



2015-2019 LONG RANGE PLAN

FOR THE LAFAYETTE COUNTY BLUEBIRD SOCIETY, INC.

9320 Wicks Rd
Gratiot, WI 53541

1/26/2015

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Lafayette County Bluebird Society, Inc.

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Introduction and History

The Lafayette County Bluebird Society, Inc. has offered the citizens of Lafayette County an opportunity over the past 32 years to participate in an organization that encourages the stewardship of nature by offering workshops, programs, notable speakers, and materials to anyone interested without requiring payment for these services. During that time LCBS has:

1. Encouraged the awareness of and the importance of the protection of the creatures and plants in our natural world
2. Brought the Eastern Bluebird back to Lafayette County
3. Educated the public on the Eastern Bluebirds early plight of diminishing numbers
4. Educated the public on the importance of assisting other cavity nesting birds
5. Provided numerous sessions on our native songbirds and their habitat
6. Brought people together in an effort to establish a positive image for the county on the subject of environmental concerns
7. In 2014, established the Bluebird Nest Nature Center at 308 Main Street, Darlington, with a focus on our native birds, plants, the driftless area, fossils, animals, and other aspects of the County's natural environment.

Lafayette County is a rural, low income, poverty level county with a predominant farm business base. The majority of farms are large establishments that have subjected the land to removal and alteration of wildlife habitat, such as: trees, brush, fencerows, wetlands, forbs, and waterways. Pesticides and herbicides applied to crop land and lawns have virtually eliminated certain native plants and insects that are the natural food source for our native birds. The changes over the past century and a half have impacted our bird and wildlife populations. When the first settlers arrived here in the early 1800's, the Eastern Bluebird was considered to be as common as the robin. During the following years, removal of snag trees, the introduction of predators, and the application of chemicals dropped the population of the Eastern Bluebird's numbers to dangerous levels. In 1976, the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Survey reported only four pair in the entire state. In 1981, the Darlington Bluebird Society was formed in the basement of the Methodist Church in Darlington with the intent of helping to bring back the bluebird to the area. Efforts were underway to establish bluebird trails that would provide housing for the bluebirds to reproduce safely. As a result, the Eastern Bluebird began to make a comeback. As the Society grew, it was renamed the Lafayette County Bluebird Society. Now incorporated, the Society maintains a list of nearly 100 members who receive weekly emails of bluebird trail reports during the nesting season, March through August. Bluebird trail records over the years show that over 12,000 bluebirds have fledged from the boxes provided by the Society's members. The mission of the Lafayette County Bluebird Society is to "conserve the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity nesting birds". In order to fulfill that mission, it is necessary to take a look at the whole picture of how each aspect of nature is involved with assisting with the cavity nesting birds' survival. The LCBS continues to feel that

there is an ongoing need to educate the citizens of Lafayette County and the southwestern section of the state of Wisconsin on the importance of preserving, conserving and reestablishing the habitat that is necessary for our native birds to thrive. We feel that we owe this to our future generations. Our testament of success is the reestablishment of the Eastern Bluebird to the county. We are looking forward to opportunity to continue to educate the public on the importance of a healthy bird population and the value of nature, wildlife and the natural history of Lafayette County. The following Long Range Plan details the methods that will be used to protect the native creatures and plants of our area. The recent establishment of Bluebird Nest Nature Center will provide a facility where people of all ages can come together to improve their lives by learning about and enjoying nature.

Over the years, the LCBS has succeeded in creating a core group of like-minded individuals who have been diligent in providing nest boxes for our native cavity nesting birds and, ultimately, have been instrumental in the survival of the Eastern Bluebird in Lafayette County. We have given people of all ages the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors by offering bird trail and birding hikes, public meetings with notable speakers, and workshops where nest boxes were constructed. We have given nature talks at schools, garden clubs, church groups, and other civic organizations, such as; Kiwanis and Optimists clubs. We have hosted the Annual Convention of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin. From 1996-2001, Darlington was the headquarters of the North American Bluebird Society, Inc. We have provided public and school libraries with books on bluebirds and other birds, and are members of various nature organizations of which we give the newsletters from these organizations to the Johnson Public Library in Darlington, WI. We have given sessions on native and invasive plants. Through these efforts we have encouraged environmental awareness.

