



# Friends of Sherburne NWR

**Annual Report of Year 2023**  
**Annual Meeting, January 11, 2024**



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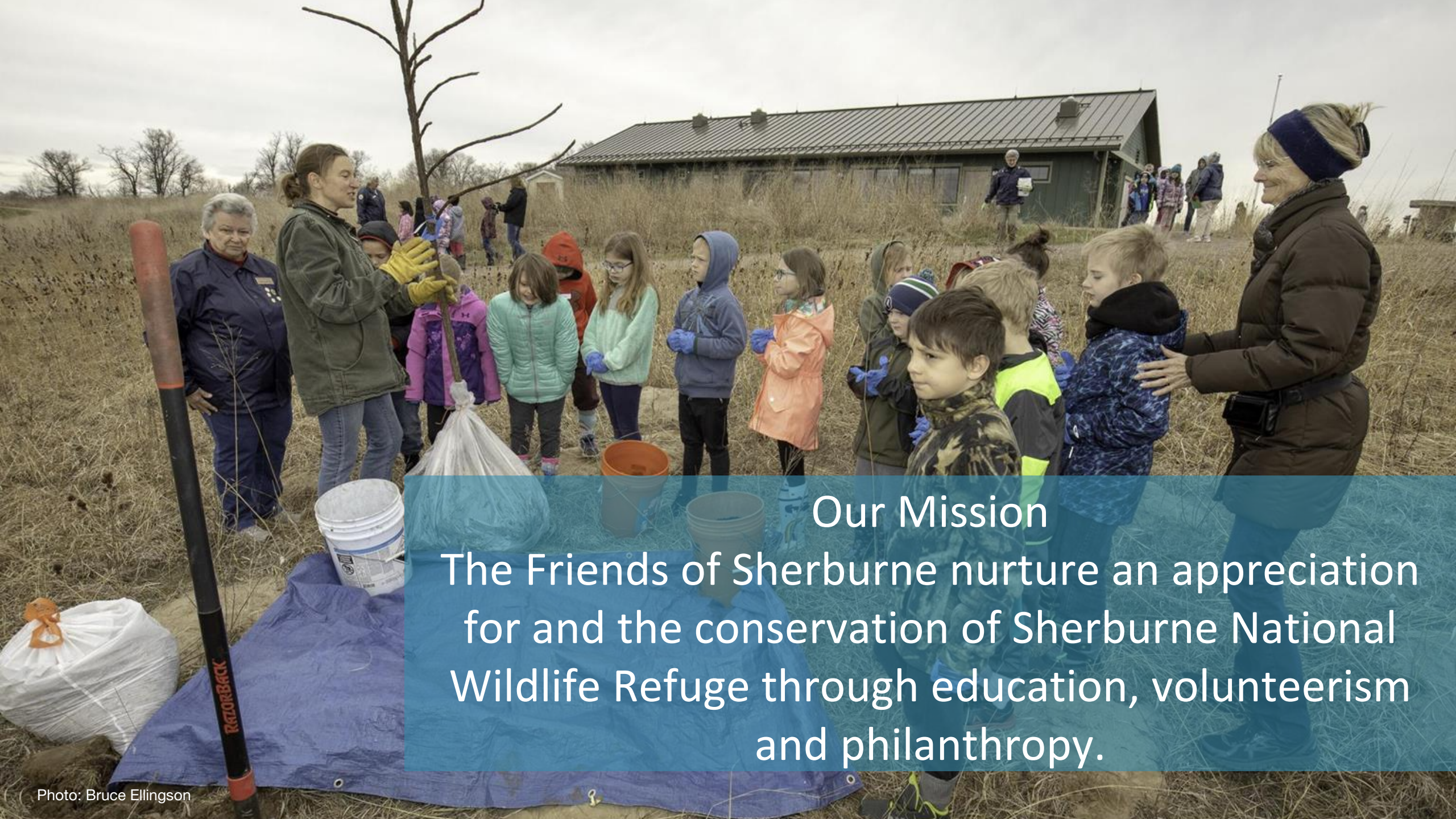
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# President's Report Steve Chesney



Photo: Steve Chesney





## Our Mission

The Friends of Sherburne nurture an appreciation for and the conservation of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge through education, volunteerism and philanthropy.

# Strategic Vision

Confirmed in 2019 and 2021

- Make Sherburne a destination for nature enthusiasts and tourists
- Amphitheater and laying the groundwork for a Visitor Center
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Growth for people and systems
- Engage new and past board members and community leaders

## 2021-2026 Strategic Roadmap



**Vision:** An intergenerational and diverse community of active stewards who conserve and support the unique natural resources at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge and the refuge system.

**Mission:** The Friends of Sherburne nurture an appreciation for and the conservation of the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge through education, volunteerism and philanthropy.

### Education

We will cultivate everyday naturalists and the next generation of environmental stewards.

### Advocacy

We will mobilize and sustain a broad and active base of conservation advocates.

### Volunteerism

We will activate and sustain a strong volunteer corps to support education and conservation activities for SNWR.

### Inclusion

We will continuously work to understand and engage all members of our community, especially those from BIPOC communities.

### Sustainability

We will inspire and activate a growing base of engaged members, donors, businesses and foundations.

### Desired 5-Year Outcome:

A robust and inclusive\* place for nature education where visitors can explore what is unique about the habitat of Central Minnesota and how to conserve it for the next generation. (\*All ages, abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, races, religions, genders and sexual orientations are not only welcomed but are intentionally invited and engaged in creating a space that meets their needs.)



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# 2023: Our Signature Activities Return

- **Nature Education:** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classes with our volunteer-led curriculum
- **Festivals and Activities:** The Spring and Fall events happened this year!
- Friends paired with Refuge Volunteers to represent Sherburne NWR at **community expos and one Pow Wow**



# 2024: Becoming a Reality



# Go Wild! Amphitheater Status

- Myrna Krueger reports for Steering Committee
- Includes Leah Bronken, Diana Burlison, Steve Chesney, Sue Hix, Bill Kolbinger, Helle Lukk, Carol Mertesdorf, John Riebel, BearPaw Shields, Scott Suhsen

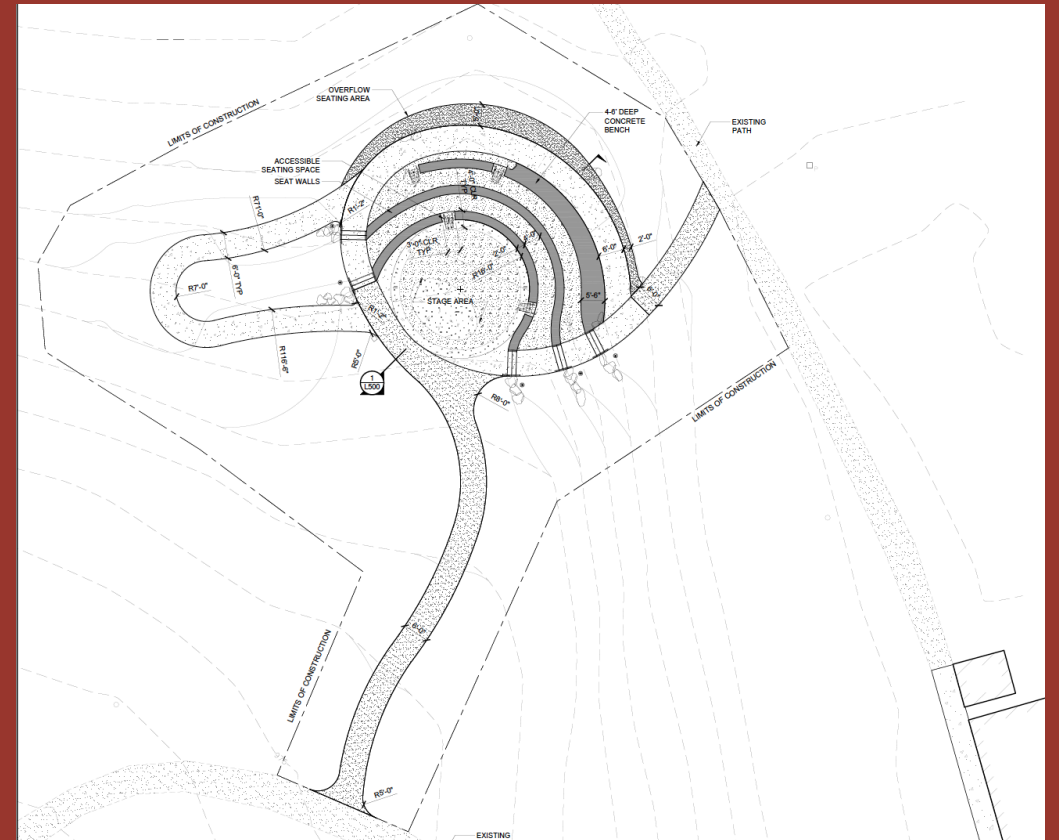


Photo: Bruce Ellingson



# Amphitheater Plans

- Construction in summer 2024
- Added accessibility pathway – the “duckbill”
- Plans approved by USFWS Region 3 engineers
- Commissioned Native American Artists to create design for stage and surround



