



SUMMER 2013

# TAMARAC TRACKS

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First Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge Manager, Gil Gigstead.

# THE DISCOVERY CENTER at Tamarac

By Don Blanding, President of the Board

By now all those who read this publication are aware of the Discovery Center that is coming to Tamarac. The local media (newspaper, radio, and T.V.) have provided exceptionally good coverage of our initiative. At the present time, we are reviewing contractor bids while our search for funding continues. In other words, we still need additional capital to meet our goal and the bids submitted.

At the same time we're 110% confident that we will bring this project to a totally successful conclusion. So why is this? Simply said, it's because of the amazing support from our larger community. Some people have "complained" about how often they are solicited for things like this. But in nearly every case, you folks have written the check any way. Amazing! One person, much more qualified than I to judge, says that this community is indeed on the top of the list with regards to giving to the better good. And remember, we can still use

any or all of you to keep up the capital campaign.

Another donor who has also done significant capital campaigning himself actually took time to coach me on fund raising. He mentioned things like commitment and passion for the task at hand. I can tell you sincerely that the more fund raising I do, the more committed and engaged I become. With our successes to date, my energy for this project only increases. I can also tell you that I'm not alone in this. Others who have and continue to campaign display this passion, energy, and commitment as well.

On another level, I think about what we've all been told about rewards that come from giving. I personally take a great deal of satisfaction knowing that



I've been able to be a part of all this. What better way to give to future generations than by sharing the wild things and wild places that are the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.



## Become a Friend

Membership: \$20

Patron: \$100

Steward: \$250

Life Member: \$500



### Friends of Tamarac NWR

35704 County Hwy. 26, Rochert, MN 56578  
(218) 847-2641 extension 21

Website: [www.tamaracfriends.org](http://www.tamaracfriends.org) | E-mail: [info@tamaracfriends.org](mailto:info@tamaracfriends.org)

The Friends of Tamarac NWR is a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to facilitate activities and programs that interpret, protect and restore the natural and cultural resources of the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.

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Rochert, MN	2014
Ogema, MN	2015
Osage, MN	2015
Rochert, MN	2013
Ogema, MN	2015
Detroit Lakes, MN	2013
Detroit Lakes, MN	2015
Detroit Lakes, MN	2014
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#### Refuge Advisors to the Board

Neil Powers, Tamarac Refuge Manager  
Kelly Blackledge, Tamarac Visitor Services

Neil\_Powers@fws.gov 218-847-2641 x11  
Kelly\_Blackledge@fws.gov 218-847-2641 x17

#### Newsletter Committee

Vonnice Jacobson, Fran Mattson, Linda Brockmann, Justine Boots, Kelly Blackledge, Nancy Brennan, Janice Bentson and Nancy Moulden. Design/Layout: Angie Pfaff (Loud Media)  
Tamarac Tracks is a publication of the Friends of Tamarac serving both the Friends and the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. Tamarac Tracks is published four times a year, mailed to members and made available as an electronic PDF on our website. Please discuss article ideas in advance with the newsletter coordinator ([jjacobson@arvign.net](mailto:jjacobson@arvign.net)).

# FRIENDS OF TAMARAC, NWR

By Neil Powers, Manager, Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge



Friends groups as a whole are not a new concept. Many organizations rely upon the talents and expertise of volunteer organizations to accomplish critical priorities and Tamarac NWR is no different. People connected to

these organizations frequently come from diverse backgrounds but are bound together by a common cause that benefits others. Among National Wildlife Refuges where friends groups are fairly common, only about 40% of all refuges have the good fortune of friends group support.

Tamarac NWR is extremely fortunate to be blessed with a friends group like the Friends of Tamarac. While the Friends of Tamarac (FOT) are involved in many varied activities, their expertise is connecting people with nature, especially young people. FOT recognizes the importance of understanding our natural environment and has been instrumental in helping the refuge build a growing environmental education program that now includes over 3,000 youth and over 20 volunteer educators. We are very proud of their efforts individually and as a group.

