



Staring Lake Nature Center
Nature / Discovery / Adventure
Eden Prairie, Parks and Recreation

SAVALOJA Grant Report 2020

On behalf of the naturalist staff and students that attend programs at the Staring Lake Nature Center in Eden Prairie, we thank the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union for supporting the enhancement of our educational efforts with a \$600 Savaloja Grant. This grant money went about raptors in general and owls in particular.

Objective

The objective of this program was to provide a high-quality educational program to 3rd graders at Prairie View Elementary School in Eden Prairie about raptors in general and owls in Minnesota in particular. Under normal years, the Staff Naturalist at the Staring Lake Nature Center would travel to the school and present a hands-on program about raptors and owls. Due to Covid 19, the program was held via Zoom over a two-day span.

Accomplished

The Staring Lake Nature Center (City of Eden Prairie, MN) provided our program "Owls of Minnesota" for the 3rd graders at Prairie View Elementary School on Nov 17 & 18, 2020. At this time the students were doing a combination of in-school learning and distance learning due to Minnesota Governor's orders.

The school was provided with 100 owl pellets (sterilized and wrapped in foil) so students could dissect the pellets and discover what was inside; mouse skeletons were a huge hit with the children. Normally the Staring Lake Nature Center naturalist would lead this fun and exciting part of the program. Instead, because of COVID-19, we provided copies of a dissection sheet to help the students identify the bones found in the pellet, while the teachers took the lead for the owl pellet dissection.

The Staring Lake Nature Center Staff Naturalist, Lead Raptor Handler and Raptor Trainer, Agnieszka Bacal, gave two one-hour programs via zoom to 3 classrooms at a time - or a total of 6 classrooms. These presentations took place on two different days to cover all of the 3rd graders in the school. A PowerPoint program was used to present the program "Owls of Minnesota". The program teaches about raptors in general and then focuses on the owls found in Minnesota. The program highlights all of the owls found in Minnesota, and also talks about owls from around the United States.

At the end of each presentation, we took questions from the students. As you can imagine, there were a lot of questions.

Results

The program was attended by a total of one hundred (100), 3rd graders who were in the classroom and ten children who joined the Zoom program from home. It was an excellent program and all of the 3rd graders greatly benefited by learning about raptors in general and about the owls that are found in Minnesota. This opportunity would not be possible without the generous support provided by MOU through the Savaloja Grant, which paid for the owl pellets and staff time to put together the PowerPoint and deliver the program to the students.

Summary of expenses

Staff time to collect, sterilize and wrap owl pellets (from our educational owl).

3 hours = \$170

Staff time to put together the PowerPoint presentation

3 hours = \$170

Staff time to deliver and present the program to the students

5 hours = \$260

Total amount = \$600