Drawing by Damon Farber

# Fundraising on Track!

- 92% of new and improved goal 😊
- \$30,000 to go
- Will keep pushing until we reach the goal



## PROGRESS TO GOAL

\$400,000 GOAL! -----

92% of Goal! - - - - -  
\$30,000 Left to Raise



You can help bring the  
amphitheater to life with  
your tax-deductible gift.



# Overwhelmed by Generosity

- Thank you!
- More than 450 donors
- 60 Community Supporters – local businesses, hunting and civic groups, and foundations
- Even 17,000 sandhill cranes showed up!
- Growing through new relationships!



Mary "Karlie" Carlson

# 2023 Nature Education

- 27 Partner School Visits with 1,726 visitors
- 7 Other Nature Education Visits with 275 visitors



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# 2023 Outdoor Education Partner Schools

- Princeton Intermediate Grade 4 – 3 visits (fall/winter/spring) – For each season, 5 groups of 2 classes each – approximately 250-275 students per season.
- Zimmerman Elementary Grade 2 – 3 visits (fall/winter/spring) – For each season, 4 groups of 2 classes each – approximately 200 students per season.
- Zimmerman Elementary Grade 1 – Spring visit only as intro for grade 2, 4 groups of 2 classes each – approximately 200 students.
- We partially funded busing for Princeton



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# 2023 Other Outdoor Education

- Milaca Summer School - 1 visit, mixed grades, 130 students
- Help with transportation costs can be arranged



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# 2023 DEI: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- BearPaw Shields reports
- Includes Stephanie (Hennig) Tatum, Carol Mertesdorf, Myrna Krueger, Sue Hix, Steve Chesney, Randall Holt-Woehl



# 2023 Actions: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- We sponsored outings led by Urban Bird Collective, Promise Neighborhood
  - Education flowed both ways – we learned too
- Our third scholarship was awarded





# 2023: Urban Bird Collective

- We sponsored
  - September Wildlife Drive tour
  - Sunset Crane tour
- Our support included funds for transportation, meals and leaders



# 2023: Promise Neighborhood

- A St. Cloud non-profit that serves students at Lincoln and Talahi elementary schools
- We funded transportation and provided volunteers for a visit of 20 students to the Wildlife Festival
- We participated in a neighborhood gathering and supported volunteers on site in St. Cloud



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# 2023: Diversity Scholarship

- Administered by St. Cloud State University
- Funds provided for a promising Naturalist or Biology major planning for a career in environmental topics or life sciences
- Awarded to Biology: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Evolution major.
- 2023 \$1000 award to Dominick Johnson, majoring in Environmental Science and minoring in Spanish



# 2023: Spring Celebration

- A “mini” version was held this year!
- Staged successful Silent Auction



# 2023: Wildlife Festival

- Silent Auction yielded \$1373 plus an additional \$134 in the donation can
- Good turnout and amazing engagement



# 2023 Advocacy

- Submitted formal testimony to Congress in support of NWRA recommended funding for the FWS
- Thanks to Advocacy Committee: Steve Chesney, Sue Hix, Myrna Krueger, Randall Holt-Woehl

Photo: USFWS



# Other Friends Projects in 2023

- Sandhill Stations – Friends and Refuge volunteers had contact with 85 visitors
- Our Year-end Fundraising Campaign was very successful so far, bringing in substantially more than average
  - Summer and year-end Newsletter
  - Give to the Max and Sandhill Celebrations online

Pictured: Judy Hidde and Renay Leone  
Photo: Myrna Krueger



# Eagle's Nest Nature Store



Thanks to the faithful volunteers who staff the store and answer many, many visitor questions.

Net sales as of year-end were \$22,054.64

Adoption of barcode price labels planned to increase inventory accuracy and make checkout easier for customers and volunteers

**[SherburneFriendsStore@gmail.com](mailto:SherburneFriendsStore@gmail.com)**

**[SherburneEaglesNestStore.com](http://SherburneEaglesNestStore.com)**







Home

Books

Apparel

Decor & Refuge Souvenirs

Activities

Kids

Online Site!

Home > Activities

# Activities

Browse by

All

Sort by

Best selling

Looking for something fun to do with nature? Look no further! We have items for inside and outside!



Window Alert Leaf Decals



52 Nature Activities - Cards



Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge



Glow in the Dark Puzzles -

# What's Ahead 2024



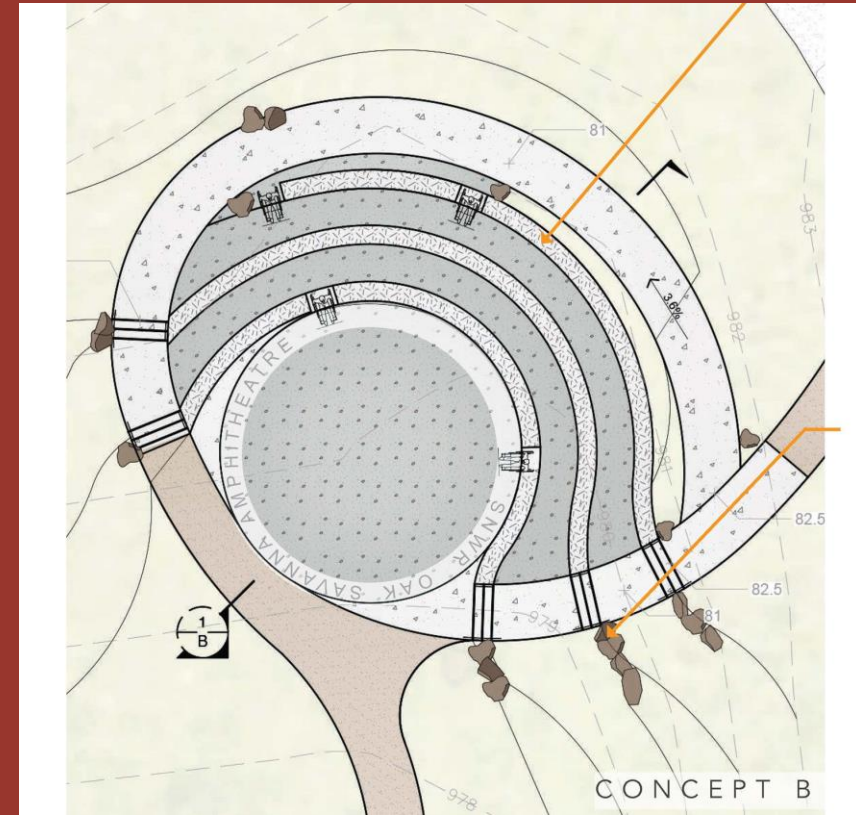
Photo: Bruce Ellingson



# Learning Center Amphitheater

- We expect ground to be broken in Spring 2024
- We are aiming for the amphitheater to be ready for the Fall Wildlife Festival

Drawing by Damon Farber



# OSLC Amphitheater Fundraising Status

- New donations and memorials will be allocated to the amphitheater fund until we are successful. (We have adequate operational funds to continue normal activities)
- Between legacy “Be Wild” funds, grants, Memorial Fund and recent donations, we are about 92% there – already!
- We still have to raise a substantial sum so we look forward to getting out and working with donors and civic groups in 2024 to make this happen!



