**ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE**

Friends of Sherburne NWR
Tuesday, January 17, 2017
Oak Savanna Learning Center
16797 289th Ave NW

**6:30 PM - Social Time**
- Dessert and coffee provided by the Friends of Sherburne

**7:00 PM - Business Meeting**
- Refuge Update
- Review of 2016 Friends’ Accomplishments
- Be Wild Campaign Recap
- Vote to Approve Proposed 2017 Budget
- Election of Board Members

Unapproved minutes from the 2016 Annual Meeting and the 2017 Meeting Agenda are available at Refuge Headquarters, 17076 293rd Ave., Zimmerman, MN 55398, and online at www.exploresherburne.org.

**Friends Year-end To-Do List**

- **Give to the Max Day Challenge Met!**
  Many thanks to those who renewed or made donations on Give to the Max Day, November 17. Counting the match offered by generous partners, we received $3,225 in gifts that week! You still have time to make a tax-deductible year-end gift.

- **Holiday Shopping at the Eagle’s Nest Nature Store**
  Take advantage of Saturday hours and holiday specials at the Oak Savanna Learning Center location, December 3, 10, and 17, 9 am – noon. The location at Refuge Headquarters will also be open M – F during business hours.

**Help Us Be Green!**

Got an email address or need to update it? We’d be pleased to save paper and mailing expense by emailing you a link to the full-color version of the Friends newsletter! We’ll also let you know about refuge events and other news that comes up between newsletters. To update or send us your email address, send a message to friendsofsherburne@gmail.com with “Newsletter” in the subject line. (And don’t worry—we will not be flooding your Inbox with a lot of mail!)

Have you changed your mailing address? Help us reduce returned mail by updating your address. Contact us at the above email address or at our mailing address c/o the refuge.

Young visitors, dip nets in hand, helped a volunteer look for aquatic invertebrates to identify at the wetland education dock on Wildlife Festival day, September 24. At least 900 visitors and 100 volunteers made the day a big success.
From the President
by Brad Johnson

I have been privileged to serve as your president for the last two years. Together we have accomplished a great deal. Here are some of the highlights.

Most notably of course was the successful Be Wild campaign and the completion of the Oak Savanna Learning Center. Thank you to all of those on the Be Wild steering committee and chair Sue Hix.

We celebrated the 50th anniversary of Sherburne NWR with crazy tie-dyed shirts. Thank you to Robin Delong, Su Johnson, and Michelle Bengson for planning this successful celebration. We were also privileged to share this day with many former refuge staff members.

We had the first of what I hope will be an annual wine-tasting fundraiser event. Thank you to Su Johnson for arranging the event, Carol VanHeel for the successful silent auction, and to Cliff Crockford and his group of talented friends for the musical atmosphere. Proceeds benefited the Friends’ environmental education fund.

This year we also sponsored a special Friends-only event. After sowing wildflower seeds we enjoyed a grilled picnic. We were thankful to move the picnic inside to the air-conditioned learning center.

Next year will be my last on the Friends board as I serve as “Past President.” Along with Su we plan to continue to be involved with the refuge and Friends group.

Finally, thank you to each member of the refuge staff for your willingness, cooperation, and hard work to make Sherburne an outstanding refuge. I hope to see you at the annual meeting on January 17, 2017.

Friends of Sherburne Website Has a New Look

“Take a look!” says Dean Kleinhans, who manages the Friends’ website, www.exploresherburne.org. “We now have more photos, less text, and fewer sections to navigate.” He further explains that the new website platform makes maintenance much easier, and he invites you to let him know if you think you may be interested in helping to keep the website updated.

We encourage all our members to check out the new look, let us know what you think, and, if you would like to know more about the opportunity to help maintain the website, contact Dean at info@exploresherburne.org.

Want to Volunteer?

The Friends are a very dynamic group and always looking for folks who can help. So we’ve developed a list of ways in which our members can contribute their time and skills. Here are a few examples: staffing a Friends booth at a local expo, advocating for the refuge with legislators, working on communications like newsletters or social media sites, assisting in the nature store, and helping with fundraising or other Friends events.

To volunteer or get a copy of the list of volunteer opportunities, click on About Us at exploresherburne.org and scroll to the Volunteer section. Or email friendsofsherburne@gmail.com.

Are You Smarter Than a Fifth-Grader?

