flying WILD* is migratory birds and the curriculum is designed to inspire young people to discover more about the natural world. It encourages middle school students to get involved in activities that promote environmental learning and stewardship. The *Flying WILD* program places special emphasis on reaching urban schools with student populations that traditionally receive few opportunities to participate in environmental education initiatives. By providing educators with educational tools and partnerships, the *Flying WILD* program encourages the integration of bird education and conservation activities into the school curriculum in an engaging, successful, and academically purposeful manner.”

~ From *Flying WILD – An Educator's Guide to Celebrating Birds*

Our goal was to provide scholarships for up to 30 educators (teachers, youth leaders, environmental educators) serving underserved areas in St. Paul to attend a *Flying WILD* workshop and receive curriculum materials.

We planned and conducted workshops in 2015 and 2016 with the assistance of 2 different Macalester College work study students. “By the numbers,” the workshops are summarized as follows:

- ✦ 5 Partners (MOU, DNR, Audubon MN, City of St. Paul, Raptor Center)
- ✦ 4 Workshops
- ✦ 2 locations (St. Paul Parks and The Raptor Center)
- ✦ 50 Educators (Informal educators, youth workers, teachers)
- ✦ 14 organizations represented
- ✦ Serving 100s of youth
- ✦ Focus on “underserved” areas of St. Paul

About the Curriculum

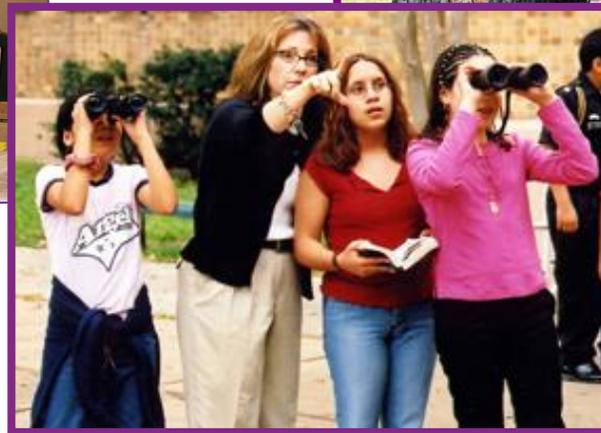
Flying WILD is a program of the Council for Environmental Education. It introduces middle school students to bird conservation through classroom activities and school bird festivals. It also supports educators by providing interdisciplinary, standards-based opportunities to engage students in real-world learning that helps them understand the importance of migratory birds and their conservation.

The curriculum was developed under the guidance of many national partners in both environmental education and wildlife conservation.

It contains Teacher-led, Volunteer-led and Student-led activities that are designed to be short and fun, require very basic and inexpensive materials and be suitable for the classroom or for a school birding /nature festival planned and led by students with or without volunteer help.



There is also a service learning component which encourages citizen science and bird monitoring, schoolyard habitat projects and student directed school festivals.



About the Workshops

We held 4 workshops led by DNR *Flying WILD* state program coordinator Jan Welsh. The first workshop was held at the City of Saint Paul's Como Zoo and Como Woodland Outdoor classroom (<http://www.comowoodland.org/>). The next 3 workshops were held at the Raptor Center on the University of Minnesota campus (<https://www.raptor.umn.edu/>).

Because of the vast number of potential activities laid out in the curriculum, workshop activities were different each time. Participants had fun working through a variety of both indoor and outdoor activities.



Dissecting owl pellets

For more information about *Flying WILD* in Minnesota contact Jan Welsh at jan.welsh@state.mn.us



Making animal tracks if fun and tactile! This exercise helps students learn how to identify common animal tracks and how looking for evidence of wildlife can help determine what animals live in a certain area.

The Migration Game helps students understand the many pressures facing migratory birds. They roll the dice and see what happens to them as if they are a bird on migration.



Food for the Brood gives students a bird's perspective as they race back and forth to fill hungry beaks.

Connections to Audubon, Saint Paul and MOU mission



What connects all the partners on this project is the goal of Creating Bird-friendly Communities. We all work on that mission in different ways but share the common goal of increasing awareness of birds and conservation.

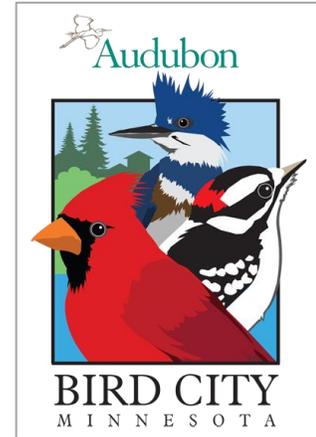
Audubon Minnesota coordinates the Bird City Minnesota program and recently named the City of Saint Paul as one of Minnesota's 1st Bird City communities. Bird City communities are recognized for fulfilling specific criteria across 3 categories:

1. Increasing bird habitat
2. Reducing threats to birds
3. Engaging people in birding and conservation

And each Bird City is required to hold a birding celebration of some kind.

Flying WILD fits in with these goals in several ways – through citizen engagement, especially in its ability to reach youth and underserved communities and through the extensive support of schools as a focal point for birding festivals.

The City of Saint Paul was excited about this grant opportunity as it helped them to bring valuable training and resources to their Parks and Recreation staff and to their community while increasing awareness and use of beautiful and cherished city park facilities like the Como Outdoor Woodland Classroom – home to hawks and swallows and foxes and diverse plants.



For MOU, *Flying WILD* has the potential to fit in with ongoing work with youth and school groups. MOU youth mentors might consider working with schools to put on a birding festival by mentoring older students who then lead activities for younger grades. MOU members may also be interested in serving as *Flying WILD* facilitators – learning about the curriculum and training other educators.

We appreciate the support of the Minnesota Ornithologist's Union in helping equip this group of educators with not just one curriculum (*Flying WILD*) but two. Through this project we were also able to provide educators with a second set of curriculum materials (*Project WILD*), giving them additional tools to help connect students with the outdoors, nature and conservation.



For more information about *Flying WILD* in Minnesota contact Jan Welsh at jan.welsh@state.mn.us