



PLANNING FOR 2015

page 3

2014 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS page 9

FALL FESTIVAL MEMORIES

page 7

Lee Kensinger "White Lady Slipper" 2014 Grand Prize Winner Of The Tamarac Photo Contest

TONAL WILDLIFE

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Ron Jenson, President of the Board

WE DID IT! As of December 5th the Discovery Center was turned over to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife. The construction phase of the building that the Friends of Tamarac were responsible for has been completed. The refuge will be putting the finishing touches on the inside such as floor tile, interior doors, and door and window trim. Some of the exterior work remains, primarily the access trail and landscaping and that work will commence in the spring. We will hold off the use of the building until the handicap accessible path to the building is completed. We have had numerous comments coming in on the great design and usability of the structure so we will be anxious to start putting it to use. The construction of the building was truly a team effort by me and Kelly Blackledge, Refuge Visitor Service Coordinator, working with our architect and general contractor.

The best part of this story is that the Discovery Center was paid for almost totally by pledges and donations. Donors have committed dollars in excess of \$550,000 and growing. We still are short around \$50,000 dollars but cash and pledges are arriving daily. It is our goal to have the Discovery Center entirely funded by June 1, 2015. A huge thank you goes out to our donors since this project would not have been completed without your support. The old saying "build it and they will



come" is now a reality. I can hardly wait to be with the school groups that get to use this awesome building as they experience nature at its best. Volunteer and join me to see and hear the sights and sounds that they will be experiencing!



Become a Friend

Membership: \$20 Patron: \$100 Steward: \$250 Life Member: \$500



Friends of Tamarac NWR

35704 County Hwy. 26, Rochert, MN 56578 (218) 844-1767

Website: www.tamaracfriends.org, | E-mail: info@tamaracfriends.org | Find us on Facebook 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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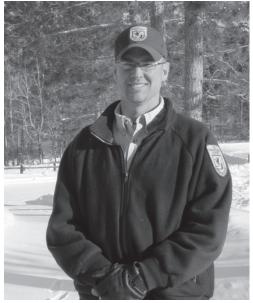
Vonnie Jacobson, Fran Mattson, Linda Brockmann, Justine Boots, Kelly Blackledge, Nancy Brennan, Janice Bengtson. Layout and design by Angie Pfaff (Loud Media)

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 (jyjacobson@arvig.net).

PAGE 2 TAMARAC TRACKS

PLANNING FOR 2015

By Neil Powers, Manager, Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge



Annually, Tamarac staff gathers to develop a work plan for the coming year. This effort generally takes place in close proximity to the start of our new fiscal year and represents an opportunity to reflect upon our successes from the past year and a chance to begin focusing on updating our program and station goals for the year ahead.

An important element of this challenging process is to accurately describe a vision for the coming year that will help guide the overall planning process. Many elements such as the predicted budget climate and staff vacancies or changes, contribute to creating a description of what we can expect. Following are a few of the items I shared with our staff as we prepared to formulate our work plan for FŶ2015: our budget is expected to be flat to declining; we anticipate that our current vacancies will continue and may grow with the potential for retirements or transfers; we anticipate having fewer resources at our disposal and will need to focus our priorities but will also have to make the tough choice to postpone, de-emphasize or discontinue some aspects of our work. This is certainly not the kind of news anyone wants to share but unfortunately, this is what the coming year will hold for Tamarac and be reflective of our predicted budget and staff capacity. Tamarac has dealt successfully with many of these same challenges in the past. What makes this different from past experiences is the lengthy duration of a key staff vacancy (deputy refuge manager) and the prospect of other staff vacancies, combined with a budget that offers little relief to address these resource limitations.

In times like this Friends, partners and volunteers become even more important to our overall ability to accomplish mission critical projects like habitat management, facility maintenance and environmental education. Tamarac is extremely fortunate to have a strong volunteer program comprised of dedicated individuals that have helped support many of our programs and contributed to the success of the refuge. For these efforts we are very grateful. We look forward to your continued support in the coming year.

THANK YOU TO FRIENDS OF TAMARAC MEMBERS!

A big THANK YOU to all our wonderful members of Friends of Tamarac! Your generosity makes it possible for us to have programs such as environmental education for children, the Fall Festival, annual photo contest, naturalist activities, and, of course, Tamarac Tracks. Following is a list of memberships received between August and December 1st.