Fifth-grade students from Clear Lake visited the refuge in October to explore wetland and prairie opening habitats. Look how much information they recorded after returning from the wetland education dock (funded by the Friends’ Be Wild Campaign)!
The Friends of Sherburne gratefully acknowledge recent donors (Through 11/18/2016)

Memorials
For Tom Brady
Janet Brady
Kevin & Susan Brady
Ann Henkin
For Wesley C Thompson
Becky Southard

Honorarium
For Janet Brady
Ann Henkin

Corporate/Organization Members
Almost Anything LLC
Anoka Game Fair
Bank of Elk River
Bell Composites
Becker Lions
Becker True Value Hardware
Big Lake Lions
Bremer Bank – Princeton Office
Connexus Energy
Crystal Cabinet Works
Decklan Group
Elk River Chamber
Elk River Lions
Environmental Explorers
Great River Energy
Howard Homes, Inc.
Knights of Columbus – Big Lake/Becker
Metal Craft Machine
Pine Ridge Dental, P.A.
Prairie Restorations, Inc.
Princeton Auto Center
Princeton Lions
Princeton Used Clothing
Ray’s Auto Body – Princeton
Princeton Insurance Agency
Sherburne County Abstract & Title
Sherburne County Swampbucks
Sherburne State Bank
SRW Products
Stoneworks Architectural Precast
Vela Strategy

Wetland Professionals Association
Zimmerman Dairy Queen

New and Renewed Members
Susan Arnold
Bill & Nancy Jones
Beth Thorson & Family
Chris Lommel
Dan and L. Jean Anderson
Barb Kasten
Mike and CJ Valenti
Kami Doley
Kathleen Gill
Kelly Thomas
Jill Schuster Peterson
Susan Enright
Mary Beth Bärder
Craig Peterson
Dohald Britt
Kristine Cornellier
Marcia Hed
Sanford & Sandy Smith
Laune Wachholz
Rebecca Braasch
Sharon Kolstad
Carol Crowe
Bonnie May Nelson
Laura MaCaughan
Leahlei Crezier
Carol Haubner
Sue Stronski
Theresa Antinotzzi
Jennifer Fuchs
Michael Antinotzzi
John Stuefen
Nick Antinotzzi
Loytte Kolbinger
Joseph Antinotzzi
Dorene Pohl
Bob & Gayle Herr
Bob & Michelle Bengson
Sue Gray & Tom Kehoe
Andy & Jill Beim
Helen Loing

Wildlife Circle Donations
Monarch Butterfly
Patty and Cliff Crockford
Leroy Brown
Karen Ippen
CJ & Mike Valent
Carol & Steve Howe-Veenstra
Kris Lindner
Kris Spaeth
Gary & Laura Pipenhagen
Debra Sorenson
Anonymous
Sherry Winter
Diane & Jim Stroschein
Diana Burtison
Sue Hix

Bald Eagle
Carol & Dan VanHeel

2016 Wildlife Festival
Supporters
Gear West
Papa’s Italian
Dunn Bros Coffee
Coborn’s
Cub
Beaudry Propane
Gary Sabon
Diane Stroschein
Nancy Haugen
Joan Læsøn
Rob & Tom Bullis
Judy Hidde
Bruno Gad
Tony Hewitt
Carol VanHeel
Barb Bode
Pattie Dorf
Amberly Suhsen
Mariiss Bock
Mark Burley
Jim Olson

Friends of Sherburne NWR 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Brad Johnson–President
Myma Krueger–Vice President
Susan Bialka–Secretary
Carol VanHeel–Treasurer
Darlene Antinotzzi–Director
Sue Hix–Director
Cory Jendro–Director
Lee T. Johnson–Director
Su Johnson–Director
Dean Kleinlns–Director
Lisa Nelson–Director
Shawn Peck–Director

ADVISORS TO THE BOARD
Steve Karel – Refuge Manager
Michelle Bengson – Visitor Services Manager

Christmas shopping hours at the new Oak Savanna Eagle’s Nest Store  Dec. 3, 10, 17 9 AM-Noon
Your Friends’ discount applies on everything, including sale items!

New items include:
• Books and guides
• Ornaments
• Coasters and trivets
• Children’s crafts and games
• Stuffed animals, including cranes
• Shirts, sweatshirts, and hats
• Bird and butterfly umbrellas

OPEN MONDAY-FRIDAY at Refuge HQ  8 AM-4 PM
and at the Oak Savanna Learning Center during events. Special holiday shopping dates: Saturdays, Dec. 3, 10, 17, 9 AM-Noon

Friends Members receive a 10% discount.
Proceeds support refuge education programs.

