Since our organization began 24 years ago, the Friends of Sherburne has relied on memberships, grants, memorials, and community generosity for funding refuge events and projects as well as our own operations. This year, with federal budget cuts looming at the same time the nature education program is expanding and demanding more of our budget, we have decided to join the parade of nonprofit organizations making a formal ask for year-end gifts.

With a theme of Be Wild, Stay Wild, we launched our campaign by promoting giving on Give to the Max Day, November 16, Minnesota’s alternative to Giving Tuesday. Thanks to a group of generous Friends, we have accumulated a match pool that we are challenging donors to meet—and exceed—by December 31. Memberships, renewals, and all new gifts received until then will be matched dollar for dollar up to $5,200. The initial push got us more than 25% of the way to our goal, and we are very grateful! But we’re not there yet.

Throughout this issue you will see examples of how your generosity has supported nature education, made quality refuge events available to the public free of charge, and funded projects that will enhance a visitor’s refuge experience, making it memorable. We couldn’t have done it without you, but we need your continued support to set us up for success in 2018. **If you haven’t already done so, please consider making a year-end gift to help us “meet our match.”** Use the member/donor form on page 8, or give online at ExploreSherburne.org or the Friends of Sherburne page at GiveMN.org.

Best wishes during this holiday season, and may you find time to visit the refuge or another wild place for a nature break and a dose of wonder. **Thank you for supporting the Friends of Sherburne!**

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**ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE FRIENDS’ 2018 ANNUAL MEETING!**

**Tuesday, January 16, 2018**

Oak Savanna Learning Center • 16797 289th Ave NW

**6:00 PM – Potluck and Social Time**

- Activity Tables & Prize Drawings!
- Special Friends Announcement

**7:00 PM – Business Meeting**

- Reports and Review of 2017 Friends’ Accomplishments
- Vote to Approve 2018 Budget
- Refuge Update
- Election of Board Members

Unapproved minutes from the 2017 Annual Meeting and the complete 2018 Meeting Agenda are available at Refuge Headquarters, 17076 293rd Ave., Zimmerman, MN 55398, and online at www.exploresherburne.org.

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**Be Wild, Stay Wild by Supporting the Friends and Sherburne NWR**

By Sue Hix

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“I can hear the forest!” said Elijah as he held a bur oak leaf to his ear. He and hundreds of other young students enjoyed quality, hands-on nature learning experiences at the refuge this fall, thanks to you. Photo: Sherry Winter
From the President
by Myrna Krueger

In 2017, we took the first steps toward revamping the Friends strategic direction and vision in support of Sherburne NWR. In January, we came together with stakeholders and board members to outline four strategic pillars that will guide our plans: Education, Advocacy, Sustainability, and Volunteerism. For us as Friends, advocacy is one of our most important activities. For many years, the Friends of Sherburne have advocated for the refuge and the Refuge System. In continuing this legacy, our new advocacy pillar says that we will mobilize and sustain a broad and active base of conservation advocates. Through advocacy, we have an opportunity to protect America’s wildlife for future generations.

Because Sherburne NWR and the Refuge System are federal entities, many of our efforts involve connecting and communicating with the legislators who represent us in Washington, DC. For example, we have routinely invited our Senators and 6th District Congress members to visit the refuge so they can learn first-hand about the programs and accomplishments at Sherburne. We provide them and their staffs with information that will help them understand the issues so they can make informed decisions about the Refuge System.

As a Friends group, we rely on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) to be our eyes, ears, and voice in Washington. The NWRA is a non-profit exclusively focused on protecting and promoting the 850 million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System through outreach and lobbying. They vigilantly watch for policies and legislation that could undermine the integrity of the Refuge System and advocate for efforts that advance wildlife conservation.

One way that you can help is to stay informed. Sign up for the NWRA Action Alerts and receive emails with the latest updates on legislation that impacts the National Wildlife Refuge System. With a few clicks, you can provide input to your Congress member and Senators in Washington. It’s easier and quicker than you think! Go to refugeassociation.org now and click Take Action to sign up.

Helen Keller once said, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Now is an important time to let your voice be heard. Please join us in advocating for wildlife conservation and Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.