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# 2023: Diversity and Inclusion Education Goals

- **Outreach:** Build on our contacts in target communities, outdoor groups and schools, to help bring individuals to the refuge. Consider presentations at schools, expos, farmers markets and powwows
- **Mentor:** Continue our college scholarship for minority student in natural resources studies
- **Learn:** Hire speakers about how to improve diversity and inclusion
- **Recruit:** Recruit diverse candidates to represent us on the board and committees as well as general membership



# 2024 – What's Ahead – Trail Signage

- Friends will fund new directional trail signs for Mahnomen, Blue Hill and Oak Savanna Learning Center Trails
- This is a goal deferred since 2021



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# 2024 Outdoor Education Partner Schools

- Princeton Intermediate Grade 4 – 3 visits (fall/winter/spring) – For each season, 5 groups of 2 classes each – approximately 250-275 students per season.
- Princeton Elementary Grade 1 spring visit only (5 groups of 2 classes each)
- Zimmerman Elementary Grade 2 – 3 visits (fall/winter/spring) – For each season, 4 groups of 2 classes each – approximately 200 students per season.
- Zimmerman Elementary Grade 1 – Spring visit only as intro for grade 2, 4 groups of 2 classes each – approximately 200 students.
- We plan to partially fund busing for each if requested



# 2024 Other Nature Education Plans

- As arranged with Refuge Staff
  - Generally the requestor handles curricula
- In the past we've hosted
  - Milaca Summer School
  - Promise Neighborhood (St. Cloud)
- Help with transportation costs can be arranged





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# Other 2024 Plans

- Diversity and Inclusion activities, online fundraisers, “Sandhill Stations” and more
- Eagle’s Nest Nature Store in-person and online sales will continue
- We are (always!) looking for new Board , Amphitheater Steering, DEI, and Advocacy Committee members. Store volunteers, too!
  - Many participate in meetings via Zoom



# Membership

We now have 675 total members


- 174 1-year
- 297 3-year
- 204 Lifetime

Last year in January we had 613 members,  
10% growth over last year.

Does not count “one time” memorials, honoraria, etc.



# Marketing



**JOIN US!**

**Support Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge**



**Join Friends of Sherburne Today**  
Your membership donation will support the refuge in providing education for children in nature's classroom, furnishing information and facilities for refuge visitors, and ensuring family events like Wildlife Festival remain free and open to all.

Join us in conserving wildlife and wild places. Help us keep the sense of wonder alive at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.

Communications: Newsletters, E-news, website, member & donor letters, mailings

Donor Management cloud-based Platform

Thank-You Committee

- Sue Hix
- Bruce Ellingson
- Steve Chesney
- Myrna Krueger
- Marilyn Danielson
- Sam Warren

**PRAIRIE'S EDGE** WINTER  
A NEWSLETTER FROM FRIENDS OF SHERBURNE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

**SANDHILL CELEBRATION**  
**Friends put the Fun back in Fundraising**  
By Bruce Ellingson  
Imagine you are Myrna Krueger, president of Friends of Sherburne (FOS). In January, you plan for a year of activities supporting Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. Figuring 2020 will look a lot like 2019.

Then comes March and a pandemic, which closes 1,000 facilities to the public and forces the refuge and Friends to cancel Every Single, In-Person Event. For the Year. Period.

But in April the scuba divers return as they migrate north, and in June the lapine bloom along the Prairie Trail. The rough timing still will attract monarchs headed south in August, and the Sandhill cranes congregating at St. Friends Pond in October—by the thousands—to feed in heady fields adjacent to the refuge. Minnesota—and outdoorists who love

is the namesake of the Sandhill Celebration celebrating or taking flight? Drawing by Kevin Johnson

ing parking lots. The wildlife, the visitors, the whole refuge need the support of Friends of Sherburne, whose president and volunteer committees face a never-before-seen challenge: How will FOS help nature lovers support the refuge, so essential during a pandemic, without holding events?

The solution to a pandemic, according to Myrna, is to put the "fun" back in "fundraising" and to "put ourselves out there a bit as we learn new ways to fundraise and connect with new refuge lovers". Having fun is how October's fundraiser—Sandhill Celebrations. Golden Plungers and geese that filled a huge need replaceable. Meet Sherburne for the refuge in any number of ways. Because the refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, its resources are set and guided by Congress. So the Friends rely on a Washington, Continued on page 2

**EAGLE'S NEST**  
**NATURE ST**  
**Take Horn Your Mem**  
By Bruce Ellingson  
Sherburne Refuge and her team of Ed Nature Stave can't take home your love for the refuge. L. Sandhill crane took the back seat. A red eagle on your head puzzle for those red center evenings, dry back beer for best company.

Short is the "manager" of the Ed Nature Stave opens the Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, and she knows that volunteers, members, and visitors from out of state who have given miles to watch the Sandhill crane migration should be more than fund the Continued on page 2

**PRAIRIE'S EDGE** SUMMER 2020  
A NEWSLETTER FROM FRIENDS OF SHERBURNE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

**WE FRIENDS**  
**Advocate, Educate, Sustain & Volunteer**  
By President Myrna Krueger  
We are advocates for the refuge, my friends. And we hope you'll join our efforts.

In this issue, we're sharing examples of the four pillars of Friends work at Sherburne—advocacy, education, sustainability, and volunteerism. One of the most important, and the focus of this column, is advocacy.

As a Friends group, we advocate Myrna Krueger for the refuge in any number of ways. Because the refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, its resources are set and guided by Congress. So the Friends rely on a Washington, Continued on page 2

**REFUGEE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR KATHY MAY**  
**The Refuge Is Like Family**


Kathy May, refuge Volunteer of the Year, inspects the spring blossoms of a chokecherry along the Bur Oak Trail.

Volunteer Kathy May

FriendsOfSherburne@gmail.com

**FRIENDS OF SHERBURNE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Online Nature Store About Friends Upcoming Events At the Refuge Support Contact Info




Nature Nurtures

CC Wi-Fi 4:24 PM 55%

Give to the Max Day is November 19!

View this email in your browser

**PRAIRIE INSIDER**  
A NEWSLETTER FROM FRIENDS OF SHERBURNE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ExploreSherburne.org



**MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR**

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Sandhill Celebration virtual fundraiser and symbolic gala potluck! With your enthusiastic support, we exceeded our goals and compensated for the in-person fundraising event we

# 2023 Wildlife Circle



- Red-headed Woodpecker (new!)
- Trumpeter Swan (new!)
- Bald Eagle
- White-tailed Deer
- Sandhill Crane
- Blanding's Turtle
- Monarch Butterfly

Photo: Mary Karlie Carlson



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Public Domain

## Red-headed Woodpecker

- Carol and Dan VanHeel Estate

## Trumpeter Swan

- Judith Hidde

## Bald Eagle

- L & N Andreas Foundation
- Carol Mertesdorf & Clayton Watercott
- Sue Hix & Dean Kleinhans
- Steven & Kathy Chesney
- Knife River



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Bruce Ellingson

## **White-tailed Deer**

- Robert Morgan
- Crystal Cabinet Works
- Elk River Lions Club
- UnitedHealth Group Inc.
- Randall & Hollie Holt-Woehl
- Sherburne County Swamp Bucks



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Mary Karlie Carlson

## Sandhill Crane

- Tom & Melinda Rusin
- Diana Burlison & Joyce Koshiol
- Helgeson Foundation
- Bruce Galer
- Jack Gburzynski
- Gail Nystrom
- Debra Carlson & Rick Wittwer
- State Farm Insurance
- Curt & Patrice Van Oort
- Myrna Krueger & Florian Keller

## Sandhill Crane

- Scott & Jackie Liestman
- Clear Lake Lions
- Mike & Joan Rajala
- Paul Sitz
- Bill & Carol Kolbinger
- Connexus Energy Foundation
- Elk River Rotary Club
- Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls
- Chet Meyers



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Mary Karlie Carlson

## Sandhill Crane

- Minnco Credit Union
- Dorothy Holmes
- Dave & Gretchen Martin
- SRW Products
- Nancy Haugen
- Uptown Offsale Liquor
- Katrina Lynn LLC
- Kenneth Brennen
- Leah & Pete Bronken
- Mike & Marca Brubaker
- Larry Loftus
- Fairview Northland Medical Staff

