



WINTER 2018

TAMARAC TRACKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF TAMARAC NWR



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Photo by Dave Baer "Highway to Heaven"

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS!

By Lee Kensinger

The Friends of Tamarac have helping to connect people with nature for twenty-five years! The current Friends of Tamarac evolved from the Tamarac Interpretive Association. The Tamarac Interpretive Association began with a small group of concerned, committed and forward-looking people. I doubt they could have imagined how much the organization would achieve, but their ideas started us on the first steps down the path of success.

Today as you journey around the refuge you will see, and hopefully benefit from projects such as the Blackbird Lake observation deck. Projects funded and built by you, the Friends of Tamarac. The most obvious and successful project, the creation of the Discovery Center, shows how much can be accomplished by the commitment and generosity of our members during the first twenty-five years of being Friends.

In 2017 we have concentrated on a few goals which we believe will prepare the Friends for our future. We have laid much of the ground work toward hiring a permanent employee. As we have grown, it has become apparent that we need someone to be available to handle and coordinate the day to day business of the Friends. We are hoping to find the right person for the job in early 2018. The other big goal that we committed ourselves to, was paying off the final debt that we incurred when we built the

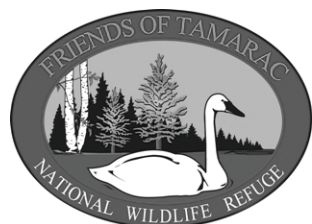
Discovery Center. I am happy to report that as of November 17, 2017, the Friends of Tamarac have retired that debt.

I have been very fortunate to have been able to know, and work with the board of directors of Friends of Tamarac. They are truly a wonderful group of people. They have spent countless hours working on behalf of our members and the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. Their dedication to their volunteer work is remarkable. Board members, THANK YOU! (yes, that's all the pay you get)

The FOT board will be making many changes in 2018. Vonnie, John, Fran, Linda, Bill, and Cathy will be retiring from the current board. These people have contributed so very much to the success of the Friends. They will be missed!

Thanks to all of you who have helped, and will help, in bringing nature and our beautiful refuge to the public, though your commitment to the Friends of Tamarac!

In the same way that the ideas of the Tamarac Interpretive Association built the Friends of Tamarac, I believe the innovative ideas and visions of our next board of directors will build on, and expand, the Friends into it's next unimaginably successful twenty-five years.



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

Become a Friend

Membership: \$25

Patron: \$100

Steward: \$250

Life Member: \$500



First Board of Directors: Betsy Benke, Frank Greenough, Nancy Moulden, By Kinkade

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

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	Term Expires
Detroit Lakes, MN	2018
Rochert, MN	2020
Ogema, MN	2019
Detroit Lakes	2020
Detroit Lakes, MN	2018
Detroit Lakes, MN	2018
Callaway, MN	2019
Detroit Lakes, MN	2019
Detroit Lakes, MN	2020
Frazee, MN	2020
Detroit Lakes, MN	2020

Refuge Advisors to the Board

Neil Powers, Tamarac Refuge Manager	Neil_Powers@fws.gov	218-844-1752
Kelly Blackledge, Tamarac Visitor Services	Kelly_Blackledge@fws.gov	218-844-1757

Newsletter Committee

Vonnie Jacobson, Fran Mattson, Linda Brockmann, Justine Boots, Kelly Blackledge, Nancy Brennan, Janice Bengston, Terry Krile, 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).

ICE FISHING FUN

By Neil Powers, Tamarac Refuge Manager

With the refuge firmly in winter's grasp, fishing enthusiasts are dusting off their augers and swapping out their summer fishing poles for shorter winter versions. I don't remember the first time I went ice fishing but I would assume, much like my other outdoor experiences, that it was very formative and helped cement my connection with the outdoors.

I've always enjoyed ice fishing, even when it's really cold. There's something mesmerizing and calming about watching a bobber make subtle movements around an ice hole followed by the excitement of seeing a bite and the slow, downward movement of your bobber as it disappears below the ice. Fish on!