Your Be Wild Gifts in Action

The Black Bear Loop, completed and added to the Oak Savanna Trail system this summer, has been popular with visitors of all ages, who hike in hopes of seeing trumpeter swans, beavers, or even the trail’s namesake. Just in time for the festival, a triptych depicting refuge landscapes in the 4 seasons was installed in the Leaning Center. Wildlife artist Gary Moss created a beautiful work of art as well as a unique teaching tool. Other recent additions at the Oak Savanna Learning Center site include the brick recognition patio by the flagpole, donor recognition art and plaques inside the building, and benches along the trails. These significant improvements were all made possible by the generosity of our Be Wild donors. Thank you!
Benefits of Friends Membership

Your Membership Donation Gives You . . .

- A tax deduction to the extent allowed by law
- Quarterly newsletter and updates about refuge events and programs
- Invitations to special members-only events
- Discount of 10% at the Eagle's Nest Nature Store (open M–F at the Refuge Headquarters and at events)
- Satisfaction of supporting education and conservation efforts at a local venue where everyone can enjoy nature

When the Oak Savanna Learning Center opened in 2016, it included space for the Friends of Sherburne’s Eagle’s Nest Nature Store along with the classrooms. Diane Stroschein, the store manager, took on the grueling process of designing and stocking the new space. When asked how much work went into the new store, Diane, who has been store manager for 5 years with 2 years as a store volunteer before that, laughed and replied, “A lot of work!”

Before the Learning Center location opened, Diane says she only had to worry about merchandise. Then Diane saw the empty store space in the new building. She said she panicked, so she did what she has always done best and reached out for help. Friends member Nancy Howard, who has years of experience in the construction business, helped Diane through the process of finding a cabinet maker, selecting fixtures, getting bids, and designing the layout of the store. Another Friends member and former board member, Darlene Antinozzi, accompanied Diane to merchandise shows, where they made purchases for the new store and then waited patiently with many items in the spare rooms of their homes for the OSLC to open. Once the store construction was completed, Friends members Dean Kleinhans and Dan Howard spent many hours setting it up with Diane.

In 2016 Diane knew it was time for a change of pace. The heavy lifting involved with moving boxes of merchandise was just too much for her, so Diane decided to retire as store manager. She promised she would not leave until the Friends found a solid replacement for her, and so the search was on. Many people were involved, and through RSVP—the Retired Senior and Volunteer Program—the Friends found Sharon Kolstad, and Diane was able to “pass the buck” in October 2017.

Sharon retired from a 38-year career in a supply chain related position for a well-established Minnesota-based company. At RSVP she completed questionnaires about what kind of volunteer work she preferred. She knew immediately that she wanted to be outside more and to try many different things. Through RSVP, Sharon learned about refuge volunteer opportunities, including “adopt a refuge trail.” She had never been to the refuge before this, except for riding her Harley Davidson through it now and then. When the store manager position opened up, RSVP Coordinator (and Friends member) Charlotte Strei asked Sharon if she would be interested. Sharon said yes! From there Sharon embarked on a one-year training program under Diane’s direction.

Now Diane has been able to step away, knowing that the store she devoted so much time, energy, and love to is in good hands. When asked what she has learned from Sharon, Diane said with a smile, “I like her suggestive selling, her energy level and enthusiasm for the store, and her idea for ‘round up for education.’” Diane will still be around, so don’t think she has totally fledged the nest. We thank you both for all the hard work and wish you the best of luck!
The Friends of Sherburne gratefully acknowledge recent donors (Through November 16, 2017)

**New Lifetime Members**
Gary Moss
JT Construction
Carlene Ewalt and Michael Deglman
Susan Bialka

**New Corporate Membership**
The Grandstand Concessions Company

**Memorials**
For Mark Lee from Kay Lee
For Allan Rife from Robin DeLong
For Kim Hoska from Lauren Young

**Honorarium**
For Patty and Cliff Crockford from Allie and Ken Crockford

**2017 Festival Supporters THANK YOU!**

**Wildlife Festival Sponsors**
Jim's Market
Princeton Chevrolet-Buick

**Silent Auction**
Bruno Gad
C. Perry Schenk
Carol VanHeel
Diane Stroschein
Jim Stroschein
Gladys Olmsted
Marliss Bock
Dunn Brothers Zimmerman
Ace Solid Waste
Jill Beim
Total Image Salon
Mary ‘Karlie’ Carlson
Dave Martin
Jim Olson
Jean Davids
Goldeneye Framing and Gallery
Jess Paulson
Marca Brubaker
Sally Zodrow