Many of you are aware that the Friends of Tamarac are engaged in an endeavor to expand their ability to reach more

youth through the construction of the Tamarac Discovery Center. This facility is an incredible and very unique undertaking that will serve as our foundation to expand and build a bright future for Tamarac NWR and, more importantly, to provide area youth with a better understanding and appreciation for nature and the outdoors. This special project involves a unique partnership between individuals, private business, a non-profit organization, and a federal government facility.

We are exceptionally proud of our Friends and amazed at their ability to accomplish challenging projects like the Discovery Center, but to be able to accomplish them during a time of limited financial resources is even more impressive. The Friends of Tamarac have worked hard and dedicated themselves to this project, and I look forward to seeing this dream become a reality.

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## MEMBERS

**Thanks so much to the many Friends of Tamarac who have renewed their memberships for this year and a big WELCOME to all our new members. Membership runs from October 1 through September 30 each year. The following is a list of new and renewed memberships received since the last newsletter through June 15. We thought we would recognize ALL our Life Members in this issue.**

### LIFE MEMBERS

Cyndi and Melissa Anderson  
David and Buggie Anderson  
Howard and Linda Anderson  
Chuck and Diane Becker  
Don andCarolynn Blanding  
Lanny and Lois Brantner  
Bob and Linda Brockmann  
Charles and Kay Burke  
Kent and Connie Carlson  
Detroit Lakes Lions Club  
Richard and Joyce Duffney  
Jerry Fredine  
Krista Hesby and Jay Jorgenson  
Greg Hoch  
Joann Knapp  
Jim and Cindy Legler

Ken and Fran Mattson  
Roger Minch  
Nancy Moulden  
George and Sally Oja  
Michael and Ginger O'Keefe  
John and Lance Pitzl  
George and Shirley Read  
Blace and Myrna Schmidt  
Dick and Claire Wilson

### NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS

Steve and Elaine Beitelspacher  
Tim Bergien  
Tom and Polly Drayton  
Richard Duffney  
Judy Egge  
Jim and Jill Eisele

Neil and Lana Engbloom  
Kent Harrel  
Boyd and Leslie Holen  
Terry and Sandi Kemmer  
Matt, Gina, Lauren and Jayden Kemper  
Loxley and Bob Koshnick  
Verna Kragnes and Rick Hall  
Steve and Genie Kufus  
Walter and Mary Kulberg  
Howard and Kay Lohman  
Steve Midthune  
John Minge  
Gary and Gail Mohlenkamp  
Jon and Lucy Normann  
Michael Orchard and Jackie Goodkin  
Jim and Sue Olsen  
Nancy Olson  
Phletus and Sally Williams



Captured alpha wolf before being collared.

**How far would you travel for a meal? If you are a wolf, you may travel up to 50 miles in search of food on any given day.**

Wolves tend to travel at a constant speed of 5 mph but can reach nearly 40 mph. An average pack of wolves ranges in size from 4 to 9 animals, but may be as small as 2 and as large as 15. By 3 years of age, a wolf has chosen to stay with its pack or to disperse. When a wolf leaves, it is often in search of new territory, which can be used to form a pack or find a mate. Wolves typically mate for life.

The size of wolf territories varies with the seasons. Some contributing factors are prey abundance, type of habitat, climate, and disease. Since food is more abundant in the summer, pack territories tend to be smaller than those in the winter. Territories usually range from 50 to over 1,000 square miles. Packs in the lower 48 states tend to be less than 100 square miles, while packs in Alaska and Canada have territories that range from 300 to 1,000 square miles or more. The smallest territory ever recorded was 13 square miles in NE Minnesota, while the largest was 2,422 square miles in Alaska.

Territories are an integral part of a current wolf study at Tamarac NWR. There are two packs with territories that include parts of the refuge. Three wolves

# WOLVES & THEIR TERRITORIES

By Rachel Post

have been fitted with research collars in the past couple of years.

