“It’s amazing the number of people who don’t see our wildflowers until you start showing them... Come and see. Come and join. If you like what you see, put your back into it.”

For more from Robin, see page 7; For more Friends interviews, see pages 3-6.

You’re Invited to a Very Special Birthday Party!

The Friends are turning 25 this year, and we are celebrating! This issue of The Prairie’s Edge highlights people and history of our first 25 years...and extends an exclusive, members-only birthday party invitation.

Enjoy Friends old and new, beverages and hors d'oeuvres, gallery showing by photographers from our newly unveiled Photo Story project, and short member meeting at 6:45. We’ll end at 8 pm with a lively talk by Al Batt, Minnesota humorist and naturalist.

We invite you and your significant other to join us!
Thursday, August 9, 6:00 – 8:30 pm
Oak Savanna Learning Center
16797 289th Ave NW, Zimmerman
Space is limited – RSVP by August 2!
FriendsofSherburne@gmail.com, 763-389-3323

OFFICIAL NOTICE

The Friends board is recommending changes to the organization’s Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and members present at the August 9 Birthday Party at the Learning Center will be asked to vote to accept these at 6:45 pm.

Changes will simplify membership structure, clarify roles of the board, and bring us up to date with state statutes.

For more details, see page 2.
Friends of Sherburne

Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

As the Friends grow and change, it’s important that we prepare to meet new challenges. That’s why we’re asking the membership to approve amendments to the Friends Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws at a member meeting to be held at 6:45 pm on August 9, 2018, at the Oak Savanna Learning Center.

What the proposed changes will accomplish:
• Simplify membership categories.
• Allow for the board to change the Bylaws.
• Provide for ability of board to remove members or directors if there is potential for harm to the organization.
• Reflect requirements of state laws.
• Clarify membership and financing in separate articles.

Proposed Amendments Will...
• Reduce membership categories from senior, student, individual, family, organization, and corporate to one class of membership.
• Provide for removal of members or directors from the organization in a fair, reasonable and transparent process that is based on MN state law.
• Allow the Bylaws to be changed by a majority vote of the board of directors. Includes process whereby members can repeal Bylaws changes approved by the board.
• Change to reflect statutory requirements and reservations of certain rights of the members of the organization to amend the Bylaws.
• Delete names of original incorporators from Articles of Incorporation per MN law.
• Delete names of voting directors from the amended Bylaws per MN law.

You can find the proposed amendments in their entirety at ExploreSherburne.org/about-Friends. If you would like to receive a paper copy or an email copy of the full text of the proposed amendments, contact us at FriendsofSherburne@gmail.com or 763-389-3323.

FRIENDS OF SHERBURNE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Myrna Krueger – President
Lee T. Johnson – Vice President
Steven Chesney – Secretary
Carol VanHeel – Treasurer
Susan Bialka - Director
Mike Brubaker - Director
Matt Finn – Director
Dean Kleinhans - Director
Debra Sorenson – Director
Beth Thorson - Director

ADVISORS TO THE BOARD
Steve Karel – Refuge Manager
Alaina Larkin – Visitor Services

The Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization (EIN: 41-1763001) that supports refuge projects and educational programs. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The Prairie’s Edge newsletter is published twice annually for members in cooperation with the refuge. Contact the Friends c/o Sherburne NWR, 17076 293rd Avenue NW, Zimmerman, MN 55398, or at FriendsofSherburne@gmail.com.

Donate or join Friends online at ExploreSherburne.org
The refuge “is a little gem located close to a major metropolitan area... where people can come out and still see nature, even being restored, the way it was back in the 1850s.”

“FRIENDS” SINCE 1969

Jim and Ann Pasch’s home is bounded on three sides by Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. They moved here in 1969, when they and their children were the ages of refuge staffers and their families.

Jim and Ann became social friends of refuge staff, then active in helping staff as volunteers and finally members of the Sherburne Natural History Association.

Jim and Ann have been Friends board members, seed collectors, bird counters, rovers and stewards of the refuge since before it became the 30,700 acres that exist today.

According to Jim Pasch

“Where did the Friends really come from... ? My recollection of it was the St. Paul Audubon Society, who had been fairly active on the refuge as part of the ‘adopt a refuge’ program, were encouraging people they met around here who were on the refuge to perhaps form a group and take over some of the functions they had been doing but also carry on the mission of the refuge.

“And so they did. It started as the Sherburne Natural History Association. A very small group. We knew the people who were originally on it because we had worked with them on some of these activities like EE Days and Youth Conservation Corps.

“Friends of Sherburne is the organization that really helps connect the refuge to the community. We are advocates for the refuge and the refuge system. We are ambassadors...”

SUE HIX

BEING WILD!

Sue Hix and Dean Kleinhans moved to the Princeton area in 1994 and became Friends of Sherburne members before they became refuge volunteers. An article in the members’ newsletter by board chair Sandy Connell inspired Sue to volunteer at the refuge.

During these past 20-something years, Sue volunteered, joined the Friends board, served as chair and, with the Learning Center about to become reality, stepped down to lead the “Be Wild” campaign, raising more than $250,000 to complete the project, assuring that the building would have the furniture, technology, educational materials, signs, and trails needed to educate tomorrow’s naturalists.