Thanks!
Friends Reach Be Wild Campaign Goal!

We did it! More than 250 gifts from individuals, families, businesses, community organizations, and foundations have helped us reach our goal of raising $250,000 through the Be Wild Campaign for Youth Nature Education. Gifts—including cash donations, goods, services, and grants—have already been used to provide tables, chairs, A/V system, patio sitting wall, sidewalks, landscaping, trails, kiosk, signage, wetland education dock, and more for the Oak Savanna Learning Center.

Our success can be measured in more than dollar signs. Since the center opened in May, more than 3,000 people of all ages and from across the U.S. have taken advantage of the new facility and site amenities. Although the learning center has hosted a variety of meetings and events, its most important function has been to welcome more than 1,000 students from area schools for hands-on, standards-based lessons that enrich classroom learning. A quick look at the education program shows why it is already receiving positive reviews.

- Refuge education volunteers, working with Michelle Bengson, refuge visitor services manager, invite each student who visits to become a naturalist—a person who studies nature. By becoming naturalists, students practice science skills like inquiry and observation as well as character-building skills like being calm, quiet, and respectful. Plus they get exercise as they explore. As Michelle says, “Students learn that nature offers life-long learning and is a source to draw upon for strength, peace, beauty, and joy.”

- A partner first-grade teacher who asked her students how they felt when spending time outside doing nature sketches received replies like, “It makes me calm, but like the happy calm,” or “Being outside makes me feel like playing on top of the clouds.” It’s hard to beat testimonials like those!

- We have been gratified to watch excited young students explore, observe, and learn about refuge habitats and wildlife, but we have been equally touched by the comments of their teachers. For example, one local partner teacher wrote, “I feel truly blessed to be part of the outdoor program! The learning is beyond anything I ever imagined. We have incorporated all subjects into our lessons.” Another teacher commented after a refuge visit, “Being able to come to the refuge made my heart warm at the wonder of children loving their time in nature, experiencing something that will change and enrich their lives forever.” Feedback like this confirms that our efforts have been worthwhile—we are offering something special. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this success!

Thank you, Be Wild donors!

Donors of $500 and more qualify for special recognition and Lifetime memberships in the Friends.

**Bald Eagle - $10,000 and Above**
- Prairie Restoration, Inc.
- C Perry in Memory of Lola Schenk
- Bernick Family Foundation Grant
- Ken Brennen
- Joe & Shannon Glenn Family Fund
- Medtronic Foundation (match)
- MidWestOne Bank Foundation Grant

**White-tailed Deer - $5,000 - $9,999**
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant
- Gift in memory of Nancy Crockford
- Myrna Krueger & Flarian Keller
- Becker True Value Hardware
- Sue Hix & Dean Kleinhans
- Ron and Harriet Burley
- Big Lake/Becker Knights of Columbus
- MDU Resources Foundation Grant

**Sandhill Crane - $1,000 - $4,999**
- Connexus Energy

**Blanding’s Turtle - $500 - $999**
- Marliss Bock
- Atlas Foundation/Structural Anchor Supply
- Sarah Foltz-Jordan and Nick Jordan
- Michelle & Todd Anderson
- Liz & Xakk Asphodel
- Betsy Beneke
- Leroy Brown
- Steve & Kathy Chesney
- Ned Dayton
- Clear Lake Lions Club
- Chuck & Lorai Delaney – Anoka Game Fair
- Lisa Fobbe & Family
- Melinda Goetseh and John Seppanen
- Great River Energy Grant
- Randall & Teresa Hillson
- Steve & Becky Karel
Tom & Bobbi Voss Marcouiller
Nancy McCreight
Jeff Ouveron - McManus Babcock CPAs
Robert Morgan
Joy and Owen Nadeau
Rebecca Papike
Jerome & Joanne Peterson
Laura & Gary Pipenhagen
Princeton Insurance
Mary Ann Straley
Robin & Scott Suhsen
Mark & Judy Thorson
Paul Trunk
Lauren Young and Peter Sovik
Marv Ziner