The first attempt at tracking wolves on Tamarac was with radio collars, but the forests made tracking difficult. On the refuge, the wolf could only be tracked within 1 to 1.5 miles. This proved ineffective when the two submissive wolves moved out of the Tamarac area. One was located near Bagley, MN, where it was shot near the end of the hunting season. The other is still traveling in a region north of Park Rapids.

Satellite tracking is more efficient than radio collars. It allows a researcher to track a wolf over greater distances, and all the data on the wolf's movements are sent directly to the biologist. It is also more cost and fuel efficient than radio collars. The alpha male in the northern

pack was collared with a satellite GPS collar. He has one of the largest ranges in the 48 continental states, and his range encompasses over 300 square miles. This is as large as the territories of wolves in Canada and Alaska. The collar tracked this alpha male until it came off due to a time-release mechanism on April 26, 2013. The last data received indicated he was on his way back towards Tamarac NWR from Crookston, MN.

The goal of tracking wolves at Tamarac is to determine pack size and survivability. It is also to learn more about the territories in western Minnesota, since it is the edge of their range. Researchers hope to gain information needed to make management decisions that will ensure wolves continue to be a part of the natural ecosystem for generations to come.



Biologists taking measurements of an alpha wolf after attaching a satellite collar.

# TAKE A HIKE

When complete, the North Country National Scenic Trail will be the longest continuous hiking trail in the United States spanning more than 4,600 miles. Designated as a premier hiking trail, similar to the Appalachian Trail, it links scenic, natural, recreation, historic, and cultural areas through New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota.

The National Park Service administers the trail in cooperation with all levels of government, the North Country Trail Association, and private interests. This section of trail is built, managed and maintained by the volunteers of the Laurentian Lakes Chapter of the North Country Trail Association. For more information about the chapter please visit [northcountrytrail.org/llc](http://northcountrytrail.org/llc).

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge is host to 14.5 miles of this national trail. This segment offers some of the most spectacular wildlife viewing and photographic vistas. Take a hike today! Download a map of the trail



at [www.fws.gov/refuge/tamarac](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/tamarac) .

A wealth of partners are responsible for the new section of the North Country Trail and cut the ribbon at the grand opening event held on National Trails Day at Tamarac Refuge.

L to R: Becca Arndt, Detroit Lakes

Regional Chamber of Commerce; Nathan Caldwell, US Fish & Wildlife Service National Transit and Trails Coordinator; Charlie Blair, US Fish & Wildlife Service Chief of Refuges for the Midwest Region; Lori Dowling-Hanson, NW Regional Director for Minnesota DNR; Bruce Mathews, Executive Director North Country Trail Association; Ray Vlasak, Laurentian Lakes Chapter President North Country Trail; Tom Melius Regional Director of the US Fish & Wildlife Service; Neil Powers, Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge Manager; Mark Weaver, National Park Service Superintendent- North Country National Scenic Trail; Matt Davis, North Country Trail Association Trails Coordinator for MN & ND



Fran Mattson and Vonnie Jacobson served the cake celebrating Tamarac's 75 years.

# A *WALK* IN THE WOODS

By Ron Jenson

It will be 8 years this October since I had that walk in the woods with a class of first graders, an experience I don't think I will ever forget. It was the first week in October; the trail was covered with six inches of autumn leaves; the chatter of first graders exploring the outdoors and kicking leaves could have been heard a mile away. After explaining that we probably wouldn't see any elephants this day at Tamarac, we started to head back to the bus. I had about 30 first graders all around me as we were walking. Suddenly I had this small hand slip into mine as we walked, and I looked down at a little girl. She had a smile on her face from ear to ear. Then she looked at me and said, "Mr. Ron, I have never ever been in the woods before." To this day, I still get a lump in my throat when I tell people about that special day in my life of retirement.