## Sandhill Crane

- First National Bank of Milaca
- Chris & Joanne Kudrna
- Metal Craft Machine & Engineering
- David J Meyers
- MissionBridge Wealth
- Northstar Canoes, Ted & Karen Bell
- John Zettervall
- Antonia Peterson
- Luke & Leigh Rusin
- Sherburne State Bank





# Go Wild! Donor Recognition

## **Blanding's Turtle**

- Rea Holmes
- Bruce & Margie Ellingson
- Dan Howard
- Bank of Elk River
- Rum River Business Builders
- Dr. Helle Lukk & Donald Sheldrew



Photo: Randy Baum

## **Blanding's Turtle**

- Kathleen Gill
- Dr. Barbara Broker
- Tim Krueger
- John Palka
- Chuck Hartell Realty
- Ruth and Bradley Thom
- Amy Nord
- Dr. Julia Albertson
- American Legion Post 147 Big Lake
- Donald Anundsen
- Aimee Arent
- Baldwin Fire Department
- James & Erma Cabak
- Jane & Terry Dunn



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition

## **Blanding's Turtle**

- Steve Erickson
- Alex & Americo Fraboni
- Dr. George Golden
- Michael Janke
- Patricia Martinkovic-Pascuzzi



Photo: Randy Baum

## **Blanding's Turtle**

- Cynthia McSherry MD
- Joel & Gloria Meyer
- Gary & Laura Pipenhagen
- Princeton Lions Club
- Princeton Twice New Clothing
- St Cloud Morning Optimist Club
- Stantec
- Mary & Bill Steinbicker
- Carla & Renzo Vita
- Diana & Steve Warner
- Zimmerman Fire Department
- Sand Dunes Gobblers NWTF



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Mark Nicholson

## Monarch Butterfly

- Teresa & Dana Podtburg
- Tim Metcalf
- Sherry & Larry Winter
- Debra Sorenson
- Diane & James Stroschein
- Mary Blood
- Randy & Teresa Hillson
- Rachel Leonard
- Renay & Gerry Leone
- Kristin Lindner
- Allyson Hammer
- Brian Barringer
- Edward & Sherry Ann Dayton
- Lake Owasso Garden Club
- McPhillips Bros Roofing Co
- Pew Charitable Trust
- Resurrection Lutheran Church
- Solveig Swendseid
- Sheri & Mike Olson
- Suzanne & Myron Angstman
- Thomas & Mary Bender
- Jim & Paula Borer
- Cheri Christensen & Amy Mitchell
- Barbara Corriveau
- Mary Kay Harris



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Mark Nicholson

## Monarch Butterfly

- Lori Heslep
- Howard Homes Inc
- Bethany & Jason Jablonski
- Roger & Nancy Leider
- Kristin J Smith
- Scott and Robin Suhsen
- Marsha Woolcott & Sharon Froehle
- Stephanie Podtburg
- Jerry Barringer
- Jim Dostal
- Dave & Jan Fesenmaier
- Alan Foley
- Jackie Hanson
- Bob & Nancy Kjellberg
- Janet Krueger
- Jim Olson
- Callie & Ted Pulvermacher
- Dennis & Cheryl Wold
- Marilyn Schroeder
- Joanne McCarthy
- Mary Dwyer
- Rebecca Guthrie
- Don & Mary Leaon
- Paige Skakal
- Jill & Andy Beim
- Scott Clark
- Norm Anderson
- Darlene Antinozzi



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Mark Nicholson

## Monarch Butterfly

- Dr. Katy Backes  
Kozhimannil
- Lord Bacon
- Marilyn Baldwin
- Kevin & Susan Brady
- Kari Brant
- Don & Beth Britt
- Tom Brown
- Mary Brunberg
- Ron Burley
- Duane & Sandra  
Caywood
- Mary Christine Common
- Patty & Cliff Crockford
- Carol Cummins
- Lynette DesChamps
- Jill & Brian Duncan
- Roland Erickson
- Carlene Ewalt and Michael  
Deglman
- Joseph & Diana Felix
- Rosanne Fischer and Mark  
Trainor
- Ardys Freichels
- Laurie Gandrud
- Mark Gilbert & Vicky  
Moreira
- Pat Graham
- Nancy Hagen
- Christine & Rod Hansen
- Kevin Heitschmidt
- Sue Herwig



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Mark Nicholson

## Monarch Butterfly

- Albert & Gunn Honican
- Julie Howard
- Carol & Steve Howe-Veenstra
- Beverly Huntley
- Dale and Bridget Kliever
- Colleen Knipfer
- Delton Krueger
- Barb Kull
- Ruth Carol Laugal
- Janet Leslie
- Chris Lommel
- Steven & Barbara Ludwig
- Laurie Manoleff
- Chad & Melissa Marolf
- Matt Massman
- Bonnie Meyer
- Jennifer Murphy
- Angie Nelson
- Barbara Nelson
- Basil & Shirley O'Neil
- Richard E & Lynne Olson
- Cheryl Pagel
- Christine A Petersen
- Dorene Pohl
- Mark & Patti Pokorney
- Jonathan & Lisa Roeder
- Debbie Russell
- Chris Sandusky



# Go Wild! Donor Recognition



Photo: Mark Nicholson

## Monarch Butterfly

- Christopher Schaupp
- Laurie Schneider
- Joe Schoborg
- Eileen Schuck
- Tim Schultze
- Sherburne SWCD
- Maryellen Skan and Peter Thiel
- Spirit River Yoga & Massage
- Carolyn Storey
- Amberly Suhsen
- Terra Construction
- Jami & Patrick Trenam
- Deborah Trunk
- Geraldine Urbanski
- Polly Williams
- Amy Wogen
- Marv Ziner
- Barbara Burandt



# Non-cash Donations from Individuals



- Leah & Pete Bronken
- Ashley Biggs
- Mary "Karlie" Carlson
- Judith Hidde
- Kevin Johnson
- Bill & Carol Kolbinger
- Joan Larson
- Dr. Helle Lukk
- Gary & Laura Pipenhagen
- Carol Mertesdorf

Photo: Mary Karlie Carlson





# Memorials



Photo: Myrna Krueger

- Albert and Rose Stenerson
- Alice Schroeder
- Bob Pearson
- Carol Swanson
- Dan Dearman
- Ed & Marvel Trunk
- Esther Niemeyer
- James Genung
- Janette Davis
- Jean Zettervall
- Jerry Barringer
- Joan Krueger
- Kitty Brown
- Thomas G Des Champs
- Lloyd and Olga Podtburg
- Lois and Norman Metcalf
- Marvel Loftus
- Michael G Johnson
- Joe Schoborg
- Nancy Howard
- Randy Knipfer
- Ray Kopponen
- Ron Holmes
- Sally Zodrow



# Honoraria



Photo: Bruce Ellingson

- Alex Caswell
- Carol Mertesdorf
- Charles Clutz
- Diana Burlison & Joyce Koshiol
- Diane & James Stroschein
- Dr. Helle Lukk
- Jan Wallin
- Jeff Anderson
- Mathew Ampe



# Community Supporters



Photo: Michelle Raph

- Ace Solid Waste
- American Legion Post 147 Big Lake
- Baldwin Fire Department
- Becker True Value Hardware
- Chuck Hartell Realty
- Clear Lake Lions
- Connexus Energy Foundation
- Crystal Cabinet Works
- D's Smokehouse Bar & Grill
- Deborah Disher Art
- Elk River Lions Club
- Elk River Rotary Club
- Fairview Northland Medical Staff
- First National Bank of Milaca
- Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls
- Helgeson Foundation
- Howard Homes Inc
- Hudson Hardware
- International Wolf Center
- JT Construction Elk River
- Katrina Lynn LLC
- Knife River
- L & N Andreas Foundation
- Lake Owasso Garden Club