Learning Center Ribbon Cutting 2016

According to Sue Hix

“Our goal started out to be a visitor center. From my first acquaintance with Friends everybody was talking about it. We assumed we’d get it. But we didn’t, and this happened more than once, even when we were on the short list. However, we stuck with it. We had the vision...and were thrilled when U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found the money to build a learning center.”

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“After a board meeting, refuge manager Steve Karel took us up to the building site... The sun was going down behind School House Pool and we were standing where the Learning Center was going to be, and I really got kind of choked up because I could feel and see the place even though it wasn’t there. I knew it was going to happen and what a wonderful thing it would be.”
BEAUTIFUL LAND

David and Gretchen Martin moved to their current home in 1996 while he was still teaching at Anoka-Ramsey Community College. Being near “beautiful land” had always inspired him and he was searching for property near the refuge when he found their new home 200 yards from its northwest corner.

“The spiritual feeling of the wilderness is something that drew me right to this area,” he said. “All the things we do are helping inspire an interest in wildlife... If you feel that you are helping the survival of the species, that’s a really noble goal.”

“Sandy Connell, who was Friends president, expressed the feeling I’d had for a long time when she said, ‘The refuge is my refuge and I want it to be everyone else’s refuge’.”

According to David Martin

- David sought to teach practical lessons in his English and public speaking classes and he saw involvement in Friends as a way to put his own skills to work; eventually, it led him to Washington, D.C.

  His first trip to D.C. for the Friends on behalf of the refuge was to meet with Congressman Jim Oberstar. “I remember him saying to his secretary, when she opened the door--putting his hand up--saying, ‘hold everything.’ I talked to him for an hour. I was surprised that he was that interested!”

- “The greatest achievement of Friends of Sherburne is the involvement of the people in the community. Sure there are buildings and events, but the number of people who visit the refuge and the number of people who support the refuge has increased so dramatically.”
“I am most personally proud of all the Friends members who have actively gotten involved in activities at the refuge, whether it be the Wildlife Festival, or seed collecting, or...”

Nancy Haugen served the refuge as visitor services manager from 1995 to 2010, assisting Friends during several attempts at achieving a visitor center, all of which ended without government funding.

According to Nancy, Tim Loose, then operations specialist at the refuge, is a “cosmic thinker who planted the seeds” of a refuge support group, recruiting refuge neighbors and people he observed using refuge trails and scheduling the first meeting of what eventually became Friends of Sherburne.

“A moment in Friends history that is especially memorable for me happened after I retired from my job at the refuge. That moment was the groundbreaking ceremony for the new classroom building... It was a homecoming of past board members as well as (former refuge manager) Charlie Blair... I felt so proud for them for sticking to it through all the ups and downs and getting to this point of breaking ground, and being able to say ‘We Got It!’”
A CHARTER MEMBER

Robin DeLong began walking the trails of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge in 1987. “I was one of the people hiking a trail and Tim Loose walked up and said ‘we’re looking to start a friends group would you like to come to the meeting?’ ” said Robin.

“I used Sherburne, I liked Sherburne and to become a Friend of Sherburne just made sense...to give back to the area.” That was in 1992, and Robin was hiking with good friend Sandy Connell.

Robin is both a charter and lifetime member of Friends, a committee and event leader who served on the board in 2001 to complete a term held by then Friends president Sandy Connell who died in a tragic auto accident. Robin continues to attend annual meetings “to keep Friends attached to their history.”

Robin received an award during the USFWS Volunteer banquet in January for having contributed 7500 hours of volunteering to the refuge. “I’m still an eagle watcher, I’m still a seed collector, I’m still a roving interpreter... It’s very much a part of who I’ve become. I’ve learned so much out here!”

“About the refuge, Robin says, “I still think we said it best when we made the video to help celebrate the centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System: It is a place where wildlife comes first, but people are invited to join them...”

“So many people now don’t seem like they want to belong, they don’t believe they’re part of the natural world. We have been, we evolved with it. We are as much a part of it as the trees and the wildlife. And we need it.”

“I have met, through the Friends, through volunteers, through the people who come out here just to visit, some of the most interesting and fascinating people that I never would have if I had stayed in my own little itty bitty cubby...but it’s taught me so much!”
Fresh, Full-Color, Redesigned

For the past 9 months we’ve focused on coordinating and redesigning our communications to benefit both members and the public. We are pleased to announce:

• The new, full-color version of The Prairie’s Edge newsletter. Expect to receive it in the mail twice a year.
• A fresh look to our email newsletter, now called Prairie Insider. Look for this in your email inbox every other month or so—no spam from us! (Not on our list? Sign up on our website.)
• Our redesigned and updated website at ExploreSherburne.org. Check it out! We have also collaborated with the refuge to develop new audio and video spots. Attend our August 9 Birthday Party for the premier of Nature Nurtures, a video about the refuge’s nature education program supported by the Friends. See other audio-video stories at ExploreSherburne.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FALL WILDLIFE FESTIVAL:
• Saturday, September 29, 10 am – 3 pm, Oak Savanna Learning Center.

BEER & WINE-TASTING FUNDRAISER:
• Saturday, October 20, co-hosted with the Sherburne History Center at Carousell Works in Big Lake. Information available at ExploreSherburne.org.

FRIENDS READ:
• Tuesday, November 13, 6:30 – 8 pm, Oak Savanna Learning Center. Stay tuned for more information about the next Friends “community book read” and the book we’ll be discussing.