The second significant event that happened to me occurred a few years later. This was with a class of 7th graders, and as we were getting ready to start our journey exploring some of nature's secrets their teacher approached me to apologize. The teacher told me that I had been given the three most difficult students in the class because she didn't want the rest of the class to experience all the distractions that would normally occur with these three. As I went about the lesson plan for the day, my three students got so involved I could hardly get a word in. Their excitement was contagious. They finished their project, entered the day's discoveries in their journals, and turned their completed work to the teacher. After the teacher had checked all the paperwork for the whole class and they were starting to board the bus to go back to school, she made a point of looking me up. She could not believe the papers that the three students had turned in; they were not only complete but were the best of the class. I have read articles as to what happens to the mind when it is exposed to the outdoors and nature's secrets. Even research has shown improved student behavior and attitudes. I



firmly believe it does happen because I was able to experience it first-hand.

Children need to be connected to the outdoors. We adults need to show them the way and lead by example. Share some of nature's secrets with a child in your life. It may turn out to be the most memorable day of the decade.

**SAVE THE  
DATE**

**SEPTEMBER 27  
TOAST TO TAMARAC.**

The Friends of Tamarac are passionate about creating more opportunities for the youth and families of our local communities to make meaningful connections with nature. Spending

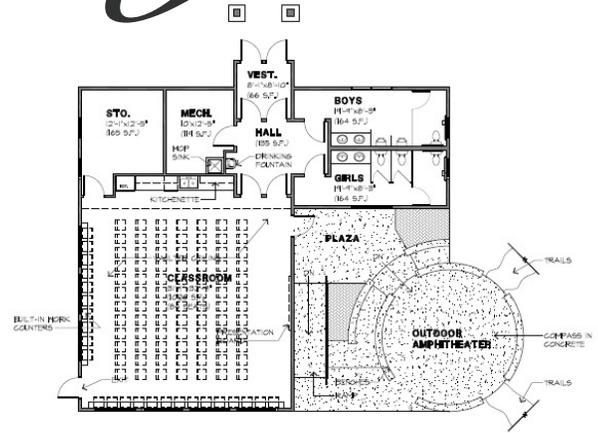
time in nature rejuvenates the spirit, inspires creativity and keeps us healthy. Children today are too 'plugged in' and don't even spend half the amount of time outdoors as their parents did as youth. This disconnect is a threat to the future of our wild places. The Discovery Center project will provide the path to making discoveries in the outdoors and developing the next generation of conservation stewards.

The Tamarac Discovery Center will be the center of education, exploration and adventure in nature. It will help young and old alike enjoy the natural resource of the refuge with modern convenience to enhance learning.

The Tamarac Discovery Center will include a multi-purpose meeting room, storage and restrooms. It will also include an outdoor classroom/amphitheater. This space will allow nearly 100 people to gather at a time without creating a large impact on the landscape. Natural landscaping around the building will help it blend into the natural setting of Tamarac.



# LEAVE A Legacy



The Friends of Tamarac are working to raise \$500,000 to build this energy-efficient, versatile facility. Nearly 80% of the funds have been raised, but we need your help to complete our goal and continue to make meaningful connections with people and nature. Make a donation today and leave a legacy of conservation. ***A donation envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.***

To make a donation on-line visit [www.tamaracfriends.org/discovery-center/](http://www.tamaracfriends.org/discovery-center/)

Ron Jenson (left) and Tom Hunt (right) present the plans for the Discovery Center to US Fish & Wildlife Regional Director Tom Melius (center). Once the center is built it will be donated to and maintained by the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

# Tamarac's *Supporting* Cast

By Rachel Post, Tamarac Intern

This year's Youth Conservation Corps, a program to hire high school students, began work in early June and brought in two new members to join the crew, Kody Vandeneysel and Riley Utke.



Kody Vandeneysel is a senior from Frazee High School and has plans to major in Biology. He's excited to learn how Tamarac runs and looks forward to gaining experience for his future career. Outside of Tamarac, Kody's interests are in wrestling and baseball.



Riley Utke also attends Frazee High School where he is a sophomore; he plans to major in Biology when he goes to college. By working at Tamarac, Riley hopes to gain experience, to work with biologists, and to learn what type work he most enjoys. Outside of Tamarac, Riley's interests are in football and baseball.

So far, both Kody and Riley have been busy with building storage areas, duck counts, water quality sampling, and putting up gypsy moth traps.



