

# Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge



## Annual Meeting January 11, 2024, 6:45pm

17 in Attendance: Leah Bronken, Myrna Krueger, Carol Mertesdorf, Helle Lukk, Sue Hix, Roger Leider, Bill Kolbinger, Scott Suhsen, Randall Holt-Woehl, BearPaw Shields, Steve Chesney, Mike Brubaker, Greg Dehmer, Jade Pederson.

Attending via Zoom: Bruce Galer, Dean Kleinhans, Stacey Morris

### President's report, Steve Chesney, Friends President:

Motion made to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting January 12, 2023. Second and approved.

- Our Mission remains the same: 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. Five Pillars: Education, Advocacy, Volunteerism, Inclusion, Sustainability
- In 2023 there have been several signature activities including nature education, the Spring and Fall festivals., and Community Outreach programs.
- **Nature Education:** 27 partner schools participated in programs during the year with 1726 visitors. In addition 7 other schools visited with an additional 725 visitors..
- **Festivals and Activities:** The Spring and Fall events are both on schedule for the coming year. Friends have also paired with Refuge Volunteers to represent Sherburne NWR at **community expos.**
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** We sponsored outings led by Urban Bird Collective, Promise Neighborhood. Education flowed both ways. Our support included funds for transportation, meals, and leaders. The scholarship administered by St. Cloud State University has been awarded for a third year.
- Fund Raising for the year has focused on bringing in money for the Amphitheater. The goals are close to being met, raising \$231,000. Groundbreaking is scheduled to take place in the Spring of 2024.
- Membership: We now have 675 total members, up ten percent from 2023.
- Eagles Nest Nature Store: Molly Feit of Big Lake has accepted a contractor position to manage the store and online sales. Thanks to the faithful volunteers who staff the store and answer many, many visitor questions. Our sales as of year-end were \$22, 054.
- Treasurer's Report: 2023year-end, and 2024 proposed budget were presented by Treasurer Roger Leider.
- Motion to approve 2023 Treasurers report. approved.
- Motion to approve 2024 Budget, approved.

Refuge Report, Greg Dehmer, Assistant Manager and Jade Peterson, Visitor Services Specialist.

2023 witnessed a series of programs for invasive species control. 1100 acres were chemically treated, while 2,000 acres for prescribed burn and 2500 acres of conservation grazing. It is expected to be less grazed in 2024.

Visitor Services: Nature's education programs with 890 partner school visits 540 other visits borrowing materials self-led. Spring celebration had 450 visitors. Snowshoe afternoons are becoming more important programs. In addition, more birding tours and wildlife tours are on schedule. The Sandhill Crane counts, and other outreach programs are increasing.

Leaving the Board: Mike Brubaker and Scott Suhsen. Nominations to the board: Stephanie Hennig, Bruce Soeder, and Emy Minzel. A motion was made and seconded to elect the nominated directors to the board of the Friends of Sherburne. Motion Passed.

Motion to adjourn 8:05 PM