# Community Supporters

- McPhillips Bros Roofing Co
- Metal Craft Machine & Engineering
- Minnco Credit Union
- MissionBridge Wealth
- Misty River Merchants
- Nelson Nursery
- Northstar Canoes
- Pew Charitable Trust
- Prairie Restorations Inc
- Princeton Insurance Agency
- Princeton Lions Club
- Princeton Twice New Clothing
- Resurrection Lutheran Church
- Rocks and Things
- Rockwoods
- Rum River Business Builders
- Santa Lucia's Ice Cream
- Securian Financial Foundation
- Sherburne County Swamp Bucks
- Sherburne State Bank
- Sherburne SWCD
- Silent Auction
- Spirit River Yoga & Massage
- SRW Products
- St Cloud Morning Optimist Club

SHERBURNE  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



# Community Supporters



Photo: Bruce Ellingson

- Stantec
- State Farm Companies Foundation
- Terra Construction
- Bank of Elk River
- UnitedHealth Group Inc.
- Uptown Offsale Liquor
- Vita Bella Ristorante Italiano
- Walmart Princeton
- Zimmerman Fire Department
- Zimmerman Home & Garden



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# Treasurer's Report

## Roger Leider



Photo: Bruce Ellingson



	2023		2024 Budget
	thru 12-31-23		
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
<b>4000 - Donations Recieved</b>			
4001 - Memorials	\$ 4,819.00	\$	2,000.00
4001 - Online Fundraisers			
4005 - Amphitheater Project	\$ 179,989.00	\$	130,000.00
4006 - Sandhill Salute			
4007 - Silent Auction	\$ 2,025.00	\$	1,000.00
4000 - Donations Recieved - Other	\$ 56.00	\$	10,000.00
<b>Total 4000 - Donations Recieved</b>			
4200 - Store Sales	\$ 14,240.00	\$	16,000.00
4400 - Interest Income	\$ 383.00	\$	325.00
4500 Misc Income	\$ 41.00	\$	200.00
<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 201,553.00	\$	159,525.00
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>5000 - Cost of Goods Sold</b>			
5001 - Cost of Product	\$ 15,592.00	\$	14,000.00
5002 - Credit Card /Online Fees	\$ 117.00	\$	500.00
5004 - Sales Tax Paid	\$ 1,064.00	\$	1,200.00
5000 - Cost of Goods Sold - Other	\$ 1,273.00	\$	250.00
<b>Total 5000 - Cost of Goods Sold</b>	\$ 18,046.00	\$	15,950.00
5010 Store Management	\$ 4,000.00	\$	4,000.00
6010 - Bank Charges and Fees	\$ 31.00		
6020 - Membership Expense	\$ 1,257.00	\$	1,500.00
6021 - Bricks and Placques	\$ 511.00	\$	750.00
6061 - Friends Printing	\$ 2,869.00	\$	1,500.00
6070 - Postage	\$ 1,602.00	\$	800.00
6033 - Misc Event Supplies	\$ 1,053.00	\$	2,000.00
6040 - Insurance			
6041 - Business, D & O Ins	\$ 1,082.00	\$	1,200.00

# 2023 Actuals vs 2024 Proposed Budget

# 2023 Actuals vs 2024 Proposed Budget (Cont.)

6060 - Printing Expense			
6062 - Refuge Printing	\$	1,085.25	\$ 2,000.00
6601 Misc Refuge Projects	\$	98.00	\$ 1,200.00
6080 - Office Expense	\$	124.00	
6081 - OSLC Phones and Kitchen	\$	1,523.00	\$ 1,500.00
6085 - Promotional Expense			
6090 - Donations Made	\$	1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
6200 - Chamber Dues/Exp	\$	671.00	\$ 700.00
6300 - Educational Programs			
6301 - Education Conf	\$	1,136.00	\$ 1,200.00
6302 - Naturalist Exp			
6303 - Div - Equity - Inclusion	\$	3,667.00	\$ 2,500.00
6300 - Educational Programs - Other	\$	125.00	\$ 500.00
Total 6300 - Educational Programs			
6305 - Transportation	\$	680.00	\$ 2,000.00
6306 - Photo Club	\$	60.00	\$ 100.00
6310 - Strategic Planning			
6400 - Misc Expenses	\$	625.00	\$ 1,000.00
6500 - Special Projects			
6501 - Signage			\$ 5,000.00
6510 - Amphitheater	\$	3,300.00	\$ 366,000.00
6511 - Project Consultant Amphi	\$	12,153.00	
6512 - Printing and Postage	\$	1,125.00	
6513 - Amphi Proj Events	\$	278.39	
Total Expense	\$	58,101.64	\$ 413,400.00
	\$	143,451.36	\$ (253,875.00)



	TOTAL
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Sherburne State Bank	82,186.74
1003 - Photo Club Fund	337.00
1005 - Memorial Fund	0.00
1006 - Educational Fund	3,915.92
1008 -Building Fund	0.00
1009 - Amphitheater Project	231,494.41
1010 - Events Fund	0.00
<b>Total Sherburne State Bank</b>	<b>317,934.07</b>
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$317,934.07</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$317,934.07</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$317,934.07</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable (A/P)	0.00
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	94,686.22
Unrestricted Net Assets	223,247.85
Net Income	
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$317,934.07</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$317,934.07</b>

# 2023 Balance Sheet

Does not include funds  
at the Initiative  
Foundation

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# Refuge Report

## Greg Dehmer Jade Pederson



Photo: Bruce Ellingson





NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM

# 2023 Annual Friends Meeting Sherburne Refuge Report

A close-up photograph of a butterfly with black, yellow, and white wings perched on a purple flower. The butterfly is the central focus, with its wings spread. The background is a soft-focus field of similar purple flowers and green foliage.

# Refuge Staff Updates



NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM

Those that moved on...

# Steve Karel

## Refuge Manager

Departed for the Regional  
Office



# Nikki Ellingson

Wildlife Refuge Specialist

Departed for a South  
Dakota WMD





NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM

... and new faces and different roles!