This is Cody Okeson's third year working at Tamarac and his second year in SCEP (Student Career Experience Program). This year his focus is on Management. Cody attends the University of Minnesota-Morris, but is transferring to North Dakota State University. He plans to major in Wildlife Biology or Natural Resource Management. Cody originally wanted to work at Tamarac because he enjoys working for an agency that conserves wildlife. He also hopes to gain new skills and work experience at Tamarac for future endeavors. So far this year, Cody has most enjoyed duck banding with the White Earth staff and the waterfowl survey at Tamarac Refuge and Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District. He

has also helped with maintenance, water quality sampling, and checking duck boxes at White Earth.



Through the Student Conservation Association, Tamarac was able to hire an Environmental Education Intern, Rachel Post. She can be found doing a bit of everything. In May, she conducted one of the activities for each group of students that cycled through the refuge. Currently she is putting her Biology major to use by assisting Judy Bell, a resident volunteer, with a breeding bird atlas. She is also gearing up for the loon survey, working with preschoolers during Wild Wednesdays, and a variety of interpretive events. Rachel hopes to gain enough experience to pursue a career in biological research and plans to get a Masters or PhD in the future. Outside of Tamarac, Rachel's interests are reading and doing anything outside, which the ticks are currently making difficult.

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## **STEVE SOX** | The Rest of the Story

By Janice Bengtson

In early May, Steve Sox traveled through a snowstorm from North Carolina to get here. Despite snow lingering at his campsite upon arrival, he decided to stay! Currently he is our mowing guru, keeping our public accesses safe and inviting for our visitors. He also assists with maintenance projects.

Steve grew up in the small town of Ashboro NC. It was in high school where he found his calling in broadcasting. He hosted the school's radio programs and even attended a summer broad-

casting camp. He went on to college at UNC - Charlotte and majored in theater. Steve enjoyed set design and lighting and worked on many productions including those with the Charlotte Opera Company. After graduating he moved to Reno, Nevada, to pursue his Master's in theater while teaching undergrads. He then moved to NC to do radio where he did live "remotes" from a variety of locations - car lots, grocery stores, racetracks all without a script. His career then took him to South Carolina, Virginia and then to Pensacola, FL where he was the general sales

manager and program director for a public television station for 5 years. As luck would have it, he started during the major fund drive. He loved those times as he could ad lib by using his "live on location" skills from radio. He then returned to radio back in NC to manage a public radio station. He was responsible for making it work financially and for keeping the listening public and supporters happy. According to Steve, it was the greatest job. In the years following, he did consulting work in Indianapolis, Seattle, and Mesa, AZ.

Steve's connection to nature began as a child in rural NC. His parents would take him and his sister on trips to the ocean in the spring and to the mountains in the fall. There were adventures of hunting with his father and going shrimping and "gigging" for flounder.

Steve enjoys road cycling and mountain biking. In fact, he owns 4 bicycles. One memorable ride was a 5 day trip into the 'maze' in Canyonlands National Park. Another was the STP ride -Seattle to Portland, 200 miles in 2 days! Steve also enjoys working with people. While in Florida, he spent many hours tutoring illiterate adults and was president of the Learn to Read Program. Steve has been on the road for three years volunteering at 6 different locations including Cape Hatteras and Joshua Tree.

Steve is enjoying his time in Minnesota, saying not only are people friendly, but also they have interesting stories to tell. Hopefully Steve will take with him fond memories and good stories from his time at Tamarac.



# VOLUNTEER VIBES

It has been a crazy busy spring! Thanks for all your time and talents donated to our environmental education programs, the Festival of Birds, and National Trails Day. Summer is in full swing and volunteers are presenting programs, conducting surveys, mowing trails, and more.

Please welcome aboard our new volunteers Cheryl Hall- Kippen, Mark Geihl, Steve Sox, Judy Bell, Sandra Boyer, Don Freking, Jeri-Anne Collins, Sarah Brunner and Rachel Post.