Ice fishing is another great way to introduce youngsters to the outdoors. As a father, I shared my interest in ice fishing with my children when they were just old enough to keep up. I learned quickly that the ingredients to a successful outing are: keep your children warm, bring lots of snacks and always have an extra pair of socks, because sooner or later, someone is going to step into an open hole and get a wet foot. I've entertained the idea that this may be some unwritten writ of passage to becoming a fully-fledged ice angler, or so it seems.

Ice fishing is a family tradition, and I still relish my children's gentle jabs about how they often caught several fish before I had a chance



to get my line in the water or how they often caught more fish than I did. What they didn't realize was that they were making their own connection with the outdoors and memories that will hopefully last their lifetime.

Tamarac NWR offers exceptional ice fishing opportunities and complements the abundant "hard-water" angling found throughout Minnesota's lakes. When considering an ice fishing adventure, keep it simple and always remember to bring along a youngster or two.

Friends of Tamarac LIFETIME MEMBERS

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George and Shirley Read
Blace and Myrna Schmidt
Jim & Deanna Sinclair
Jim & Michelle Snyder
Ray and Lynette Vlasak



Karen Stenberg of the North County Trail's Laurentian Lakes Chapter led a group of hikers on a hearty hike from Blackbird Lake to the cabin site.



The enthusiasm of the presenters in the Wetland Adventures puppet show was contagious. The amazing puppet show cast of puppeteers and readers included Janet Bridgers, James Kawlewski, Ale Vogt, and Don Bridgers.

2017 TOAST TO TAMARAC/FALL FESTIVAL

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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 Native Harvest
 Norby's
 Norseman Motors
 OK Lumber & Hardware
 Olivieri's
 Papa Murphy's
 Perkins Family Restaurant
 R & G Subaru
 Red Pine Quilt Shop
 Richwood Store (Pete Johnson)

Richwood Winery
 Roasted Pub & Eatery
 Scheels of Fargo
 Seven Sisters Spirits
 Shearer's Snacks
 Sinclair Service Station
 Subway
 Sunlite Bar & Grill
 Tamarac Gift Shop
 Thrifty White Drug
 Trader Joe's
 Ulmer Stoneware
 Utke's Country Furnishings
 Walmart
 West River Dental
 Zorbaz



Jared House, aka the Babbling Biologist, shared his passion of aquatic insect water quality indicators with visitors at the Fall Festival.



The talented playwright Carol Anne Hough modified her play into a puppet show for the Fall Festival. It was big hit!



The 2017 Tamarac Quilt, "Duck, Duck, Geese" was won by Kathleen Muscatell of Cotton Lake. The winner of the quilt, created by Julie Warweg, was announced at the Photo Contest Award ceremony.



Friends of Tamarac President Jim Sinclair with Cyndi Anderson.

REMEMBERING A FRIEND

Cyndi Anderson made a difference at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. With compassion and expertise she helped guide the growth of the Friends of Tamarac which has made a profound impact on the capacity of the Friends to assist the refuge with protecting habitat for wildlife and inspiring people to be good stewards of our natural resources. Cyndi was always a good friend to Tamarac Refuge and supported our work in many ways. She was especially fond of

the outdoor education programming for youth. She was instrumental in helping us kick off the fundraising efforts for the Tamarac Discovery Center and was always at the ready for advice and celebration to keep us going. Cyndi Anderson passed away in January. Cyndi's kind heart will be missed, but she leaves a legacy of strength and encouragement that will be felt for decades.



Over 700 students participate in the Partner Schools program and explore the refuge through the seasons coming 3 times each year. Photo by Lee Kensing.



3rd Graders put on snowshoes and were guided by Dave Schneider out on Jim's Marsh to get a close up look at an active beaver lodge. Photo by Lee Kensing.