New Life Members Ira "Skip" Burhans

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Annual Memberships and Donations

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2014 Toast to Tamarac/Fall Festival Silent Auction Contributors

Anderson, Buggie

Anderson, Jon & Johanne

Becker, Chuck Bergen, Brooke Blackledge family

Boots-Marshall, Jennifer Boots, John & Justine

Brennan, Nancy Bridgers, Don

Brockmann, Bob & Linda

Burke, Kay Daggett, Karen DuBay, Jim

Ehnert, Luverne & Jeanine

Ferguson, Cathie Fritz, Cathy Geihl, Mark Gilles, Diane

Gunderson, Erik Hunt, Tom & Linda

Jasken, Jim & MaryAnn Jacobson, Vonnie & John

Jenson, Michele

Karsnia, David & Maureen

Kensinger, Lee

Kohlhepp, Steven & Mary

Lacina, Nancy Larson, Robb May, Linda Mattson, Fran Mohlencamp, Gail Moulden, Nancy Navara, James & Jean Odegaard, Diane Pechmann, Tracey Powers, Susan & Tim

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Target

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Timberwolves Foundation

Trader Joe's Walmart

Webber Family Motors

WF. Fest

Zorbaz on the Lake



Nancy Olson engaging guests.

PAGE 4 TAMARAC TRACKS



This year's Friends of Tamarac quilt, created by Denise Warweg, "Wildlife of Tamarac" was won by Deb Larson of St Anthony, MN.



Denis Muddermann sampling the delicious appetizers.



Mark and Sue Geihl at A Toast to Tamarac.



The Robson's enjoying Toast to Tamarac



Everyone participated in games and auctions with food, wine, music and art for all.

HEAR THE WIND WHISPER

By Cheryl Hall-Kippen

A crisp autumn morning, wind rustling, golden leaves fluttering against a sky so blue. The morning starts as we quickly set up and prepare to greet the students arriving for the day. We hear crackling, the sound louder as the school bus barrels along the gravel road. The bus stops, the stillness is broken by the chattering of students deboarding. Teachers quickly begin to cluster students around them in anticipation of their outdoor classroom experiences.

Now it's quiet again as we begin the Tamarac watch, our first session of the day. Using eyes, ears, sense of smell and touch we experience the essence of Tamarac. During the experience, 3rd grade student Asher

Neimark from Rossman School writes, "I hear the wind whispering in my ear. What it is saying to me, I do not know. I feel the grass on my hand. I see all the trees waving back and forth."

At the end of the day, the teachers will not be disappointed by the carefully planned nature sessions designed to fulfill their curriculum standards. The students, redcheeked and full of healthy enthusiasm, will also have experienced the peace of the Tamarac Watch, hands on education about trees, GPS, wolves, forest treasures, and peeks at the history of the old cabins, and more in nature's classroom without walls. The Tamarac volunteers and staff teachers will feel the joy of passing on their

love of nature to these very special present and future stewards of our environment. We, as volunteers, broaden our own education and learn from our experiences of the day. A feeling of camaraderie develops among us as we share what we know and support each other.

I see volunteering at Tamarac as gratitude in action. Environmental Education is only one of the many volunteer opportunities available. The area of interest you choose and the amount of volunteer time you offer is up to you. You are welcome to join us anytime or just drop by to visit and see what's going on!

DO YOU ENJOY THE OUTDOORS AND CHILDREN?

Why don't you join our Environmental Education team? Contact Janice Bengtson at Janice_Bengtson@fws.gov or 218-844-1756 to find out more about volunteer teaching/helping opportunities.



John Boots delivered a spell-binding rendition of the legend of Old Three Legs, the infamous and elusive Becker County wolf.

PAGE 6 TAMARAC TRACKS

FALL FESTIVAL MEMORIES



The early 20th century came alive with memorabilia from the Becker County Historical Society, and the historic cabins allowed for an easy peek into history.



Young wolves were seen throughout the event site with thanks to seven high school volunteers from the Philanthropy and Youth organization who helped at the art table and other areas.



Girls on one of the Wilderness Bus Tours wrote about what they saw, heard and felt in a remote area near the Ottertail River.



