

### BEHIVE

### By Don Blanding, President of the Board

On March 4, 1959, the beehive officially became the logo of the beautiful state of Utah. Their motto, simply stated, is "Industry." Among the many definitions of the word industry, the folks from Utah choose to refer to such things as ingenuity, energy, and devoted activity to any work or task. A walking tour in Salt Lake City at the state capital or Temple Square finds replicas of the beehive to be truly ubiquitous.

Sure, we all think of "busy as a beehive." That's nice. But the word industry as used in Utah is truly mindful of what's going on at Tamarac and with the Friends of Tamarac. When one decides to discuss our initiatives, it's best not to recognize individuals for fear of missing someone. Moreover, there are so many active, devoted, energetic and ingenious people involved.

While the weather may have been less than totally cooperative, the May bird festival was still a success. The friends hosted a dinner which featured speaker Carrol Henderson . Carrol was instrumental in the introduction of trumpeter swans at Tamarac, and his account of what led up to the first swans at Tamarac 25 years ago was most inspiring. The next morning, a very early breakfast was also well attended.

Most of you know that our bookstore/gift shop will be closed for approximately one year while construction takes place at the visitor center. Without this revenue source, the Friends need to find other venues to replace it. For example, we will be part of the clean up crew at We Fest after the event is over. The more volunteers we can muster, the easier the job will be and the more revenue we can generate. You may contact me or any other board members if interested.

Planning for the Toast to Tamarac is well underway. Our first "Toast," held last year, was attended beyond our expectations. So save the date: September 14 for this year's Toast. More to follow as the date gets closer.

We are also preparing for the Fall Festival. This free admission event is a great opportunity for families and children of all ages. A nature trail finds many outdoor educational experiences. Guided bus tours of special places on Tamarac are always popular.

We continue to explore new ideas to help generate revenue. In fact, a group has formed solely to brainstorm and discuss new options to help us fulfill our mission of facilitating activities and programs that interpret, protect, and restore the natural and cultural resources of the refuge. We are also in the start up phase of a significantly larger capital campaign, and we're putting in the required infrastructure and procedures for this



effort. More about this in future issues of Tracks.

We really do have an amazing group of Friends with very diverse areas of expertise. And we can always use more volunteers, ideas, suggestions,

I always tell people who show an interest that The Friends volunteers are very seldom asked to do something. People simply volunteer to join in on areas of interest, and things get done.

Sunrise at Bryce Canyon, Utah, is simply beautiful beyond description. The same goes for Rainbow Bridge and many other wonderful natural experiences. Henceforth, these monuments will remind us of "industry" as it applies in Utah and to the Friends of Tamarac.

### **Become a Friend**

**Individual/Family: \$20 Patron: \$100** Life Member: \$250 Student: \$10

As a member, you will receive our quarterly newsletter mailed to your home and a 10% discount on purchases from Tamarac Wildlife Gifts & Bookstore. Download a membership from our website. (www.tamaracfriends.org)





#### Friends of Tamarac NWR

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Website: www.tamaracfriends.org, | E-mail: tia@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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Newsletter Committee

Vonnie Jacobson, Fran Mattson, Linda Brockmann, Justine Boots, Kelly Blackledge, Nancy Brennan, Kathleen Curphy

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).

TAMARAC TRACKS PAGE 2

# GOING G

By Neil Powers, Tamarac Refuge Manager

The Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge Staff is on the move and going green! July will mark the culmination of nearly two years of planning and the start of the headquarters



construction project. The refuge has received special funding to address long overdue building upgrades and handicap accessibility deficiencies that have accumulated since the structure was built in the early 1980's. Doorways, public and staff restrooms will be reconfigured with handicap accessibility and families in mind.

Central to this project is the goal of reducing our overall energy consumption by upgrading or replacing current amenities with those that are more energy efficient. Windows and

doors will be upgraded and additional insulation will be added to the walls and roof. We will also have the opportunity to address some foundation drainage issues and abate the remaining asbestos from the building. Also, as part of this process the refuge will be converting from fossil fuel as a source of energy and tapping into renewable resources like solar and geothermal to heat and cool the building as well as offset some of our electrical demand. In addition, we will be adding some neat features like occupancy sensors that turn the lights off automatically if someone happens to forget and solar tubes to enhance the natural lighting capabilities of office spaces and reduce our dependence on artificial lighting.

