



FALL 2015
TAMARAC TRACKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF TAMARAC NWR

The Disappearing Monarch

page 5

Hunting is a Family Tradition

page 10



MOVING FORWARD

By Ron Jenson, President of the Board



The Friends of Tamarac wrapped up a busy summer with lots of volunteers working on many exciting projects. The newly completed Discovery Center attracted far more visitors to the refuge, tripling the number of young children and parents in the Wild Wednesday program and providing space for photo workshops and meetings. We will soon have over a thousand students using the Discovery Center as a hub for fall outdoor education activities. Now that the building is complete and in high demand the FOT Board has to carefully plan their next steps forward.

On September 8 board members attended a retreat to outline goals for the next six months to five years. During the retreat they identified three areas of concern: improve the operation of the gift shop, plan for consistent office help and plan for an education coordinator. The first priority is the gift shop since it is an important revenue stream to the Friends. A new gift shop committee formed to research the best way forward. Many other ideas were discussed about creatively tackling the need for more office help and an education coordinator. We also discussed new ways to connect with the community through wild edible workshops, summer camps for kids, photography workshops and more.

Our newest board member, Lee Kensinger, attended training at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia in August. Lee returned from training with ideas to share and also stated Friends of Tamarac has an excellent reputation on a national level with the Fish and Wildlife Service and other Friends' groups. This reputation has been built by hard work, dedication and a high level of cooperation among board members and between the board and the Fish & Wildlife Service. Plus, we know how to have fun while working!

The board will be recruiting new board members when current members' terms are up. Please let us know if you are interested in serving on a board that is a national model, active, motivated and fun-loving.



Become a Friend

Membership: \$20

Patron: \$100

Steward: \$250

Life Member: \$500



Friends of Tamarac NWR

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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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Term Expires

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 2017

Refuge Advisors to the Board

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

Neil_Powers@fws.gov 218-844-1752
Kelly_Blackledge@fws.gov 218-844-1757

Newsletter Committee

Vonnie Jacobson, Fran Mattson, Linda Brockmann, Justine Boots, Kelly Blackledge, Nancy Brennan, Janice Bengtson, Denise Warweg. 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 (jjacobson@arvig.net).

WELCOME

ALISHA HAKEN

Tamarac NWR staff are excited to welcome Alisha Haken who will be the new Deputy Refuge Manager. This position was formerly held by Todd Luke and has been vacant for three years. Alisha, also, is excited to join the Tamarac team. Her position will begin October 19. She is presently working in the Minneapolis area at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District.

Alisha grew up in this area graduating from Frazee-Vergas High School. She attended Vermillion Community College in Ely, MN for an A.S. degree in Wildlife Management, the University of MN-Crookston for her B.S. degree in Natural Resources Management and then received a Master's degree in Wildlife Science from South Dakota State University.

She has worked with the US Fish & Wildlife Service at the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District on a project harvesting prairie seeds, at Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge and Management Area on an intensive reptile and amphibian inventorying project. Presently, she has been immersed in prairie and wetland restoration and management. She has partnered with many groups such as Pheasants Forever, MN Pheasants Inc., and MN Waterfowl Association to get grant funds for habitat restoration. Alisha is excited about improving habitat for wildlife.

Alisha hopes to learn more about personnel management and the administrative pieces that build the foundation for a refuge to operate, while still being involved in habitat work. She and her husband love spending



time outdoors with their three dogs. Hunting is a favorite activity. Her family lives in the area and she is thrilled to get back to them and her two horses. In high school she participated in rodeo events and ran sled dogs. As she finalizes her work at Minnesota Valley NWR & WMD, she looks forward to her new roles at Tamarac, as well as getting acquainted with her new colleagues, volunteers and Friends.

FALL IS FRIENDS OF TAMARAC MEMBERSHIP TIME!

Please renew your membership now, or if you aren't a member this is the perfect time to join. To make it easy we have enclosed a membership envelope. You may also use this form to update your mailing or email address. The membership year runs from

October 1st to September 31st.

Membership dues pay for things like this terrific newsletter, nature hikes, photo hikes, Wild Wednesdays, Fall Festival and many, many other Friends activities. All these

wonderful programs would not happen without the support of Friends like you! Membership dues are only \$20, but please consider adding to your check so that we may add to our programs. Thank you.