Cameron Feaster from the International Wolf Center discussed pelts, wolf ecology and prey interactions with the crowd.



Bill Paulson returned to the Fall Festival with his demonstration of the traditional art of wild rice parching. Folks enjoyed watching the process, listening to stories and warming their hands by the fire.

KENSINGER TAKES GRAND PRIZE IN PHOTO CONTEST

Lee Kensinger of Detroit Lakes took the top honors in Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge's 13th Annual Photography Contest. Winners were announced at the awards presentation held October 19 at the Washington Square Mall. His photo, White Lady Slipper, was chosen out of 136 entries. This rare albino variation of the Showy Lady Slipper sprinkled with fresh rain drops cast a spell on the judges. The People's Choice Award was presented to Diane Turcotte for Peace, showing an icy Tamarac Lake with the intense glow of sunlight filtering through dense fog. This award was determined by public voting during Tamarac's Fall Festival and National Wildlife Refuge Week at the mall. Over 330 people voted.

According to Kensinger, he at first took over 40 pictures of the Lady Slipper, remarking they were just "OK." He continued down the road to shoot other photos but returned once more

in hopes of getting that perfect shot. "I'm laying in the ditch and it just starts pouring rain. I'm there, and I'm wet, and I just keep shooting. Because of the cloudiness, it got very dark and so the background got really dark and obviously the flower got wet. When I exposed it, I metered it to the white of the flower so it made everything else fade into the background."

Brian Basham, photographer for the Detroit Lakes Record, Gale Kaas, publisher of the Frazee Forum, and Joe Allen, professional photographer all returned for another year to judge the entries. The contest consists of five categories including Plant Life, Scenic, Nature's Abstracts, Recreation, and Wildlife.

Winning photos may be viewed on the Friends of Tamarac website at www. tamaracfriends.org and are on display at the refuge visitor center.

The Tamarac NWR Photo Contest recognizes outstanding amateur photography that showcases the wildlife, plant life and natural beauty of the refuge. The contest provides the refuge an opportunity to increase its photo collection, used to promote the refuge and its mission. All photos may be used in public presentations at the refuge and in local communities. may also be utilized in newspapers, brochures, exhibits, the refuge website, and Facebook page. Photos will also be exhibited during the year at local venues. The annual photo contest is sponsored by the Friends of Tamarac, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to facilitate activities and programs that interpret, protect and restore the natural and cultural resources of the refuge.

2014 WINNING PHOTOS

Grand: White Lady Slipper by Lee Kensinger **Refuge Manager's Choice:** Harebell by Dale Rehder **Friends of Tamarac Choice:** White Lady Slipper by Lee

People's Choice: Peace by Diane Turcotte

Wildlife:

1st: Scarlet Tanager by Dale Rehder

2nd: Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello and Michelangelo by

Barb Haberman

3rd: Majestic Flight by Dale Rehder

Plant Life:

1st: White Lady Slipper by Lee Kensinger

2nd: Glory! by Vivian Sazama 3rd: Red Columbine by Greg Stetz

Scenic:

1st: Dragonfly Sunset by David Baer

2nd: Autumn at Mitchell Bridge by Bob Bork

3rd: Pelicans in the Mist by Judith Bell

Nature's Abstracts:

1st: Musical Tunes by Diane Turcotte 2nd: Damsels in Caress by Judith Bell 3rd: Underwater Abstract by Noah Paul

Recreation:

1st: CPR (Catch, Photo, Release) by Diane Turcotte 2nd: Meanwhile, Back at the Cabins by Robyn Lapko 3rd: Family Watching Family by Denise Warweg

Youth: 12 years old and younger

1st: Beaver's Lunch by Emma Teiken

2nd: Inchworm Lunchtime by Nathalie Kennedy 3rd: Trumpet of the Swans by Lane Kennedy

Youth: 13-17 years old

1st: Pair of Swans with Babies by Jake Teiken

2nd: Tamarac by Cole Dinh

3rd: Underwater Shell by Stanley Alexander

PAGE 8 TAMARAC TRACKS



Diane Turcotte—Musical Tunes



Diane Turcotte—CPR (catch, photo, release)