As a result, staff and volunteers have been busy packing and recycling in preparation for the move to temporary office space. During construction the staff will be moving to the refuge residence located adjacent to the maintenance shop facility east of the headquarters/visitor center. This three bedroom residence has been used to house refuge staff and more recently to support research crews conducting work on the refuge. Construction is slated to take around 14 months to complete and Gordon Construction from Mahnomen has been awarded the contract. Tamarac is very fortunate and excited to have been chosen for this large scale energy conservation project and this will be a tremendous asset for the years to come.

### NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS

Friends of Tamarac appreciate the loyalty and generosity of our many members and volunteers! Memberships and donations fund many programs, including education programs for children and adults throughout the year, the bus fund, the Fall Festival, and the Friends webpage. The membership year runs from October through October. Following is a list of memberships received since our last newsletter through April 1st.

#### LIFE MEMBERS:

Cyndi & Melissa Anderson David & Ingeborg Anderson Howard & Linda Anderson Don & Carolynn Blanding Bob & Linda Brockmann Kent & Connie Carlson Greg Hoch Joann Knapp Fran Mattson Roger Minch Moulden Nancy Michael & Ginger O'Keefe John and Lance Pitzl George & Shirley Read

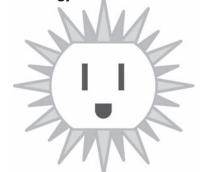
#### PATRON MEMBERS:

Les & Nancy Brennan Damien Society First National Bank Brian Halverson George & Sally Oja Ruth Olson

#### NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS:

Bergien Tim Jordan & Andrea Bonney Dave & Judy Egge Mark & Karen Hagen Grant & Barb Hauschild Eloise Irvine Kinzler Gina Steve & Genie Kufus Dave & Janice Millford Tim & Sue Powers Bob & Diane Reff Carol Urness Paul & Ann Jean Wibe

### Look for this symbol on the refuge to learn how wildlife benefit from clean energy.



### A SUMMER A

BY KATHLEEN CURPHY



Four Wheeling at Mitchell Bridge. Photo by Kathy Curphy.



Enjoy a hike along Chippewa Trail. Photo by Kathy Curphy

Tamarac is a great adventure on a summer afternoon. There are many things to see and do for all ages, a great place to bring the kids and grandkids, or just renew your spirit with the forests, lakes, air, and water. Several of us have written about our favorite places at Tamarac that we know you will enjoy. Be prepared and consider bringing a picnic lunch or snacks, water, lawn chairs, tennis shoes, trekking poles, bug spray, binoculars, camera, sunglasses, hat, fishing poles, bait, GPS, and books on birds, mammals, wildflowers, and trees to help identify who lives there.

Justine Boots described the hike she took on the Tamarac Loop of the North Country Trail last year during the Fall Festival. "The brilliant fall foliage, the sounds of silence followed by the symphony of bird songs, the quiet of the lake at the end of the trail invites a tranquil yet profound meditation about the joys of a quiet walk, of fragrant waters, of the endless change in nature which mirrors our own." If you look across the Pine Lake and the small pond next to the parking area, you might see a family of swans, pelicans, eagles flying, muskrats, and ducks diving into the water.

### AFTERNOON

The Old Indian Trail is Nancy Brennan's favorite hike at Tamarac because it is so soothing. "Just walking a few yards into the old maple-basswood forest slows my heart rate and piques my curiosity. How old are these trees? What storms have they endured? Who has walked this ancient trail before me in pursuit of maple sap, healing plants or solitude? If you take the entire 2.25 mile hike, which will take you about an hour depending on your linger-and-ponder habits, you will see a rich sedge meadow and you'll meet up with white pines well over a hundred years old who escaped the attention of the loggers in the late 1800's."



John Weber points out butterflies and dragonflies along Pine LakeTrail. Photo by Kathy Curphy.