# Jade Pederson

## Visitor Services Specialist





# Kris Spaeth

Migratory Bird/Refuge  
Biologist



# Carrie Anderson

## Seasonal Fire



# Cody Kennedy

## Forestry Technician (Fire)



Sherburne



NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Department of the Interior

# Refuge Highlights

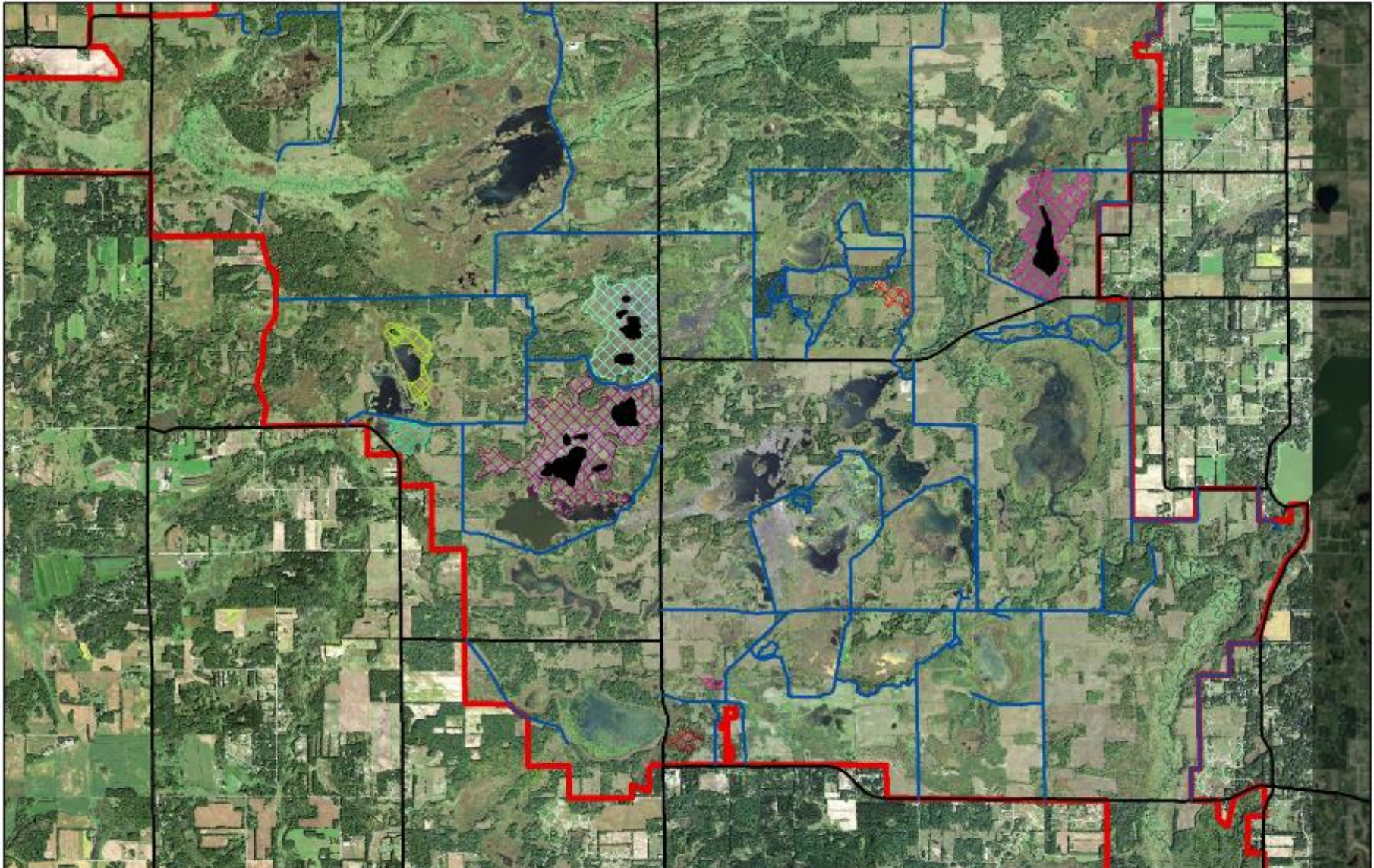


NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM

# Invasive Species Chemical Control

1,100 Acres of invasives treated in 2023

Sherburne NWR Aerial Herbicide Application Sites



# Hybrid Cattail Treatment

~950 acres aerial sprayed



# Black Locust Treatment

-and many other species



# Prairie Enhancement Seedings

- Forbs collected by volunteers! \$12,300 worth!
- post prescribed fire







---

## **Bumble Bee Survey's**

**-continue to work with MN  
Bee Atlas**

**-looking for Rusty Patched  
BB's and other rare species  
of pollinators.**



# Special Hunting Programs

- Mentored youth turkey
- Disabled Access



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# Fire Program

**-8 prescribed fires for  
2,000 acres**

**-11 wildfire assists  
~100 acres**

---

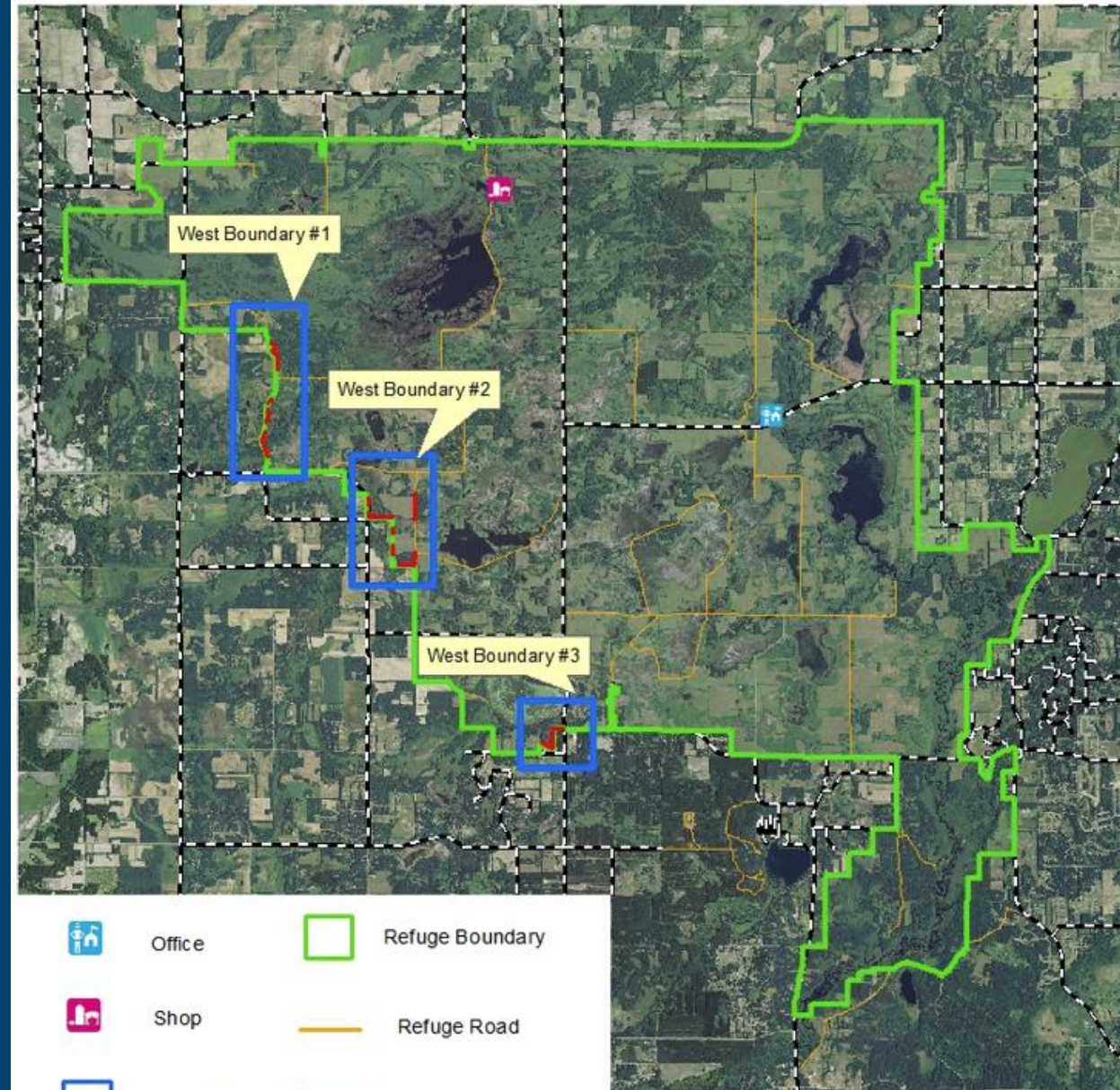


# Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
- 2.44 miles of firebreaks enhanced
- 35 acres
- work is ongoing