Presently, the Lafayette County Bluebird Society is financially sound. In 2010, we were the recipients of a sizeable monetary contribution from a generous donor. Since then, we have managed to operate the Society with the interest from the gift. Our new venture, the Bluebird Nest Nature Center, will require added funds for its operation.

2015-2017 Long Range Plan

GOAL 1: The Lafayette County Bluebird Society will increase awareness of the importance of nature by increasing the number of persons attending meetings and visiting the Bluebird Nest Nature Center in Lafayette County and southwestern Wisconsin by 5% each year.

Objectives for Goal 1:

A. Continue to operate the Bluebird Nest Nature Center, 308 Main Street, Darlington, WI 53530 that was created in 2014 that provides nature and environmental programs to adults and children throughout Lafayette County and southwestern Wisconsin.

Strategy to achieve Objective 1:

1. Publicize the Bluebird Nest Nature Center in local news media
2. Encourage adults and children in the general public to attend programs

B. Darlington was awarded Bird City status in 2014. LCBS will continue to work with the City of Darlington to meet the criteria set forth by Bird City Wisconsin on a yearly basis

C. Encourage the Mayor of Darlington to designate a proclamation for International Migratory Bird Day each year, at which time, LCBS will hold activities.

D. Organize and implement two meetings each year; one in April for the public and one in October for the membership

E. Organize and implement one bluebird trail hike each year

Goal 2: Increase the assets of the Lafayette County Bluebird Society by 10% (\$15,000) by December 2019

Objective for Goal 2:

A. To ensure the financial stability of the Lafayette County Bluebird Society and the nature center

Strategies to achieve Objective 2:

1. Draft a letter to local membership encouraging them to suggest the LCBS when dealing with estate planning.
2. Draft letter to corporations and businesses asking financial support for the Bluebird Nest Nature Center

Goal 3: Increase membership to 200 by 2019.

Objective for Goal 3:

A. Encourage membership to assist with funding the nature center and expenses of the Lafayette County Bluebird Society

Strategy to achieve Objective 3:

1. Continue to increase membership in the varied age levels, businesses and corporations

Goal 4: Increase the annual fledgling number of the Eastern Bluebirds by 10% in Lafayette County each year

Objective for Goal 4:

A. Increase member participation in the organization

Strategies to achieve Objective 4:

1. Mail or email a letter to each member in February reminding them to monitor and report their trail data to LCBS
2. Encourage members to install Simple nest boxes in Lafayette County
3. Present programs on beginning bluebird techniques at the Bluebird Nest Nature Center
4. Encourage bluebird trail monitoring by recognizing trails at the annual meeting in October
5. Encourage Citizen Science participation

Goal 5: Increase the Bluebird Nest Nature Center from 600 square feet to 1200 square feet and make it handicapped accessible with sustainable utilities

Objective for Goal 5:

- A. To provide a larger facility for the purpose of adding more interpretive displays and educational environmental information
- B. To have a handicapped accessible facility
- C. To have an environmentally sustainable facility

Strategies to achieve Goal 5:

1. Conduct a feasibility study by September 2019
2. Write grants to acquire the funding needed to expand the facility
3. Start a fund drive to gather funding for the project

This Long Range Plan has been developed by the Board of Directors of the Lafayette County Bluebird Society, Inc.

President Carol McDaniel

Vice President Stephen Seffrood

Secretary Sue Cashman

Treasurer John McDaniel

Director Jim Barth

Director Jim Hess

Director Dallas Augustine

Updated and approved : 01/26/2015, 09/14/2015, 02/13/2017

Signed by

Carol J. McDaniel/President