One of Fran Mattson's most memorable trips around the Wildlife Drive happened when she spotted two yearling black bears sunning themselves on a big birch tree. "I especially enjoy this route in the spring, as it's an excellent area for seeing warblers. I park close to the observation deck and walk a distance along the lake."

Chippewa Picnic Area has restrooms, picnic tables and grills. Janice Bengtson writes that this area is a peaceful setting nestled along the Ottertail River as it flows between North and South Chippewa Lakes. Here's your chance to dine under both red and white pines. You may see loons, trumpeter swans, bald eagles and great blue herons near the water while listening to the music of woodland songbirds nearby. Back in the 30's, the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp BF2 was located just south of here. Stroll along a short trail and imagine the excitement of 50 young men who were anxious to work and be part of Tamarac's history.

One of my favorite spots is Mitchell Bridge where the Otter Tail River flows under the bridge from Rice Lake and makes this one of the best fishing spots. One afternoon I saw birds flying back and forth under the bridge, a beaver lodge with a goose sitting on top, ducks flying in the air, swans, a turtle laying eggs, butterflies, and a family of geese enjoying the sun. A great blue heron flew towards the rookery on the north side of Rice Lake. Check out Tamarac's Facebook page to see what is happening the day you plan to go to Tamarac.



Admiring an old white pine along Old Indian Trail. Photo by Nancy Brennan.

## FROM DINOSAUR SPIT TO SWAMP TEA

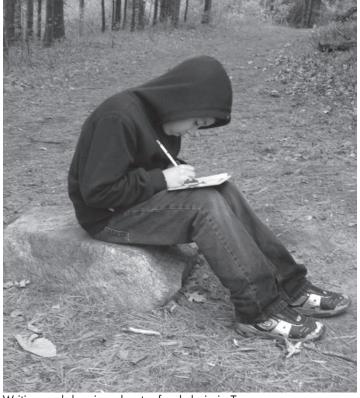
By Nancy Brennan

As environmental educators, our limited time with hundreds of students prevents us from personally getting to know all of them, so how can we tell if time at Tamarac makes a difference? When you watch the kids get off the bus you see a mixture of attitudes. Some look very excited and eager to stretch their legs, especially after a seventy mile bus ride from Moorhead! Some look a little bored or preoccupied; maybe they are worried about problems at home or in the neighborhood. We have no way of knowing the personal stories of all of these students, but in the gorgeous natural surroundings of Tamarac, a bit of magic occurs. When students hear the raucous greetings of red squirrels and breathe the pine infused air they focus on the wonders of the natural world. They are ready to have fun and to learn!

Staff members, Kelly Blackledge and Janice Bengston, and volunteers spend numerous hours planning age-appropriate activities that meet Minnesota teaching standards. Some activities emphasize the world of tiny things like finding insects and lichens with magnifying glasses. There are active games where kindergartners pretend to be frogs or lily pads. Cameras are always a popular learning tool as kids scramble to capture various treasures such as the first breeding pair of trumpeter swans on Jim's Marsh. In Wild Songs and Puppets, kids learn catchy tunes about many of the animals at Tamarac. Journaling activities hone

the eye in quiet observation while Spring Sounds highlights the succession of early morning bird songs and the seasonal succession of frogs. GPS is always popular as the students learn to use the hand-held devices to follow trails and gain understanding of the satellites circling the earth. A new unit on the Water Cycle for fourth graders featured Kelly as storyteller, "...so the swamp tea you drink today was once a part of dinosaur spit long ago!"

Studies have shown that outdoor education improves attitudes towards learning, student behavior and critical thinking skills. When you consider that volunteers donated over 760 hours to environmental education this past school year with approximately 10,000 student contact hours at Tamarac, the effect on learning should be very positive. The students' artwork and photos tell the story. Will these students be prepared to be our future conservationists? Will they value wild places? How can we nurture their growth?