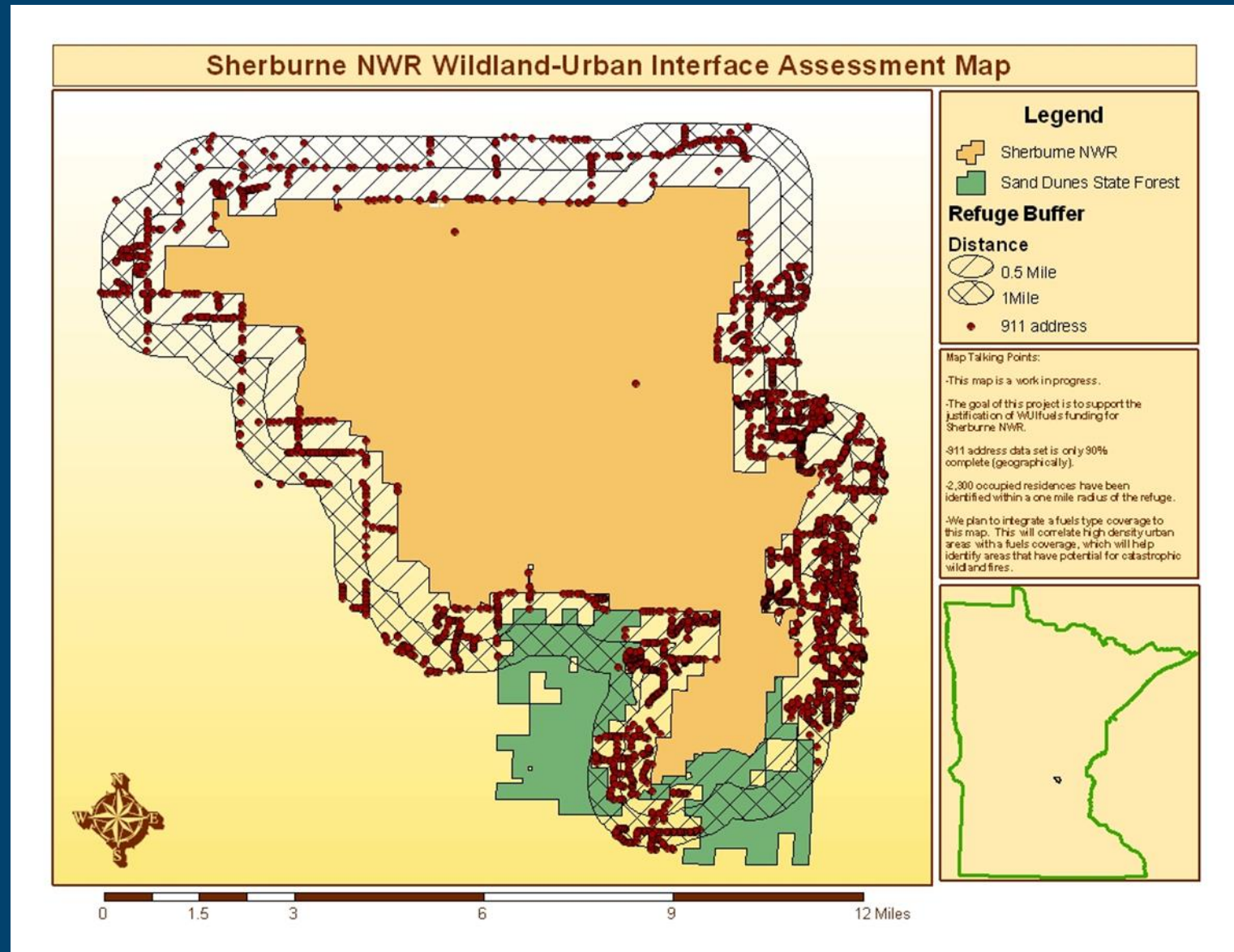
## Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge FY23 Fuels Project



# Wildland –Urban Interface

~2300 Homes  
within 1 mile of the  
refuge boundary.

-BIL helps to  
mitigate the  
damage concerns  
from wildfire  
within the urban  
interface.



# Conservation Grazing

- ~2,500 acres grazed
- oak savanna, prairie, and wetland management
- fewer grazing acres in 2024




# MINNESOTA BOUND

## – Getting to know Sandhills

YouTube

Search



0:43 / 20:20 • Intro >


Getting to know Sandhills #1074

Minnesota Bound  
6.31K subscribers

Subscribe

19

Share



**Kris Spaeth**  
REFUGE OFFICIAL

1:47 / 20:20 • Greater Sandhill Cranes >

Getting to know Sandhills #1074

Minnesota Bound  
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Subscribe

19

Share

Save



# Law Enforcement

-social media at work!





# Staff Sharing Time Within the Complex

- GAOA Projects
- Prescribed Fire
- Biology Projects

# Sherburne in the News

What Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge has to offer

KSTP

Refuge asks people to fill bird feeders

Star News

Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project at Sherburne Refuge

Patriot News

LITTERING CONCERNS AT SHERBURNE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Environmental Educator