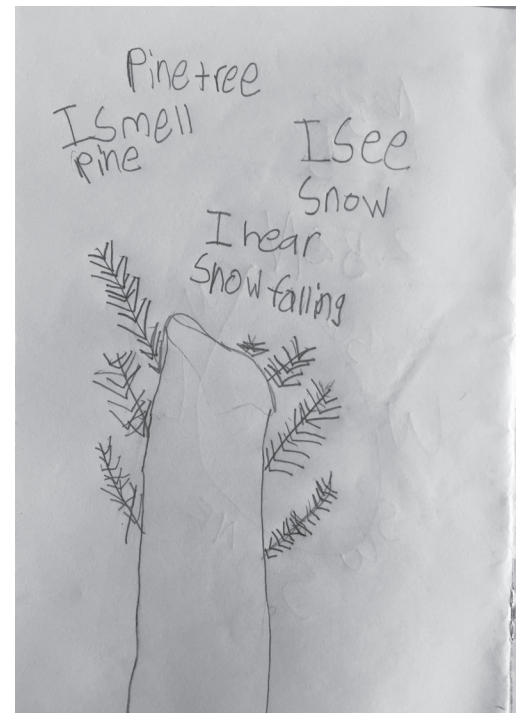
Students take a few moments each time they come to the refuge to reflect on nature and make a journal entry. Photo by Lee Kensing.



Students watched a volunteer, Pete Olson, auger a hole on Tamarac Lake and measured the ice depth- 19 inches! They measured an average snow depth and determined how much liquid was in a gallon of snow - 5 1/2 cups. Photo by Kathy Coyle.



Volunteer Nancy Jacobson and Ranger Tina Pierce explained how to recognize different wildlife tracks by first identifying if the tracks were left by animals that hop, walk, or waddle. Photo by Kathy Coyle.



Third grader, Grace, sat quietly wondering about nature and created this journal entry.

WHY I LOVE TO VOLUNTEER WITH TAMARAC'S EE PROGRAM

By Terry Krile

In September, the Environmental Education program began its 10th year. Local schools (primarily Kindergarten and 3rd grades) partner with the refuge for a day of activities learning about wildlife. The program runs three times a year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) so that the kids can get a chance to see the refuge and what happens during each season. Since there are several dozen classes involved, there are many days when volunteers are needed. This year it looked like we didn't have any volunteers; we were at risk of having to cancel some of the sessions! Since I was newly retired, it was an easy decision for me to volunteer and learn more about how the program works. I enlisted a good friend to help out, as well.

The experience was AMAZING! Before the buses arrived, we helped the instructors to get the stations ready. When the buses came, the kids would climb out just thrilled to be outside. I remember clearly hearing one boy yell out, "This is going to be the BEST DAY OF MY LIFE!" We would help the teachers line them up to get their backpacks, journals, clipboards, and pencils, and then on to the adventures! I helped Dave with the Cache Walk. We walked through the forest where we had set up stations for five different animals and talked about how they stored food for the winter. The kids then hunted for the 'cache' of food that the animals had hidden. They were so excited to find the seeds, nuts, acorns, and other treats we had placed for them to find. Then on to other stations

where they learned how to use a compass, how things decompose, what it takes for animals to hibernate in the winter, and just to sit and listen to nature. I heard many kids say that it was the first time they were ever in a forest. I found that to be sad, but I was so thankful that I could be part of their experience.

The kids were always full of questions and wonder, and at times they were very smart and learned very fast. One definitely needs to keep up with them. I really have a newfound respect for teachers!! At the end of the last day, I was pulling up the signs, and a few of the kids stayed behind to help me. We caught up with the rest of the groups, and everyone dropped off their backpacks, clipboards, journals, and pencils in the assigned bins. We had five classes that day so all the kids were lining up to get ready to get on the bus again. One little girl, who had helped me with the signs, came running all the way back from the line and gave me a big hug before she ran back to the bus. That made my day! That's what it's all about!

Meet Jason Shell

I studied administration as part of the last graduating class at Administrative Training Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Del Mar. After graduating, I served as an administrative clerk for 1st Combat Support Group, 3rd Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan and then Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters Marine Corps (Division of Public Affairs, Media Department), Washington, D.C..

Upon being honorably discharged, I returned to my home state of Florida and began working for the law firm Frese, Whitehead, Anderson, Anderson, & Heuston, P.A. as one of their administrative clerks. After a combined seven plus years in administration, I left the law firm and began focusing on academics.