WE FEST SPIRIT

by Fran Mattson



A huge thank you goes out to the forty volunteers that came forward to participate in the We Fest Clean-up fund raiser. This is the fourth year we have participated in this project. Volunteers demonstrated their commitment to The Friends of Tamarac mission as each one took on the clean-up process. The majority of this volunteer group is composed of retired individuals who excelled in their work lives because they have a strong work ethic, can see what needs to be done, and pitch in to do it. In 2014, this volunteer project raised over \$5,000. We don't know yet what this year's work will generate.

Four campgrounds and the performance "bowl" area were completed. There is a tremendous amount of spirit and comradery that takes place in the process of this project. Roses were presented to John and Vonnice Jacobson at the volunteer picnic as a small token of appreciation for their "spirit." They have worked every day of every year on this

clean-up project; they even spent their fifty-second anniversary working.

Workers are allowed to keep treasures found except for keys, wallets, and electronic devices. Random items such as a hula hoop, solar lights, relaxation beads, a camp stove, cash and coins have been known to go home with "pickers." Tents are commonly left. Many volunteers brought family or friends along, which helped our efforts. All the campgrounds we cleaned had some wooded areas and two were by water. There is real satisfaction seeing these areas return to natural beauty after 9,000 campers leave their sites.

We Fest employees use words of praise for the work that the Friends do. They continue to be pleased with a job well done. We were blessed with beautiful weather as we turned trash into treasure with our commitment to our cause.

SAVE MONARCHS LOCALLY

By Nancy Brennan

With all of the national concern about monarch populations, Tamarac NWR has stepped up its role to save monarchs locally, starting with education. Volunteer educator, Connie Carlson, presented a Wild Wednesday summer program that brought monarchs in focus for the very young. Children listened to the story Monarch

and Milkweed, made orange tissue paper butterflies and then flitted down the trail to find live milkweed plants growing near the Discovery Center. This fall hundreds of 3rd grade students will mimic monarch migration through a GPS exercise that will lead them on an imaginary journey from Minnesota to the mountains of Mexico. Students will learn that exactly how the monarchs navigate over 1,500 miles is still a scientific mystery! Another fun and educational opportunity that everyone is invited to experience is the Fall Festival, "Bees & Butterflies," which will be held at the refuge on Saturday, October 3 from 10 to 3p.m. The importance and wonder of butterflies and bees will come alive through

speakers, children's activities, music, dance and puppeteering. Participants will take home milkweed seeds to enhance their own yards for monarchs.

On a landscape scale, Tamarac NWR helps to protect monarchs by not using insecticides and maintaining about 20% grasslands within the refuge. The Friends of Tamarac also installed a Pollinator Garden on the south side of the Visitor Center that has over twenty plant species native to the area, including four kinds of milkweed. The garden is aflutter with bees and butterflies. Planting more milkweed and native plants is something we can all do to help save monarchs locally.



TICKETS FOR THE QUILT ARE AVAILABLE AT WHITE DRUG

"The
Sights and
Sounds of
Tamarac"

Raffle Quilt

2015



THE DISAPPEARING MONARCH

By Connie Carlson

Many people are unaware that in 2000, the Minnesota State Legislature adopted the monarch butterfly as the official Minnesota state butterfly. The large orange-and-black monarchs are easily one of the most recognizable butterflies and their regal colors have earned them their name. Unfortunately however, all is not well in the butterfly world. Once a common sight in the Midwest, monarchs may soon become just a memory and could disappear in our lifetime.

In the 1990's, there were an estimated 1 billion monarchs in North America, but now there are less than 35 million. Researchers are working hard to determine the cause(s) of this alarming decline and, at this point, primary contributors seem to be: a loss of milkweed plants which are necessary for monarch caterpillars to grow and develop; continuing weather anomalies; an expanding use of insecticides and herbicides, and a general loss of habitat.

Each summer, from states east of the Rocky Mountains including Minnesota, several generations of monarchs are produced and in mid - September, survivors migrate to a remote mountain area in central Mexico

where they spend the winter in a state of semi-hibernation. States west of the Rockies experience a similar migration, but to a number of locations along the California coast. Unfortunately, many of the monarchs' winter destinations are no longer the safe havens they once were. Monarchs, for example, occupied some fifty Mexican forest acres in 1996, but this past winter they were found on less than two acres. In this situation, illegal logging seems to be playing a significant role.