Jake Teiken—Pair of swans with babies



Dale Rehder—Scarlet Tanager



Emma Teiken—Beaver's lunch



VOLUNTEER VIBES 2014 Highlights

- Welcome to those who joined our team in 2014: Les Perry, Darrel Bauder, Janet Bridgers, Wally Sizer, Terra Huff, Jim Rorah, Tim Kessler, Pat West, Michael West.
- Bill Wickum became part of our trail mowing team after attending Heavy Equipment-Tractor Training in June. Resident Volunteer John Hatch attended Chainsaw Training and was a great help in taking care of downed trees on roads and trails.
- Friends Naturalists Jeanine Ehnert, Cheryl Hall-Kippen and Connie Carlson presented Wild Wednesday activities to 110 visitors! Thanks for their time in preparing and presenting these programs for little ones 3-6 years old. Kudos to Connie for coordinating this program.
- Resident Volunteers John and Bridget Hatch and Judy Bell donated 1222 hours. They hosted the visitor center, stocked kiosks, cleaned restrooms, mowed, managed recycling, patrolled for purple loosestrife, conducted loon surveys, assisted with Environmental Education, and led wildlife excursions.
- Denis Mudderman, Connie Carlson, Cheryl Hall-Kippen, Nancy Moulden and Judy Bell teamed up to host a booth at the County Fair. Many families enjoyed the activities. It was a great way to promote the refuge, summer programs and volunteering.
- Cheers to AIS Team members Jim Dubay, Cathie Ferguson, Connie Carlson, Ken Mattson, Charlie Leitheiser, and Harry Halvorson for donating over 295 hours in educating the public on aquatic invasive species.
- Ron Jenson was named the 2014 Volunteer of the Year for his dedication to the refuge and its environmental education program.
- Over 60 volunteers participated in hosting the Fall Festival-Wolves and Wilderness braving cold temperatures and winds. Despite the weather, it was a great success because of you!
- Led by Wilderness Fellow Morgan Gantz, over 3500 white pines were bud-capped by Connie Carlson, Nancy Brennan, Denise Warweg, Ray Vlasak, Dave Gunderson, Ruth Bergquist, Darrel Bauder, Ken Mattson. Hurray for taking care of habitat!
- Congrats to our Volunteers of the Month: Nancy Brennan, Sandie Boyer, Ron Jenson, Cathie Ferguson, Vonnie Jacobson, Justine Boots and Connie Carlson.

JOIN OUR TEAM! If you are interested in volunteering at Tamarac, contact Janice Bengtson at Janice_Bengtson@fws.gov or 218-844-1756. Check www.tamaracfriends.org for specific job descriptions.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT – CONNIE CARLSON

Connie grew up in the farming community of Twin Valley. As a youngster, she spent many summers at the family cabin on White Earth Lake enjoying outdoor activities including swimming, water skiing and fishing. During her senior year, the family moved to Detroit Lakes where she graduated from high school. Connie then attended college at Moorhead State for two years. After marrying her husband Kent, they both studied at UND in Grand Forks and Washington State in Pullman. Kent obtained his Master's and Doctorate in math while Connie studied elementary education. They then moved to St. Cloud where she received her Master's from St. Cloud State and began her career as a preschool teacher. She continued to teach elementary grades in the Sauk Rapids area while Kent was a professor at the university. Connie and Kent raised four children during this time.

After 29 years of teaching, Connie and Kent retired and moved to Detroit Lakes. Since that time, Connie has been very active to say the least! For ten years, she volunteered as an adult education teacher--teaching English, helping students obtain their GED, and study for the American Citizenship test. Connie has traveled extensively with education as a focus. She taught English to children in China for four summers as part of the Global Language



Village through Concordia College. She also has made two mission trips to Jamaica to build a library and cafeteria. A trip to Mexico through Lion's Club provided eye exams and glasses to those in need. Connie has also visited Russia, explored most of Europe and has even floated the Nile River!

Connie began volunteering at Tamarac in 2007. She has been involved in many activities and projects including the Fall Festival, Holiday Open House, hosting the visitor center, coordinating and leading Wild Wednesdays, bud- capping trees, staffing outreach booths and more. But she is best known for leading Environmental Education activities. To kindergartners, she is the "puppet lady." Through use of puppets and songs, children learn about wildlife through the seasons. Connie enjoys working with children and watching them explore, discover, and experience nature. It's creating that "wonder" that is so rewarding. She also enjoys the variety of experiences the refuge has to offer and learning from other volunteers. Connie recently received the Regional Director's Award for 1000 hours of service. We are so fortunate to have Connie as part of the Tamarac family.