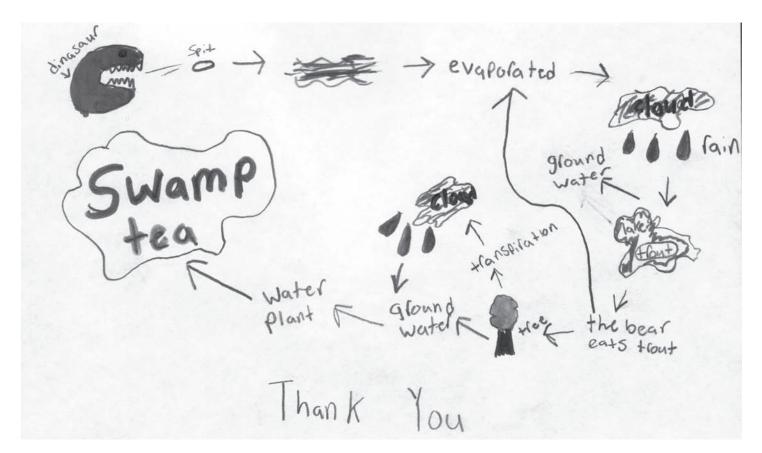


Writing and drawing about a food chain in Tamarac



James shares his knowledge of using Canada Mayflower leaves to help wounds heal.

PAGE 6 TAMARAC TRACKS









Discover the close-up world of birch bark

### **VOLUNTEERVIBES**

by Janice Bengston

Summer is in full swing... and it is proving to be a very busy and interesting summer for all. Here's the latest in volunteer news:

We have a new team of Aquatic Invasive Educators and Inspectors. Volunteers will be stationed at lake accesses to greet visitors and educate them about invasives and how to prevent their spread. FWS seasonal Jason Ballard and volunteer Craig Lewis will be leading the program. Let's keep Tamarac's lakes pristine! If you are interested in this program, please contact Jason.

**Wanted:** Roving Naturalists: Greet visitors and provide information at designated areas such as the Wildlife Drive and the Visitor Center Entrance Kiosk during our energy retrofit. Wildlife Excursion Guides – Lead visitors on an adventure through the refuge. Tours are offered Thursdays, June through

August. Wild Wednesdays Activity Leaders (July-August 10:00 am) - Lead a one hour nature activity for 3-7 year olds accompanied by parents or grandparents. Photo Contest Committee members – Our photo contest continues to grow! We need people with good organization and computer skills. Volunteers will be entering data, filing, organizing photos, setting up the exhibit, and following up with the awards presentation. Most of the time commitment will occur between August and mid-October.

Pat and Ward New will be our resident volunteers for the second half of the season. They are from Suches, Georgia. Both are retired science teachers and are seasoned volunteers having worked at 3 refuges and a historical park. We are excited they can stay into the fall to assist with the Fall Festival and school programs.

Please welcome aboard our new volunteers:

John Haack, Craig Lewis, Steve Lindow, Jerry and Bonnie Compton plus numerous student researchers.

Kudos to our volunteer environmental educators and assistants. During the month of May, you donated 261 hours. Thanks to Dave Schneider, Nancy Brennan, Luverne Ehnert, Jeanine Ehnert, Cathie Ferguson, Jim DuBay, Connie Carlson, Fran Mattson, Ron Jenson, Rick Pechmann, Linda Brockman, Craig Lewis, Betty Gunderson, Vonnie Jacobson, Kathy Curphy, Steve Midthune, Del Larson.

Thanks to those volunteers who are helping with our move! We are finding out it takes a village to move a village! We appreciate your organizational skills and positive attitude as we take this step forward on our way to going green!

Mark your calendars! The volunteer recognition picnic will be held Thursday August 23 at our beautiful shop and will be catered by Spanky's. More details to follow!

### MEET OUR RESIDENT VOLUNTEERS



Bonnie and Jerry Compton

Bonnie and Jerry Compton arrived in May and dove right into the organized chaos of hundreds of school kids, the Festival of Birds, the invasion of wood ticks, volunteer training and more. They were great sports and after all that, they are still here! Today they are settled in and are enjoying their time on the refuge and the surrounding area.