So what, specifically, can be done to improve prospects for our royal state butterfly? First, we must recognize how critical a healthy population of milkweed plants is to the monarch. High crop prices have recently motivated farmers to put more land into production which has resulted in the destruction of many milkweed stands. But here, we may have good news. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recently pledged \$3.2 million in a public-private partnership to protect the monarch by restoring habitat, focusing on an area of the U.S. between Texas and Minnesota, through which the butterflies migrate annually. This fund will support schoolyard habitats, pollinator



gardens and give grants to landowners who will work to conserve areas where milkweed plants grow. Tamarac NWR is joining the effort to increase our monarch population via education, creating habitat, and supporting conservation efforts.

CALLED TO DUTY



Many US Fish & Willdife Service staff have been called to assist with over 65 wildfires in the western states. Four Tamarac staff members, Gina Kemper (pictured), Kurt Svendsgaard, Tom Franklin and Wayne Brininger, have been on fire details in the state of Washington.

DISCOVERY CENTER IN ACTION

by Fran Mattson

The new Discovery Center has already become so beneficial. Before the grand opening, it had already been put to use by school groups and the Bird Festival birders. The day after the grand opening a family photography class took place within its domain. The Girls and Boys Club has taken advantage of the educational nature programs bringing out groups of children in their bus at least three times. The White Earth Tribal Council met with the Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss wolf management in the Discovery Center. The amphitheater, hiking trail, and indoor space have proven to be ideal for a variety of uses.

Wild Wednesdays, an exciting family opportunity at the refuge has grown greatly this summer with the move to the Discovery Center area. Last summer small numbers of young children, parents, and grandparents attended these programs at the Chippewa site. This year attendance has grown to as many as 37 children and 25 adults on a given Wednesday. With bigger sized groups, they have been divided to better facilitate the program.

One leader, Pamela Longtine, brought out her violin and had cherubs dancing around like hummingbirds. A typical program includes information focusing on a given topic, a story, a craft project, and a short walk in the woods. Some of the topics included owls, frogs, trees, turtles, bears, porcupines, and dragonflies. This year's leaders included Connie Carlson, Denise Warweg, Jeanine Ehnert, Pamela Longtine, James Kawlewski, Luverne Ehnert and Nancy Brennan.

As the variety of uses expand for our Discovery Center, we are filled with gratitude for all the generosity that made this building truly come to life. Whether the families are inside or outside of this beautiful building, they are surrounded by the views of our Minnesota forest and wetlands and one only hopes that the seeds are planted in terms of appreciating and protecting that environment.





Meet Volunteer James Kawlewksi

By Susan Wilson

You don't have to have gray hair to be a volunteer. Since James Kawlewski came to Tamarac in early July, he has helped with the Wild Wednesday kids' summer programs, bud capping pine trees, and the fall festival. An ecology/evolutionary biology graduate of Minnesota State University Moorhead, James is assisting the Buffalo River prairie restoration project while searching for a job in his field. Mixing his interest in photography with his love of wildlife he hopes someday to write children's books about nature and eventually to start a native plant seed company. He is currently writing a photo field guide to native grasses, and is considering a master's degree in natural resources or ecological systems. James is a wonderful asset to Tamarac Refuge and brings a new perspective to many program areas.



VOLUNTEERS WANTED:

- **Environmental Education Assistants/Leaders** - lead or assist with 25-45 minute activities for kindergartners and third graders. Also looking to cover for winter session which occurs in February. Join our fun team and make a difference in a child's life.
- **Visitor Center Hosts** -welcome visitors, open or close visitor center, retail sales. Fall is a very busy time with students here for environmental education and visitors coming for the fall color. We need hosts for weekend days as well through mid- October. To accommodate our winter visitor center hours, hosts will be needed afternoons on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month beginning in November. Shifts are 4 hours.
- **Maintenance Assistants**- cover fall projects which may include mowing lake accesses and interpretive sites, sign and gate maintenance.
- **Maintenance Volunteer Coordinator**- Working with our maintenance staff, coordinate projects for maintenance volunteers. This position would require 20-25 hours/week (May through October) and would include recruiting for specific projects, scheduling volunteers, getting materials ready for the project and reporting back to staff. Duties would also include assignments which may include mowing and running errands.



Volunteer Picnic 2015

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



Connie Carlson was presented with Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge's 2015 Volunteer of the Year Award. Connie began volunteering in 2007 as a visitor center host.