With a love for learning and the GI Bill in hand, I began studying at Eastern Florida State College where I earned my Associate's degree. Enrollments at the University of Florida and the University of Central Florida followed, which covered the subjects of Microbiology, Computer Science, and Digital Media. After an attempt at entrepreneurship as a web developer, I was offered an opportunity to pursue accounting from two small CPA firms.

At Motty CPA, P.A., I was exposed to a variety of accounting, administrative and IT tasks which brought to light how strong my aptitude and interest is for the profession. My time at FPT Ser-



Jason Shell is the new Administrative Technician at Tamarac Refuge. Originally from Florida, this is his first full winter. Jason is keeping up with the 3rd graders on his first snowshoeing adventure.

VICES, CPAs solidified my interest and reinforced how important the team is in accomplishing the overall goals of an organization.

Outside of work, I can be found tinkering with different mobile app ideas, volunteering as a youth sports coach, or learning a subset of finance; options, futures and other derivatives.



OTTERS

With much patience, local photographer Robb Larson caught this otter resting upon the ice of the Otter Tail River on the refuge. River Otters are active year round and generally feed on smaller fish like perch or sunfish. They also eat crustaceans and frogs. Otter can be 4 to 5 feet long including the tail and weigh upwards of 30 pounds, however 15 to 20 pounds is more common. Watch for otters where there's even a little open running water.



FWS Employee 2017 Sense of Wonder Honors

Kelly Blackledge, visitor services manager, Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, Minnesota, wins Regional 2017 Sense of Wonder Honors for leading a partnership of volunteers, community groups, schools and Friends volunteers in the design and construction of the *Tamarac Discovery Center*.

The annual Sense of Wonder awards honor U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees who have “designed, implemented, or shown visionary leadership in an interpretive or environmental education program that fosters a sense of wonder and enhances public stewardship of our wildlife heritage.”

Congratulations Kelly on a well deserved honor!

TAMARAC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST 2017 PHOTO AWARDS

GRAND PRIZE: SWAN FAMILY – ALAN TURCOTTE - WILDLIFE

Manager's Choice

Highway to Heaven - *Dave Baer*

Refuge Friend's Choice

Highway to Heaven - *Dave Baer*

People's Choice

Highway to Heaven - *Dave Baer*

Wildlife: Live birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects in their natural habitat.

First Place

Swan Family- *Alan Turcotte*

Second Place

Pleats Please - *Robb Larson*

Third Place

Bug Eyes - *Robb Larson*

Honorable Mentions: I Otta be by Mom – *Kristie Yliniemi*, Two Spotted Bumble Bee - *Rodney Ludwig*, Painted Lady – *Rodney Ludwig*

Plant Life: Trees, shrubs, grasses, flowers, mushrooms, and other flora in their natural habitat.

First Place

June Columbine - *Dave Baer*

Second Place

Tail of the Marsh - *Lee Kensinger*

Third Place

Woodland Fantasy - *Kathy Anderson*

Honorable Mentions: Blue Flag- *Greg Stetz*, Fungus & New Growth – *Kathy Anderson*

Scenic: Landscapes and scenic vistas.

First Place

A Fresh Day - *Lee Kensinger*

Second Place

Highway to Heaven - *Dave Baer*

Third Place

Tranquil Seclusion - *Greg Stetz*

Honorable Mentions: Rain on the Way – *Richard Lambert*, Peaceful Dreams – *Dave Baer*

Nature's Abstracts: Images of nature's shapes, colors and patterns, a creative category revealing the art in nature.

First Place

Fall Colors - *Rodney Ludwig*

Second Place

Crazy Sweet - *Lee Kensinger*

Third Place

Dragon Mosaic- *Robb Larson*

Honorable Mentions: Winter Composition – *Rob Larson*

Recreation: People enjoying the recreational opportunities on the refuge.

First Place

Peaceful Paddle - *Kristie Yliniemi*

Second Place

Manoominike - *Lee Kensinger*

Third Place

Hiking the NCT - *Robb Larson*

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge Photography Contest is sponsored by Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. Contest judges were Paula Quam (Editor, Photographer, Detroit Lakes News-papers), and Hans Gilsdorf (Renowned local artist and occasional kilt wearer) and Dr. Robert McCamy (Photographer, Wood Carver and Doctor of Optometry at Jerry's Optical.