During the month of May, our environmental education leaders and assistants donated over 450 hours! Thanks to Dave Schneider, Nancy Brennan, Luverne Ehnert, Jeanine Ehnert, Cathie Ferguson, Jim DuBay, Rachel Post, Connie Carlson, Ken Mattson, Ron Jenson, Rick Pechmann, Linda Brockmann, Craig Lewis, Betty Gunderson, Vonnie Jacobson, Steve Sox, Judy Bell, Cheryl Hall-Kippen, Krista Hesby-Jorgenson, Craig Lewis, John Jacobson, Fran Mattson. Please consider becoming part of our team next fall.

Art Bakker attended Heavy Equipment tractor training at Sherburne NWR. He joins Ron Jenson and Luverne Ehnert as part of our trail

mowing crew.

Kudos to Naturalist Committee members Craig Lewis, Nancy Brennan, Jeanine Ehnert, Luverne Ehnert, Connie Carlson and Denis Mudderman for presenting many of our summer interpretive programs. There is a wonderful variety geared for people of all ages.

**Wanted: Aquatic Invasive Species educators** -volunteers will be stationed at lake accesses on Saturday mornings to greet visitors and educate them on invasives and how to prevent their spread. **Roving Naturalists** - Greet visitors and provide information on the Wildlife Drive Sundays 12-4:00 pm. **Wildlife Excursion Guides** - Lead visitors on an adventure through the refuge. Tours are offered Thursdays at 10:00 am. **Wild Wednesdays Activity Leaders** - Lead a one hour nature activity for 3-7 year olds accompanied by parents or grandparents, 10:00 am July-August. **Photo Contest Assistants**-We need people with good organization and computer skills. Volunteers will be entering data, filing, organizing photos, setting up the exhibit, etc. (mid-Sept - mid-Oct). **Fall Festival planning committee members** - Do you have some creative ideas on how to celebrate our 75th? We need you to assist in planning this event.

## WE FEST WORKERS NEEDED

**Who knew cleaning up after We Fest could be so fun and profitable! Join us for the 2nd Annual We Fest Clean Up and fundraiser.**

**Workers needed Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, August 4 - 6. Contact Fran at (218) 983-3173 or fnkmattson@gmail.com.**

# SEVENTY FIVE YEARS AGO AT TAMARAC

By John Boots

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge is enjoying its 75th year, and it is obviously flourishing. It has doubled in size since its creation in 1938. It hosts thousands of visitors annually, many of them school children involved in the refuge's environmental education programs. It is presently engaged in building an ambitious new Discovery Center to receive and educate those visitors. It enjoys the support of a large and dedicated corps of volunteer supporters. And it succeeds beautifully in doing what wildlife refuges were designed to do: providing places of refuge for wildlife in a time of growing populations, intensifying land use, and increasing urbanization.

In the face of these successes, it is interesting to reflect that wildlife refuges do not build themselves, maintain themselves, or administer themselves. Nor do they plan for their own futures. There is lots of work involved, lots of human foresight, and a good deal of mud. Most of the dedicated people who laid the foundations of Tamarac and surveyed its boundaries are gone now, but some sense of their challenges and triumphs can still be found in the quarterly reports that the first refuge manager submitted to the U.S. Biological Survey (now the Fish and Wildlife Service) in the founding year of 1938.

That first manager was Gilbert Gigstead, a young biologist who came to Tamarac in 1938 from a previous post at the Chautauqua Federal Refuge in central Illinois. What he found in Becker County was an area of slightly more than 22,000 acres ideally suited to function as a waterfowl refuge. Three river systems, 21 named lakes, and scores of smaller wetlands provide perfect nesting and resting habitat for ducks of all varieties.

What the new manager also found is that building truck roads and service trails through country as wet as this is no picnic. It did not help that May and June of 1938 were miserably wet months. Gigstead's first report notes that they saw the sun four times in



May, and a late snowstorm on the 6th blanketed the refuge with six inches of white. June was no better. Storms with hailstones the size of chicken eggs broke windows in new buildings, and abnormally heavy rains brought lake levels up by a foot and a half. Most of the report is written in the terse style typical of such documents, but in one section he departs from that style to give a detailed report of a single dismaying day near Lost Lake that involved two cars mired to the running boards in mud, two 9-mile walks for help, and a final rescue by tractor some time after sunset. There were zero rods of road built on that day.