Over the years, she has helped plan and staff events including Tamarac's Annual Fall Festival, the Holiday Open House, Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds, Tamarac's "Nature Nerd" activity booth at the county fair and more. Being a retired teacher, she soon became part of the refuge's environmental education team. Her creativity in developing meaningful activities is so much appreciated. To local kindergartners, she is known as the "puppet lady." Connie has taken advantage of every training opportunity offered. She has even sought out training on her own to become more knowledgeable about wildlife and to gain

skills in interpretation. She is a certified Minnesota Master Naturalist. As part of Tamarac's volunteer naturalist team, she has led public interpretive programs. She has also presented activities for Boys and Girls Club, home school students and Head Start children. In 2014, she became Tamarac's "Wild Wednesdays" coordinator. This summer program, geared for preschoolers ages 3-6, allows children to explore nature through stories, hikes, crafts and music. Wild Wednesdays flew to new heights this summer with over 350 children and adults attending! Carlson donated over 500 hours of service to the refuge this past year and has accumulated over 1900 hours.

Volunteers Celebrate Accomplishments

This year, volunteers attended a more traditional themed picnic in our new Discovery Center. As volunteers walked the pathway, they were thanked by Tamarac's many wild critters for taking care of their home. The center was decorated with red and white gingham tablecloths, bright summer flowers and monarchs for inspiration. Dinner was catered by Destination Dining (Spanky's) and was delicious! 70 volunteers, staff and family attended. Refuge manager Neil Powers welcomed everyone and highlighted special accomplishments from

the past year. Awards were presented to those volunteers who had reached key milestones. Mark Geihl, Denise Warweg, Sandie Boyer, Susan Wilson and Ken Mattson all received the Assistant Regional Director's Award for 500 hours of service. Lois Brantner and Del Bergseth received the Regional Director's Award for 1000 hours of service. 2014 Volunteer of the Year, Ron Jenson presented this year's award to Connie Carlson.

various areas including maintenance, wildlife and habitat projects, public programs and events, environmental education, cultural resources and more. Nationwide nearly 42,000 volunteers contribute in excess of 1.5 million hours completing more than 20% of the work conducted annually on national wildlife refuges. If you are interested in sharing your time and talents in support of conservation, contact volunteer coordinator, Janice Bengtson at Janice_Bengtson@fws.gov or 218-844-1756.

In 2015, Tamarac's 175 volunteers contributed over 9500 hours of service in

25 hours:
 Wally Sizer
 Nancy Henke
 Mary Meyer
 Lee Kensinger
 Margaret Kragerud
 James Kawlewski
 Pamela Longtine

100 hours:
 Janet Bridgers
 Bob Brockmann
 Bill Wickum

200
 Joy Nyberg
 Kathy Smith
 Howard Lohman
 Cheryl Hall-Kippen
 Leslie Holen

Arlene Furuseth
 John Boots
 Sue Braun
300
 Jim DuBay
400
 Dave Schneider
 (300,400)

500
 Mark Geihl
 Denise Warweg (300,
 400)

600
 Sandie Boyer (500)
 Susan Wilson (500)
 Justine Boots

700
 Cathie Ferguson (600)
 Ken Mattson (500, 600)
 Ken Wilson (600)

800
 Luverne Ehnert

900
 Jeanine Ehnert
 Betty Gunderson (800)

1000
 Lois Brantner
 Del Bergseth

2000
 John Jacobson

6000
 Ron Jenson (5000)

11,000
 Denis Mudderman

2015 Volunteers of the Month
 October –
 Connie Carlson
 November –
 John Jacobson
 December –
 Steve Midthune
 January –
 Nancy Brennan
 February –
 Dave Schneider
 March- Denise Warweg
 April- Mark Geihl
 May – Fran Mattson

June- Ken Mattson
 July – Luverne Ehnert

National Recreation Pass
 Cheryl Hall-Kippen (has accumulated 250 hrs)

Donated 250 hrs in 2015:
 Joy Nyberg, Kathy Smith, Ken Wilson, Susan Wilson, John Jacobson, Ron Jenson, Denise Warweg, Connie Carlson, Denis Mudderman

Hunting is a Family Tradition

by Denise Warweg

It's autumn, and hunting becomes the theme. All things are planned around openers and youth hunts. You shouldn't be having weddings or babies during hunting season! (But sometimes it just happens.) Hunting is pure passion around our house. There is scouting to be done, guns and ammunition to get ready, and the camo to get dusted off and ready to go. Also, we practice duck calls and shooting clay pigeons. The rifles and bows will soon follow for deer season and all of the gear for that.