YOUTH DIVISION

Nature's Abstracts

1st

The Wooden Wave
Jocelyn Frazee-Jimenez

Honorable Mention
A Milkweed's Dream
Kris Wilkins

Honorable Mention
Eye
Destiny Martin

Plant Life

1st

Alien
Destiny Martin

Honorable Mention
The Amethyst Mushroom
Kris Wilkins

Honorable Mention
Drawn Berry
Destiny Martin

Honorable Mention
Flower with Red Tips
Nevaeh Lee

Recreation

1st

The Stove
Brendon Sander

Honorable Mention
Crocs by the Rocks
Sady Swiers

Scenic
1st
On the Road Again
Victor Jimenez

Honorable Mention
Shady Forest
Kaitlyn Kymberlee Forehand

Honorable Mention
Nature's View
Kaitlyn Kymberlee Forehand

Wildlife

1st

Mr. Caterpillar
Avery Browen

Honorable Mention
Squirrel in a Tree
Nevaeh Lee

Honorable Mention
Swan in the Water
Nevaeh Lee

Youth Participation Awards: *Ginger Garcia Ortiz, Mark Carlson, Tristan Stone, Jasmine Wilkins, Emily Welte, Lilah Price, Hunter Noel, Olivia Clark Burnette*



Photographer Alan Turcotte holds the Grand Prize winning metal print "Swan Family" with Tamarac Refuge Manager Neil Powers.



"Peaceful Paddle" by Kristi Yliniemi wins 1st Place in Recreation category.



"June Columbine" by Dave Baer wins 1st Place in the Plants category



"The Wooden Wave" by Jocelyn Frazee-Jimenez wins 1st Place in Youth Division of Nature's Abstracts.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE TURCOTTES

by Vonnie Jacobson

Just sit down for a cup of coffee with the Turcottes, and you quickly find out why they both produce such stunning photos for Tamarac's Annual Photo Contest. They have a relationship with Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge that is so close, not only in proximity to their home, but also their hearts. They are frequently found scouting favorite locations in all seasons to find that perfect shot. They say that they either go out all the time or not at all. The funny thing is that their favorite photos are a hap-

py collision of many factors. For instance, the swan family photo and the 2018 Best Wildlife and the Judges' Grand Champion, was taken when they stopped the car and spotted a swan family next to the road. Allen grabbed the camera expecting the family to move into the water as he walked closer, but they just waited for him to get that iconic Tamarac photo with the lake in the background. Another award winning photo, taken by Diane, was caught when they were out fishing, as their boat's motor

lost power and they had a late long and slow ride across the lake by trolling motor power. Just as Diane was taking a lovely sunset photo, the boat bumped and swung around just right placing Allen, who was pulling a nice fish out of the water, in the middle of her award winning photo. The Turcottes' best date night is a drive around Tamarac enjoying and photographing the great view.

FRIENDS OF TAMARAC

2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Another successful fall festival event “Healthy Habitat” had about 375 in attendance. It had events carried out at the cabin site, Visitors Center and at the Discovery Center.
- We hosted the seventh annual “Toast to Tamarac” fundraising event which included wine tasting, appetizers, games, and, a silent auction with over 200 in attendance.
- The Aquatic Invasive Species team of 9 inspected 138 boats and trailers while striving to better educate 288 fishermen on the dangers of spreading AIS.
- Worked with North Country trail volunteers to maintain and clear the 14.5 miles of NCT that runs through the refuge
- Friends assisted staff with water quality monitoring on refuge lakes.
- Assisted staff with completing a variety of wildlife surveys including loon, tern, duck and drumming grouse counts.
- We participated in two on-line giving programs, Give to the Max and Giving Hearts.
- Additional funds were raised through a Dilly Bar Sales event and a quilt raffle.
- A number of photo workshops were held with a particular focus on promoting this type of outdoor activity with youth.
- Friends sponsored another successful photo contest with 120 entries (54 from youth), A photo display was exhibited in the Washington Square Mall during National Wildlife Refuge Week and awards were presented.
- Quarterly newsletters were developed and sent to continue making connections in the communities touched by Tamarac.
- Webpage and Facebook representation were continued to increase connections with the public.
- Friends co-sponsored the 2017 Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds.
- Friends continued to help refuge with school groups, interpretive programs, plant hikes, the citizen science program, and photo safaris.