**Gift Cards/Certificates, etc.**
Wal-Mart
Cub Foods Elk River
Coborn's
Diamond City Bread
Papa's Italian

**Wildlife Circle Donations**

**Bluebird**
Charles Snyder
Anonymous
Beth Watson
Kris Spaeth
Becky Pollard
Jim Olson

**Sandhill Crane**
Gene and Mary Lou Seipp
Stoneworks Architectural Precast
Kenneth Brennen
Prairie Restorations, Inc.
Busy October at the Learning Center

A group of talented refuge education volunteers hosted more than 750 students and teachers during student visits to the Oak Savanna Learning Center in October. Standards-based lessons focused on habitat comparisons as well as using your senses to explore, with emphasis placed on spending time outside in lesson-related discovery. The financial support of the Friends of Sherburne provides transportation assistance for schools, equipment used during visits, and development of lesson plans. **Thank you, Friends!**

Welcome, Alaina! Alaina Larkin is a new face around the office! She will be full-time in January but until then she’s working part-time this fall until she finishes her Masters in Natural Science and Environmental Education from Hamline University in December. Before Sherburne, Alaina worked at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, Minnesota Valley NWR, and Seney NWR, along with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board. Alaina is thrilled to be joining the team at Sherburne and is looking forward to getting to know everyone!

**Holiday shopping hours at the Oak Savanna location!**
The Oak Savanna Learning Center location will be open the first 3 Saturdays in December from 9am to 1pm

16797 289th Ave NW, Zimmerman, MN / located 5 miles west of Hwy 169

---Watch for the “Open” banner on CR 9---

**OAK SAVANNA LOCATION**

HQ LOCATION is open Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:00pm

OAK SAVANNA LOCATION will be open 12/2, 12/9, 12/16 (2017) and for Special Events

---Be sure to check out our close-out and sale items, too!---

New Gift Items Include: Garden Picks & Chimes; Swedish Dishcloths; Kitchen Towels & Hot Pads; Garden Statuary; plus large variety of new Puzzles. Excellent book and field guide selection still available.

Friends Members receive a 10% discount on purchases.

Proceeds support refuge education programs.

---Watch for the “Open” banner on CR 9---

Help Us BE GREEN!

**We urge you to do your part:**

- Tell us about changes to your email or mailing address.
- Ask us to add you to the email list to receive the full-color version of this newsletter.
- Contact us: [FriendsofSherburne@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofSherburne@gmail.com) or mail to us c/o the refuge

**2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Myrna Krueger – President

Dean Kleinhans – Vice President

Susan Blair – Secretary

Carol VanHeel – Treasurer

Matt Finn – Director

Brad Johnson – Director

Lee T. Johnson – Director

Debra Sorenson – Director

Beth Thorson – Director

**ADVISOR TO THE BOARD**

Steve Karel – Refuge Manager
Christmas Bird Count Set for December 20

The Friends will sponsor the Sherburne NWR Christmas Bird Count on Wednesday, December 20. This is the 50th count year for this area and will contribute to the 118th Annual Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count held nationwide from December 14, 2017, to January 5, 2018. The count area includes a circle with its center on the refuge (corner of CR 9 and CR 5) and its radius extending 7.5 miles in all directions. If you live in or near the count area, we ask that you keep your bird feeders filled. Not only will you help feed the birds, but you will attract them to places where they will be easier to see and count. Coordinator Andy Beim reports that a few experienced birders are still needed in order to cover the entire count area. If you are available to help, please contact Andy at andybeim@gmail.com.