More important than the food that hunting provides, it becomes a time to bond out in nature with family and friends. It provides experiences and stories to be shared (over and over again). Remember the time.....

I am probably the first female in our family to hunt with the boys. I began shooting when our boys were learning to shoot. Pretty soon, I was shooting as well as they were, and sometimes I would beat them at a game of Annie Oakley. I finally got the invitation to join them on a hunt. I didn't get the fancy hunting clothes like they had. I



Pictured are Owen, Wyatt, and PaPa Warweg

wore camo pajama bottoms, cut off waders, a camo sweatshirt and hat. They sat me on a bog-- on a two by four-- on a bucket with a gun. I was a sight to behold, and this became the retold story of years gone by.

Everyone should buy a duck stamp even if you don't hunt. The duck stamp funds help protect wetland habitat in the Refuge System. Hope you have an awesome and safe season, fun memories, bonding, and many stories to tell for years to come.

THANK YOU

to all the generous volunteers and businesses that donated time and treasure to make "A Toast to Tamarac" a great success. This is our 5th annual fund raiser to support our mission of connecting children with nature. Board members and refuge staff truly appreciate your support.



MOVIES AND ACTIVITIES

Saturday, September 26, 8:30-11:30am & 1-4pm

National Public Lands Day – Save the Seedlings!

Over 15,000 pine trees have been planted on the refuge to restore acres of red, white & jack pine habitat. We need your help to protect the trees from deer browse. Wear long pants, sturdy shoes, and bring water for a morning or afternoon in the field making a difference for wildlife. Or bring a lunch and stay for the day! Join our fun crew for bud capping trees of Tamarac.

Sunday September 27, 2:00 pm

Movie: Beavers, the Biggest Dam Movie You Ever Saw!

Take an intimate swim with beavers and experience the rich aquatic habitat of one of nature's greatest engineers. 38 min.

Saturday October 3, 10:00- 3:00 pm
Tamarac Fall Festival

Spend a beautiful fall day on the refuge and celebrate Bees and Butterflies. Discover their importance in the ecosystem, learn what conservation efforts are being made and how you make a difference. This grand event is perfect for the whole family. There are children's activities, hiking, annual photo contest exhibit, artist in action, live music, guided bus tours and more! All activities are Free! Lunch will be available for sale by the Friends of Tamarac.

Sunday October 4, 2:00 pm

Movie: Planet Earth, Seasonal Forests

Investigate temperate regions and find some of the most elusive creatures and well-adapted plant life on earth. From the giant sequoia to the Siberian forests, Forests bring to life a seemingly familiar world that remains largely unexplored. 55 min.

Sunday October 11, 2:00 pm

Movie: An Original Duckumentary

Ducks waddle, glide, dive, dabble and their feathers shimmer with dazzling hues. Take to the skies with a flock of green-winged teal. Watch wood ducks raise a family. Learn why goldeneyes head north in the winter. 50 min.

National Wildlife Refuge Week October 12-18.

Visit the Detroit Lakes Washington Square Mall to see all the photo contest entries on display. Cast your vote for People's Choice! You'll also be able to purchase a chance on the beautiful quilt featuring a loon and other wildlife, created by Denise Warweg that the Friends of Tamarac are offering as a raffle fundraiser.

Thursday, October 15 – 8:30-11:30am & 1-4pm

Save the Seedlings!

Be a forester for a day and join the bud capping crew. We need your help to protect the newly planted pine trees from deer browse. Wear long pants, sturdy shoes, and bring water for a morning or afternoon in the field making a difference for wildlife habitat. Or bring a lunch and stay for the day!



Sunday October 18, 2:00 pm

Photo Contest Awards Presentation at the Washington Square Mall.

Ribbons and prizes will be awarded to the winners as well as honorable mentions. The Friends of Tamarac will also announce the winner of the Annual Quilt Drawing.



VISITOR CENTER IS OPEN

7 days a week through October 18.

Visitor Center

Winter Hours- October 24- May15:

Monday – Friday - 8:00am-4:00pm

1st & 3rd Sundays – 10:00am-5:00pm

**NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS
OF TAMARAC NWR**

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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



PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
DETROIT LAKES,
MN
56501
PERMIT NO. 707



Save the Date of Saturday, October 3 to learn more about our pollinator pals at the Tamarac Fall Festival as we celebrate Bees and Butterflies. (Photo by Lee Kensinger)