**Monarch Butterfly - $100 - $499**

James Cabak
Mike Niziolek
Bob & Bette Dunn
Mark Nystrom
Karen Bowen
Elk River Rotary Club
Robert & Darlene Mullenburg
Brian & Lisa Nelson
Eric Nystrom
Diana & Steve Warner
Gordon & Josephine Bailey
Bremer Bank - Princeton
Jeanne Bromberg
Michelle & Bob Benson
Catherine Hegg
Philip & Susan Linge
Pew Charitable Trusts (match)
Lukas & Leigh Rusin
Lynn Hass
Joan Frick
Santa Lucia Ice Cream
Sue - Gray & Tom Kehoe
101 Market
Adventure Publications
Mark Anderson
Sue & Myron Angstman
Merwin & Lois Miller Berhow
Susan Blaika
Marilyn Bina
Diana & Steve Burlison
Laurie Chasteen
Martha Davidson
Miranda & Chris Dibble
Julia & Brian Espe
Federated Insurance (match)
Kit Ferber
Kathleen Gill
Jacquelin Gordon
Sandi & Joe Hanson
James Harp
Dale Hennek
Robert & Barb Hoeft
Rea Holmes in memory of Ron Holmes
Albert & Gunn Honican
Dan & Shirley Imholte
Cory Jendro
Char & Wally Kramersmeier
Les & Joan Larson
Gary Laurent
Cindy Ley

**Bluebird - $10 - $99**

Joel Meyer
Bill & Charlotte Strei
Steve & Carol Howe-Veenstra
Curtis Strombeck
Andy’s on Main
Beaudry Oil & Propane Co
Jill & Andy Beim
Lizzy Berkley and Scott Peckham
Janet Brady in Memory of Tom V Brady
Angela Chesney in Honor of Steve Chesney
John & Christine Harvey
Dorothy Holmes
Gina & Dan Hugo
Gene Karlson
Christopher Keller
Mike Kennedy
Yvonne Kilby-Howard
Kris Lindner
Carol Mertesdorf
Bonnie May Nelson
James L Olson
Andrea Pearson
Deb & Don Steiskal
Thomas & Vicki Tyler
Douglas Wark
Deetje Zettervall
Sally Zodrow
April & Jim St. Aoro
Karen Miller
Connie & James Reeves
Mark Gilbert
Steve Weston in memory of Margaret Connolly
Dan & Jean Anderson
Greg Anderson
Joan Beckrich
Kathleen Brown
Jean Davids
Jill & Gary Fedo
Roger & Kathy Hatting
Coborn’s - Princeton
Charlotte LaBathe
David & Sheryl Larsen
Brian Layor
Helen Loing
Rebecca Maslonkowski
James and Irene Meier
Richard Nelles
James Palmblad
Phyllis Pesola-Krumholz

Kathryn & Thomas Rivers
Marilyn Rynes
Jennifer & Brooks Smith
Kris Spaeth
Joel & Marlene Stattstrup
Kristen Whitley
Vickie Wineinger
Reynolds Balloon & Party
Bridget Evens
Shirley Miller
Bonnie May Nelson in memory of Jan Riedl
Jack Pierson
JoAnn Stark
Amberly Suhsen
Nancy Cassano
Jay & Louise Eisenstrager
Ross Gabrielson
Sue Hales
James & Lucille Mallery
Mike & CJ Valenti
Kent & Barb Nelson
Mark & Judy Thorson
Paul Trunk
Lauren Young and Peter Sovik
Marv Ziner

**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
Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Introduces First-Ever Photography Club

Since Sherburne Refuge was established in 1965, photographers have flocked there to capture the beauty within it: stands of wild lupine that stretch to the horizon, thousands of sandhill cranes gliding feet first into open wetlands, copper leaves from century-old bur oak trees shimmering in an autumn breeze. But for the first time in its history, the refuge is starting a photography club so photographers can gather and share their passion for nature photography!

The photography club meets the second Wednesday of each month, and you’re invited to join refuge volunteers for the photography club’s meeting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 7, at the Oak Savanna Learning Center. Social time starts at 6:30 p.m. Volunteer-led and member-driven, the photography club is free and open to all ages, backgrounds, and experience levels. Members share a common interest in nature and photography. If you would like more information, please contact the refuge at 763-389-3323 or Sherburne@fws.gov. You can also find the club on Facebook by searching “Sherburne Photography Club.”

Strategic Planning Ahead in 2017

With the completion of the Oak Savanna Learning Center and the achievement of our Be Wild capital campaign goal to furnish the center, the Friends are looking to the future and asking, “What’s next?” So we’ve undertaken a project to create a strategic plan for the Friends of Sherburne.