**Thanks for showing the love for the
Friends of Tamarac on
Giving Hearts Day!**

MOVIES AND ACTIVITIES

Don't let the winter blues get you down. Come out and enjoy Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge! Winter can bring some of the best wildlife watching. With leaves off the trees you can see deeper into the forest and the snow pack absorbs sound making listening for wildlife crisp and clear. Each fresh snowfall creates new opportunities to explore the tracks left by the wild travelers of the refuge. Explore on cross-country skis, snow shoes, boots or just take a drive.

Cross-Country Ski Trails:

The Tamarac Loop trail is a two mile loop that will take you through a field, among the oak-maple forest and along the shores of Tamarac Lake. The Pine Lake loop is nearly 6 miles and will guide you around Pine Lake with spectacular views. Both trails are generally even terrain with a few short hills to keep your trek interesting. Parking is available at the trail head along County Hwy 29 about 3 miles south of the visitor center. These trails are occasionally groomed by a volunteer.



Winter Fishing: Ice fishing is allowed on North Tamarac, Two Island, Wauboose and Pine Lakes. Accesses to these lakes are minimally maintained. Vehicles are not permitted on the ice. Please note that ice shelters may not be left overnight.

February 18- 2:00

Disney Nature: Bears

Showcasing a year in the life of a bear family, their journey begins as winter ends. Emerging from hibernation, a mother and cubs face the bitter cold and an exciting but very risky outside world. Astonishing footage captures the fast-moving action and suspense of an endearing family learning to live life to its fullest in the wilds of Alaska. 78 min

March 4- 1:00 Snowshoe Hike

Explore the winter woods on snow shoes. We'll identify wildlife tracks, watch for porcupine and look for snow fleas. Dress warm and meet at the Visitor Center for this one mile trek through the woods on the Bear Paw Spur Trail. Bring your own or borrow a set. Only a few adult snow shoes are available, lots of kid's sizes. This hike is co-hosted with the Laurentian Lakes Chapter of the North Country National Scenic Trail.

March 4- 2:00 Birds of the Gods

Tired of the cold? Escape to the New Guinean rainforest, home to birds of unimaginable color and beauty. When Europeans first saw the plumes of these creatures in the sixteenth century, they believed they must be from heaven and called them Birds of Paradise. To find them in New Guinea is one of the toughest assignments, and to witness their extraordinary mating displays is even tougher. 50 min



March 18- 2:00 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 their struggle for survival in this land of extremes. Wildlife includes grizzly bear, wolf, gray whale, and cougar. 50 min

April 15- 2:00

Animal Homes: The Nest

Bird nests come in all shapes and sizes, crafted from a diversity of materials, including fur, grasses, leaves, moss, sticks, twigs, bones, wool, mud, and spider silk. Take a journey around the world, where birds arrive at diverse nesting grounds to collect, compete for, reject, steal, and begin to build homes for the all-important task of protecting their eggs and raising their young. 50 min



**NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS
OF TAMARAC NWR**

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge
35704 County Highway 26
Rochert, MN 56578

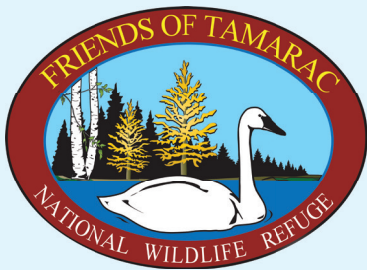
www.tamaracfriends.org

Phone: 218-844-1767
info@tamaracfriends.org

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

Refuge Website:
www.fws.gov/refuge/tamarac



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Photo by Allen Turcotte "Swan Family". 1st Place Photo Contest Winner in Wildlife