In circumstances like these, it is a little surprising that any work got done at all. In fact, however, that first summer saw significant progress in the infrastructure of the infant refuge. Part of this, as Gigstead generously says, was attributable to help from the CCC crews living on the refuge, and to contributions from the National Youth Administration. By the end of the summer, there were seven miles of truck roads cleared and largely graded; five new buildings were up and functioning; two lookout towers were in place; and four miles of phone lines had been strung to tie it all together.

Beyond the physical building projects, Gigstead's crews made a good start on the actual work of the refuge.

By September, for instance, they had completed field work for aquatic maps of 13 of the refuge's lakes, required for the water development work that would occupy the coming years. They had also harvested a thousand pounds of rice seed for new plantings, stocked beaver in the Egg River drainage, and completed a survey of most of the refuge perimeter.

Gigstead's early reports make it clear that the building of infrastructure, while necessary, was not the part of the job that he liked best. Infrastructure was only the means; the end in view was to provide refuge for waterfowl. Gigstead loved to see the ducks come; he devised efficient methods of counting them; and he reveled in their numbers. The "Waterfowl" sections of his reports are lavishly detailed, complete with dates, species, locations, relative sizes of specific flights, and their food preferences.

In the fall of 1938, 60,000 ducks visited Tamarac, including the 5,000 that were raised there. Fully half of the migrants were scaup and blue winged teal, with mallards contributing an additional 8,000. Black ducks, green winged teal, and buffleheads numbered only about 100 each, but their presence was duly noted. A single flock of swans--probably whistlers--spent one night on the refuge in the spring. None were seen in the fall, and no geese at all were counted during the first year. Of wood ducks, sadly, fewer than 30 were seen.

The wood duck sightings were of special interest to Gigstead, and he notes their scarcity with obvious regret. He clearly held a special brief for this then-rare species. In the fall of 1938, for example, the refuge hosted a special field tour for biologists from the University of Minnesota, and the refuge manager presented a lecture on his specialty: wood duck behavior. We do not know the exact content of that lecture, but it is likely that it included extensive notes on the construction, placement--and effectiveness--of wood duck nesting boxes. Gigstead was, it turns out,

# JULY AND AUGUST ACTIVITIES

one of the inventors of the wood duck box. During his time as superintendent of the Chautauqua Refuge in Illinois, he and biologist Milford Smith designed the artificial nesting structure and pioneered its development. As he was giving his Tamarac lecture in 1938, hundreds of his boxes were being placed in the refuges and wetlands of Illinois. Now, of course, they are ubiquitous throughout the wood duck's nesting range, and their widespread use is at least partly responsible for the resurgence of wood duck numbers. There is a nice irony in the fact that Gigstead, who lamented the scarcity of wood ducks in 1938, was himself responsible for a management tactic that helps to account for their abundance 75 years later.

The final note in Gigstead's autumn report to the Biological Survey 75 years ago refers to registered visitors to the refuge. There were 150 of them. Some were visiting biologists and wildlife professionals; many were hunters; two were fishermen; and four were poachers. By contrast, the year 2012 saw an estimated 65,000 visitors at Tamarac. Three thousand of these were school children participating in the refuge's educational programs. Thousands more were hunters, fishermen, bird watchers, biologists both amateur and professional, cross country skiers, snowshoers, hikers, photographers, and picnickers. And many score were volunteers dedicated to maintaining and extending Tamarac's resources. A comparison of these numbers across three quarters of a century should be read as eloquent testimony to the labor and vision of Tamarac's founders.

Wildlife Excursions are offered every Thursday starting at 10:00. Explore the refuge with a knowledgeable guide. Search for wildlife and learn about the cultural and natural history of Tamarac. Meet at the Chippewa Picnic Area on County Hwy 26 just 3 miles east of the visitor center.

