

## What Is *Nature's Circles*?

Nature's Circles is an informal group of women who meet to explore and experience nature on the refuge and to discover and express themselves through these experiences. The group meets the first Sunday afternoon of each month at the Old School House in the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. Winter meeting time is 3 – 5 PM; during months with more daylight, meeting time is 4 – 6 PM.

New in 2009, this group is a joint effort of the Friends of Sherburne and the refuge. Volunteers plan and conduct the meetings, and there is no charge to attend. Come when you're able—you are always welcome!

Nature's Circles meetings include "the Three E's": Education, Experience, and Expression. At the beginning of each meeting, 15 - 20 minutes is set aside to explore a topic that is educational or informational about nature, especially at the refuge. The nature experience that follows is related to the topic presented. Afterward, there is time for each participant to give expression to the day's experience. Participants are invited to use journals to record thoughts, discoveries, or insights that arise during the refuge time.

Each gathering allows plenty of time to meet others and share a cup of tea or coffee while getting better acquainted. Meetings so far have included information about Blue Hill and a hike on the Blue Hill trail (October); a short presentation about how leaves change color followed by time outside enjoying the sunset and the rise of the Hunter's Moon (November); a talk by Lizzy Berkley, refuge biologist, about how animals adjust to winter followed by a hands-on activity decorating greens to hang by our doors for the holidays (December); and a brief history about snowshoeing followed by all 18 attendees bundling up to face temps barely above zero and donning snowshoes to explore the prairie and oak savanna around the Old School House (January).

Women of all ages are welcome. If you are interested in finding out more about Nature's Circles or joining a meeting, contact Mary Brennen, [Brennen\\_mary@yahoo.com](mailto:Brennen_mary@yahoo.com) and ask to be added to the email meeting notification list.