With a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to support the process, we’ll begin working in January to gather input that will feed discussions and help set priorities for the future. As we go through the planning process, we’ll work closely with the Sherburne staff, getting their input so that we are aligned with their goals for the future. We look forward to sharing plan progress and outcomes with you in the months ahead.

Christmas Bird Count Set for December 20

The Friends will sponsor the Sherburne NWR Christmas Bird Count on Tuesday, December 20. This is the 49th count year for this area and will contribute to the 117th Annual Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count held nationwide from December 14, 2016, to January 5, 2017. 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. Coordinators Dean Kleinhans and Andy Beim report that volunteers have already been assigned to cover the entire count area. Although no more volunteer help is needed, 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.
The Manager’s Corner

by Steve Karel

What an amazing autumn we have experienced this year with unseasonably warm weather sprawling deep into November. I hope this warm weather made it more inviting to come out to Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge to see the sandhill cranes. Mild temperatures and lack of snow provided an opportunity for the cranes to stay a little later than normal and continue to feed in adjacent crop fields and roost on open water at the refuge.

This year the refuge had approximately 9,196 cranes at the peak of migration on November 9. You may wonder how we get these numbers. It isn’t rocket science; we actually count the individual birds! From early October through the end of November, we do periodic crane surveys that usually last 1 1/2 to 2 hours around daybreak. We stage staff members at various points around the refuge between landmarks that are visible from a great distance. These landmarks usually consist of a line of trees or a road. We count the birds as they come off the roost and fly out to feed through the corresponding flight area. This can be quite challenging at times in areas where there are large numbers of birds, but with binoculars in one hand and a pencil in the other, the tally marks are placed on coffee-spotted data sheets until the staff reunites and gets the grand total. This is truly one of the finer experiences that we have on the refuge as we enjoy the sun making its way above the eastern horizon, witnessing thousands of magnificent, prehistoric-looking birds, all the while hearing the cacophony of their unique calls. This is truly a rewarding experience that makes us realize how fortunate we are to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

On October 15 and 16, the refuge staff led two crane tours with a total of 30 participants each day. The crane tours provide an opportunity to get up close to see the cranes before they leave their roost and to hear a “play by play” narration by our biologist, Tony Hewitt, and park ranger, Adam Muilenburg. It is truly a memorable experience and if you are a bird lover, it is a must see. The refuge hopes to continue to provide the tours annually. To minimize disturbance to these remarkable birds and to provide a quality experience for all, we require reservations and keep tour groups small. Keep your eye on the Sherburne calendar of events for 2017 for the next “show” times.

Of course, there is always the self-guided tour option, which requires visiting the northwest corner of the refuge in the fall and allows you the opportunity to watch cranes from the comfort of your vehicle as they fly to and from the refuge in the mornings and evenings.

Stay Wild, My Friends!
**Friends of Sherburne Membership Form**

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<th>1 Year</th>
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- Please send email link for the newsletter.
- Please send information about the Refuge Volunteer Program.

**Other Ways to Support the Friends and Refuge Programs**

- Please select the donation you wish to make.

- **Friends’ Wildlife Circle Donation**
  - Bald Eagle: $10,000 and above
  - White-tailed Deer: $5,000 – $9,999
  - Sandhill Crane: $1,000 – $4,999
  - Blanding’s Turtle: $500 – $999
  - Monarch Butterfly: $100 – $499
  - Bluebird: $10 – $99

- **Be Wild Education Fund**
  This gift will support the Oak Savanna Learning Center and its education programs and also defray transportation expenses for visiting student groups.

- **Memorial or Honorarium**
  This gift is in memory/honor (circle one) of:
  - Name: __________________________

- Please make checks payable to Friends of Sherburne NWR, 17076 293rd Ave., Zimmerman, MN 55398

**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.

**AMOUNT ENCLOSED** $__________

Name: ______________________________________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________
City: ___________________________ State: _____________ Zip: _____________
Phone: __________________________ Email: ____________________________

Please make checks payable to Friends of Sherburne NWR, 17076 293rd Ave., Zimmerman, MN 55398

Membership fees and other donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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**Other Events:**
- **February 2017**
  - **11:** Snowshoe Hike
  - **18:** Moonlight Ski/Hike

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**17076 293rd Avenue**
**Zimmerman, MN 55398**