Perfect Day for a Festival

More than 1,500 visitors, staff, and volunteers enjoyed a beautiful fall day at the refuge during the 24th Annual Wildlife Festival on September 30. Financial support from the Friends enabled the refuge to offer the event free to the public. Highlights included presentations, an exhibit featuring live animals, and horse-drawn interpreted wagon rides. Hands-on activities spread around the Learning Center trails kept visitors of all ages occupied throughout the day, and the live raptors presentation by the Audubon Center of the North Woods was standing room only inside the classroom. The popular activities shown in the photos include exploring for aquatic invertebrates at the dock, examining the Marsh Master, learning about the refuge during a wagon ride, and measuring your wingspan. Photos: Bruce Ellingson
Recently I received a report from a staff member who had just seen a snowy owl on the refuge. While I am always excited to hear about the sightings of rare wildlife species, this one also made me realize something. Winter is here! The seasons seem to march on without regard to my state of readiness. I always wish for a longer fall but also know that I love the changing seasons.

As we enter the holiday season and approach the end of 2017, many of us take time to reflect on the year that just passed us by. It is no different at the refuge. This time of year we look back on what we accomplished. When I think about all of the accomplishments at the refuge in 2017, it’s hard to pick just one. However, since I need to focus on just one, I picked the completion of the granite trail at the Oak Savanna Learning Center (OSLC). What I loved about that project was the fact that it couldn’t have happened without the collaboration of the Friends, volunteers, and refuge staff. When we unify and work together, there aren’t many things we can’t accomplish. Such is the case with the OSLC trail project.

As many of you may remember, in the summer of 2016, over 1/2 mile of the trail near the OSLC was finished by laying out fabric, hauling in crushed granite, raking smooth, and packing. The finished trail took lots of work but provided an accessible surface for visitor and student use. Not long after the first section of trail was completed, the plans for finishing the remainder of the trail to the south began. With support from the Friends Be Wild campaign and a grant from Knife River, we completed the remaining mile of trail this July. A huge THANK YOU is in order for everyone who made the trail project possible.

Just recently we gave new names to the different loops of the hiking trail. The north loop that goes through the woods down to the floating dock will be known as the Overlook Loop; the trail around the beaver lodge will now be (you guessed it!) the Beaver Lodge Loop; and the loop to the very south will be known as the Black Bear Loop.

Since the first section of trail was competed in June 2016 until today, the trail has been enjoyed by thousands of visitors. More importantly, during that same time, more than 2,000 students have used the trail for nature education. Outstanding!

As I look forward to 2018, I do not know what the future will bring. What I do know is that, because of your support of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, we will be able to do it together. Happy Holidays!

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**SHERBURNE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**SHERBURNE NWR PHOTO CLUB**

Meets every 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 pm social, 7:00 pm meeting, at the Oak Savanna Learning Center. Open to all ages, backgrounds, and experience levels.

**FEBRUARY**

**Moonlight Ski/Hike**
Friday, February 2, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Meet at the Oak Savanna Learning Center for a rare opportunity to experience the refuge at night and ski under an (almost) full moon! Skis not provided.

**Snowshoe Hike**
Sunday, February 11, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Meet at the Oak Savanna Learning Center for a fun-filled afternoon of snowshoeing! Snowshoes provided.

**MAY**

**Spring Bird Tour**
Saturday, May 12, 7:00 am – 10:00 am
Meet your guide at the Mahnomen Trail to learn about native birds. Led by volunteer naturalist Dave Martin.

**Spring Celebration**
Saturday, May 12, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Come celebrate the spring season and International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) with a festival focused on plants, birds, and pollinators! Meet at the Oak Savanna Learning Center.
- Friends of Sherburne Plant Sale will take place outside at the same time.

**Kids’ Photography Workshop**
Saturday, May 12, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Kids (K-12) are welcome to attend an introduction to photography workshop led in collaboration with the Sherburne NWR Photo Club.
Meet at the Oak Savanna Learning Center.

**For More Information:**
All events are FREE and open to the public. The Oak Savanna Learning Center is located at 16797 289th Ave, Zimmerman. See online at https://www.fws.gov/refuge/sherburne/ or call 763-389-3323
Who Are The Friends?  The Friends of Sherburne is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that supports refuge projects and educational programs.

THE PRAIRIE’S EDGE, the newsletter for the Friends of Sherburne, is published quarterly for its members in cooperation with Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. See us at www.ExploreSherburne.org as well as on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Contact the Friends c/o Sherburne NWR, 17076 293rd Avenue, Zimmerman, MN 55398, or at friendsofsherburne@gmail.com.

Friends Annual Meeting!

17076 293rd Avenue
Zimmerman, MN 55398