PAGE 10 TAMARAC TRACKS

MOVIES AND ACTIVITIES

January 18, 2:00 Snowshoe Adventure

Explore the nature of winter as you trek through the forests of Tamarac. Meet at the visitor center and carpool to location. Children's snowshoes are available. There is also a limited number of adult sizes available.

February 1, 2:00 Movie: Love in the Animal Kingdom

Animals dance, sing, flirt and compete with everything they've got to secure a mate. But are these important bonds love? Take a provocative look at the feminine wiles of a gorilla, the search for Mr. Right among a thousand flamingoes, the soap opera arrangements of gibbons and more. 50 min.

February 15, 2:00 pm Backcountry Ski Trek

Grab your skis, dress in layers and meet at the visitor center for this 4 mile tour. We will carpool to a special location based on snow conditions. Look for signs of wildlife and discover how they adapt to the extremes of a northern climate.

March 1, 2:00 Movie: North America – Outlaws and Skeletons

Tired of the cold? Take a trip to the desert! Explore 500,000 square miles of desert in North America's Southwest. In this parched land, water drives all life. From Utah's Great Salt Lake to the Gran Desierto of Mexico, plants and animals fight for survival using astounding adaptations.

March 15, 2:00 Movie: North America-Born to Be Wild

Take an extraordinary journey through North America and meet the incredible array of exotic wildlife that lives in our backyard. Through epic cinematography and compelling storytelling, we experience the struggle for survival in this land of extremes. 50 min. Wildlife includes grizzly bear, wolf, gray whale, cougar.

For more information on these free events contact refuge staff at 218-847-2641. For refuge information, contact the refuge at 218-847-2641 or visit http://www.fws.gov/refuge/tamarac. The Visitor Center is open Monday-Friday 8:00 - 4:00 and every 1st and 3rd Sunday from 10:00-5:00.

THE GREAT GREY OWL

by Steve Midthune

Imagine a creature that is able to sit on a branch 50 feet in the air and hear a rodent scurrying around beneath it under six inches of snow.

It then is able to locate that sound so accurately that it can dive down through the snow and capture its prey. Great Gray Owls do this all the time. This iconic owl of the north woods can hunt both during the day and during the night with most of its activity occurring around dawn and at dusk. Great Grey Owls have incredible eyesight, which allows them to hunt in low light, and their ears are structured in such a way that they can accurately pinpoint a sound from long distances.

This bird nests mostly in Canada and in higher elevations in the Rocky Mountains, but its range does include the northern edges of Minnesota. It feeds mostly on small rodents, especially the vole, which it catches and swallows whole. Periodically, when the population of voles declines, the Great Greys are forced to go further south in search

of food. The last "eruption" of this sort occurred in the Land of Sky Blue Waters in 2004/05. It was estimated that during that period 10,000 Great Greys traveled south from Canada into our state. Several of these owls were seen at Tamarac NWR that winter. Otherwise, Great Greys are a rare sighting at Tamarac.

The Great Grey Owl prefers habitat that includes dense conifer forest with adjacent meadows and bogs for hunting. It seldom builds its own nest, preferring to use an abandoned hawk or raven nest. The female incubates their 2 – 5 eggs while the male hunts and feeds both the female and the young until the young leave the nest. In some cases, the adult female departs after the young fledge while the male remains to feed them for another month or two. These birds can live up to 40 years in captivity, but in the wild their average life span is much shorter.

One place in Minnesota where Great Greys nest and can be seen on a fairly regular basis is the Sax-Zim Bog, north-



PHOTO BY WAYNE BRININGER

east of Duluth. Take a drive on Owl Avenue, and visit the new Welcome Center there. It is easier to see these owls during the winter months. It is well worth the trip to see this magnificent creature in its natural habitat.

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF TAMARAC NWR

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge 35704 County Highway 26 Rochert, MN 56578 www.tamaracfriends.org Phone: 218-844-1767

info@tamaracfriends.org
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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



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Diane Turcotte "Peace" People's Choice Award 2014 Tamarac Photo Contest