Sherburne Wildlife Refuge to host Wildlife Festival

Union-Times

SANDHILL CRANES AT SHERBURNE NWR AHEAD OF MIGRATION

WJON

# Visitor Services Highlights



NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM

# Refuge Headquarters

Monday – Thursday  
8 am – 4 pm

+

# Oak Savanna Learning Center

Open for special events  
and group reservations



# Afternoon Snowshoe

**115** Visitors  
**25** Volunteers



# Spring Celebration

**115** Visitors  
**24** Volunteers



# 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Wildlife Festival

1120 Visitors  
77 Volunteers



NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM



# Bird and Wildflower Tours

5 Events  
68 Participants



# Sandhill Crane Viewing

6 Tours  
263 Participants



Image: Hugh Smith



## Sandhill Crane Counts

**2021:** 13,130

**2022:** 29,256

**2023:** 17,979

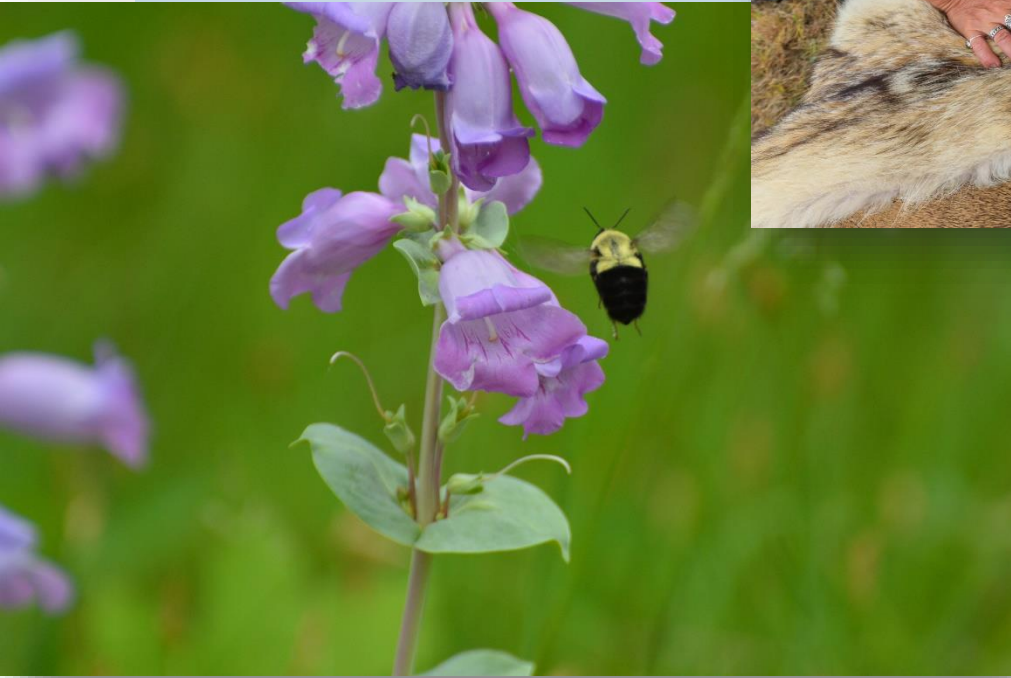
# Nature Education

1,726 Partner School Visitors  
275 Other Education Visitors



# Wildlife Programs

11 Programs  
426 Participants



# Outreach Events

**10** Events  
**1,466** Community Connections



# What's new in 2024?



NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM

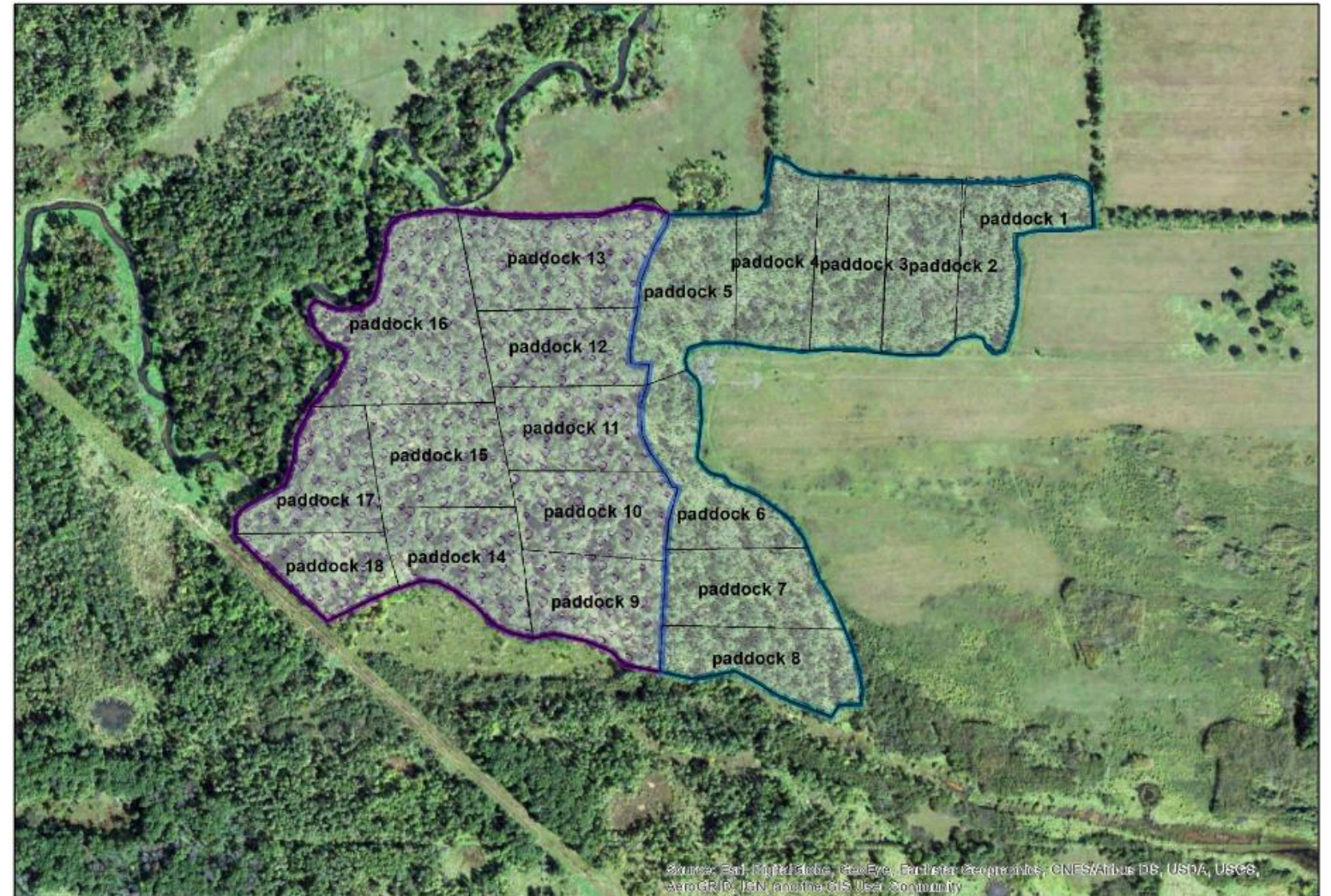
# Staffing

- Refuge Manager backfill
- Seasonal hires?
- Critical vacancies remain

# Brande Rd Oak Savanna Enhancement Grant

- Grant Project – GRG Partner
- Control of native and non-native invasive shrubs and trees
  - forestry mowing (fecon)
  - hand cutting
  - goat browsing (3-4 years)

Oak Savanna Enhancement Project Area



## Legend

- Browse Area
- Mech thinning & Browse
- refuge boundary
- ASP 8 Project Area

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

N







# Additional Projects:

- New Prairie Trail Boardwalk
- Directional signage for hiking trails
- Critical Infrastructure repairs
  - Water Control Structures
- New BIL Fire Project – South Spur
- Ongoing habitat management: prescribed fire, conservation grazing, invasive species control, seed collection
- Continue to work with partners:
  - Youth turkey hunts – NWTf
  - Accessible deer hunts – CP
  - Amphitheater support – FOS!!



# 2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



ALL EVENTS ARE FREE

## JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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## FEBRUARY

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Get outside and explore the winter landscape. Bring your own gear or check out free snowshoes for use during the event.

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## ONGOING

### REFUGE NATURE EXPLORATION SUPPORT

WHEN HEADQUARTERS IS OPEN  
 Refuge Headquarters  
 Check out free binoculars, kid's nature backpacks, and snowshoes to help you explore our refuge!

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THURS & SAT • CLOSED JAN - FEB  
 10 AM - 2 PM  
 Oak Savanna Learning Center  
 Run by the Friends of Sherburne, stocked with refuge merchandise and fun, seasonal goods!

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#### Registration Required\*

Behind the gates tour with the potential to see thousands of staging sandhill cranes. *Spotting scope and binoculars available.*

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### SHERBURNE PHOTO CLUB

MONTHLY, FIRST WED  
 6:30 PM  
 Oak Savanna Learning Center  
 New members and people of all experience levels are welcome to attend.

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#### MAY 18

10 AM - 1 PM  
 Oak Savanna Learning Center  
 Join us to celebrate spring migration and pollinators with activities and booths for all ages! Food available for purchase.

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Stop by the Welcome Station on the Wildlife Drive to learn more about the monthly topic.

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- AUG 28** - 5 PM TO 7 PM - PRAIRIE'S EDGE WILDLIFE DRIVE
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### WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

#### SEPTEMBER 28

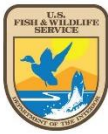
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ALL EVENTS ARE FREE

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New members and people of all experience levels are welcome to attend.

Visit Our Website:



Register for Events:



# A big THANK YOU to the Friends of Sherburne for your support in 2023.



We look forward to your partnership again in 2024.



- Welcome Station

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# Election of Board Members

2023 Board of Directors

Nominations for new and renewed 3 year terms

Retirements

Election of Board Members





Photo: Myrna Kr

## 2023 Board of Directors

BearPaw Shields, Leah Bronken, Steve Chesney, Roger Leider, Carol Mertesdorf, Mike Brubaker,  
Scott Suhsen, Bill Kolbinger, Bruce Galer

(Not shown: Matt Finn, Helle Lukk)



---

# Board Nominations 2024

## Brett Soeder

“I am Brett Soeder. I recently moved to Big Lake with my wife Kalie and dog Nyla. I was very interested to be part of the wildlife refuge when I learned how close it is as I love hiking and being in nature. I am excited to be part of an organization dedicated to education and maintaining such a beautiful part of nature.”





# Board Nominations 2024

## Emy Minzel

Emy Minzel is a nature lover, animal lover, and environmental advocate. She enjoys spending time in the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge with her family and dog Hank. Emy has many eclectic interests that keep her life full and adventurous. She owns Spirit River Yoga and Massage, LLC. Where she is a yoga teacher and has been a massage therapist for over a decade in Princeton. Emy loves spending time on the water, kayaking or canoeing, camping in the BWCA and floating all summer. Her love of the environment and threats of toxic sulfide mining in the BWCA spurred her to be politically active. Running for State Representative in 2018 and State Senate in 2022. Emy is a previous Friends of SNWR Board member from 2019-22 before taking a short leave of absence to focus on growing her business. She has missed being part of Friends' talented, passionate team.



# Board Nominations 2024 – Stephanie Tatum

- The board is a great opportunity to be involved in our community & to share knowledge & time with others who have a passion for the future & history of our land.
- My background includes, greenhouse management, liaison for Elk River High School American Indian Education, Early Childhood teacher, Market Manager for Midwest Dairy, insurance agent & currently an insurance consultant.
- Married with 2 children. Being a mother means everything to me. We are active in Scouts BSA, Wrestling, Cross Country & guitar.
- Some things that make my heart sing are; all events my kids & niece & nephew are involved in, riding my horses, fishing & making old things new again. We have been renovating our 3800 sq ft home and hope to be totally done within the next few years.



# Board Renewal 2024

- Steve Chesney – started 2018
- Carol Mertesdorf – started 2021
- Matt Finn – started 2018
- BearPaw Shields – started 2021



# Board Renewal 2024

- Steve Chesney – started 2018
- Carol Mertesdorf – started 2021
- Matt Finn – started 2018  
(Not Shown)
- BearPaw Shields – started 2018
- New 3 year Terms



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---

# Leaving the Board

Thank you to Mike Brubaker

- Served since 2017
- Secretary for 2021 and 2023



---

# Leaving the Board

Thank you to Scott Suhsen

- Served since 2021
- Serves on the Amphitheater Steering Committee



# Board Officers 2024

- Carol Mertesdorf – President
- Bruce Galer – Vice President
- Steve Chesney – Secretary
- Roger Leider – Treasurer



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# Keep Up to Date

In addition to our semi-annual mailings and frequent short email news updates, try these:

- **Facebook:** Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Friends
- **Instagram:** Sherburne NWR Friends  
(mostly mirrors Facebook postings)
- **Email:** [friendsofsherburne@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsherburne@gmail.com)
- **Website:** [Friends of the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge \(exploresherburne.org\)](http://exploresherburne.org)





# Thank you!



Photo: David Halgrimson

