



River Bend
NATURE CENTER



Inspirational Photo Credit: <https://discoverlouisianapark.com/venues/westwood-hills-nature-center/>; Westwood Hills Nature Center

River Bend Nature Center, located in the heart of Faribault, Minnesota, is seeking \$500,000 in funding to design a 15,000 square foot global environmental learning center expansion and improvements to inspire curiosity, care and respect for nature.

PROFILE: Each year, River Bend Nature Center provides environmental learning and career training in natural resources for over 5,000 participants and our 743 acre nature preserve hosts over 100,000 visits annually. Our youth educational and enrichment programs serve approximately 60% BIPOC learners and about half of all our youth qualify for free or reduced lunch.



100,000

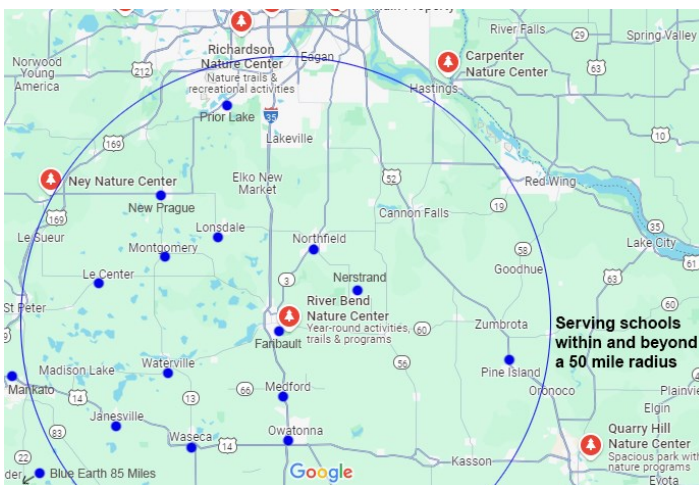
VISITS ANNUALLY

5,000+

STUDENTS EDUCATED
ANNUALLY

60 %

BIPOC LEARNERS



HISTORY: The human history of the grounds of the nature center is a complicated tapestry of people. Much of the land that is now River Bend Nature Center, was the home of the Faribault Regional Center- the states first and one of largest institutions for the care of people with physical and cognitive disabilities. For a century, thousands of Minnesotans lived on and died on the land. These histories have been largely erased from the landscape and these stories, and more, deserved to be told through an inclusive interpretive plan and exhibits in an expanded center.

TODAY: People from all over the globe settle in Faribault for the promise of a better life. River Bend Nature Center is the

region's best and closest opportunity to build meaningful connections with nature for all Minnesotans. River Bend Nature Center provides environmental education and natural resource career path training for nearly all school age children across Rice County but today, our capacity to serve is inhibited by limited classroom and interpretive spaces. An investment from the Minnesota Legislature will help River Bend Nature Center design and build a world-class environmental education center for the region and state.



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"The state of Minnesota helped establish the Nature Center 45 years ago. Over those years, River Bend has helped create countless environmental leaders. As Faribault becomes a global community, River Bend is strategically situated to develop Minnesota's next generation of diverse environmental stewards and a new investment from the state is needed today to make this vision a reality."

Mayor Kevin Voracek



"Faribault is a global community and River Bend Nature Center is emerging as a national leader in building meaningful, lifelong connections between Minnesota's natural environment and Somalis in Faribault and beyond."

Anisa Hajimumin, Somali Community
Resettlement Services.



"River Bend is an instrumental part of the Faribault Public Schools' science and agricultural curriculum. The demands from school districts like mine of River Bend are starting to add up and an investment from the legislature is needed to ensure that River Bend can continue to serve students."

Jamie Bente - Superintendent Faribault Public
Schools