**\*Wild Wednesdays!** Programs will be offered every Wednesday at 10:00 am July through August. Explore the world of nature with your child or grandchild during this hour long adventure. Activities designed for 3-7 year olds. Meet at the Chippewa Picnic Area.

## **Sunday July 21 2:00 pm Celebrating 75! History Tour**

Join us for this car caravan tour as we embark on a journey through the story of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. Discover the people and places that played a key role in refuge development from the 1930s and the Civilian Conservation Corps forward. Meet at the Chippewa Picnic Area.

## **Saturday July 27 10:00 am Tree Trek**

Discover the forest! During this hike, we will see how many of Tamarac's 36 species of trees we can identify. We will also take a peek at their neighbors, the shrubs and forest floor plants. Hikers will receive a complete Tamarac tree checklist and a partial list of other plants likely to be encountered. Hand lenses will be provided for looking closely at some of the characteristics. Meet at the 400th Ave. Trailhead. Wear good hiking shoes, bring water and a snack (or lunch) for this two hour trek.

## **Sunday August 4 2:00**

**Wet and Wild: Macroinvertebrates!** Explore the shore of the Ottetail and discover tiny critters which provide food and cover for fish and other animals. You'll

collect invertebrates using a dip net and will have the opportunity to sketch these animals and to identify them by using a key. See how many you can find! Fun for the whole family. Presented by MinnAqua instructor Kyle Quittschreiber. Meet at the Chippewa Picnic Area.

## **Saturday August 10 7:00-9:00 pm Owls, Howls and Shooting Stars**

Join us for an evening of discovery as we witness the fall of night on the refuge. Listen to the sounds of Tamarac's wildlife and learn how they adapt to the darkness of night. Use your senses and become part of their world all while experiencing the peak of the Perseid meteor showers! Bring a flashlight and a lawn chair. Meet at the refuge shop parking area, ¼ mile east of the visitor center entrance.

## **Sunday August 18 2:00 pm Bugs and Creepy Crawlers: Adventures in Insect Sweeping**

Discover the strange world of insects found on the refuge that are a part of the food chain of a healthy ecosystem. We will work grass and brush with sweep nets to collect insects that we will view up close with magnifiers and try to identify. Meet at the Pine Lake Parking Area on County Hwy 29.

## **Saturday August 24 10:00 am – 12:00 pm A Wander through Wildflowers**

Join us as we search for the sun-loving blooms of late summer. Meet at the Pine Lake Parking Area for this 2 hour exploration.



Volunteer naturalist Jeanine Ehnert leads a wildflower walk.

**NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS  
OF TAMARAC NWR**

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge  
35704 County Highway 26  
Rochert, MN 56578  
[www.tamaracfriends.org](http://www.tamaracfriends.org)  
Phone: 218-847-2641 Ext. 21  
[info@tamaracfriends.org](mailto:info@tamaracfriends.org)

***Friends of Tamarac NWR's mission is to  
facilitate activities and programs that  
interpret, protect and restore the natural  
and cultural resources of Tamarac Wildlife  
Refuge.***

Refuge Website:  
[www.fws.gov/refuge/tamarac](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/tamarac)



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# AMONG THE TREES

by Heather Ripley ©

We pass like ghosts  
Like a breeze falling over her needles.  
The wind will rise,  
The pines will sway,  
Then settle.... then settle.  
A leaf  
(Unnoticed)  
Sailing across clear waters.  
All is still.... all is still.  
Day begets night begets  
day begets night  
Rain to snow to thunder to stars  
I lie under her  
She arches herself above me  
Does she see me?  
Is that a wink in the birch's eye?  
Stillness.... stillness....  
A breeze, only on her leaves.  
A whisper, only she responds.  
What does she tell me?  
What will I hear?  
What can I learn beneath her green mantle?  
What can I learn beneath her bare arms?  
Oh Catcher of Stars, Oh Drinker of Rain, teach me.  
I will listen.



“Floating Along” photo by Denise Mooris, a second place winner in the Tamarac Photo Contest, competing in the Nature’s Abstracts category