Jerry is the all-around handyman. He enjoys fixing and building things. He has been a great help to our maintenance staff. Both Bonnie and Jerry staff the visitor center on the weekends.

Jerry grew up in the Seattle area, later

moving to Reno, Nevada. In his 'previous life,' he worked in retail sales for a sporting goods chain and also worked in the RV industry which sparked his interest in year-round travel. Bonnie grew up in Ohio, just south of Youngstown. She has lived in several states including Florida, California, Texas and Nevada, where she met Jerry. Bonnie has held various positions in administration, market research and most recently working for a small family business.

They have been full time RVers for 28 years! They have visited every state except Hawaii. Their favorite places include Glacier National Park, the Smokey Mountains and the states Colorado and Utah. Jerry wonders why people go to Europe and other far away places when "they don't even know their own country." They call their home base St. Petersburg, FL. In winter they enjoy exploring the Everglades and the Ocala National Forest. Bonnie keeps a journal of all their travels. Imagine the stories they could tell! Of course both enjoy everything outdoors. For Jerry it's photography, fishing, canoeing and four-wheeling. For Bonnie, it's fishing, birding and going to the beach.

Bonnie and Jerry are happy to call Minnesota home for a couple of months. They are impressed with the friendliness of the locals and the many outdoor recreational opportunities. They are enjoying their time volunteering and are considering other refuges down the road. Tamarac was their chance to "test the waters" as Jerry said and they are liking it.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Friends of Tamarac are making a call for volunteers.

Sunday, August 5 and Monday, August 6, we will be doing WE Fest clean-up in the main area and at the Lake Sally Campground. Friends will receive \$9/hr. for each volunteer's time. You may also earn general admission tickets to WE Fest. You are also needed at the Toast To Tamarac event on Fri. Sept. 14.

Call Fran at 218-983-3173

PAGE 8 TAMARAC TRACKS

### MY PEEK

### at Environmental History

By Nancy Moulden



A single trumpeter swan is an emblem for the larger Tamarac NWR success story. Kathy Curphy photo.



Tamarac is celebrating 25 years since the first release of swans on the refuge.

Few people have the opportunity to be present when history is being made, but Carrol Henderson's words at this year's birding festival brought back memories of when I was lucky enough to be present for such an event.

I was teaching 5th graders at Callaway School in the early 90s when Betsy Beneke, then a ranger at Tamarac, called to invite us to see a trumpeter swan release at the refuge. Teachers love field trips as much as the kids, especially the ones outdoors, so I wasted no time in accepting.

It was a lovely spring day and we enjoyed our lunch and playing games at the Chippewa Picnic Area. The release took place on the Blackbird Auto Tour near the location where the deck was later built. Also, attending were 2 avid birders from Detroit Lakes, Margaret Kent and Jean Traver, who snapped pictures of the release.

The first bird out of its cage was more than happy to be free and immediately went out on Blackbird Lake but the second bird was more reluctant and took some coaxing to leave the kennel. The students applauded and cheered when the hesitant bird gained its freedom although both birds seemed oblivious of their audience.

Who could have known that 20 years later these 2 swans, part of a release of 362 birds, would increase in numbers to 30 breeding pairs at Tamarac and over 6,000 in the state today? Although the swans are considered self-sustaining, their rate of only one out of four surviving to breed keeps them on the endangered list. I am proud of being able to have attended this small event that was a part of a bigger, successful project of environmental history.

### THE SOUNDS OF TAMARAC

There is a pre-eminent emphasis in our world about the By Jim Jasken look of things, of beauty pageants, architectural grandeur, stylish clothing. When it comes to nature, a favorite contest is photo competitions relating to the incomparable natural world. Enjoying pleasing visual beauty comes naturally.

But listen. Yes! Close your eyes, and Listen! The fullness of the "audio presentation" requires concentration, a skill that many, so busy, miss as a significant part of discerning beautiful nature!

As a boy, the unexpected thunder of a ruffed grouse at my feet at first scared me, then I felt the electric energy tingle at the base of my neck hairs! I was awed that a bird could make such a roar. I'd watch it fade into the underbrush, my heart-thumps pounding in my chest. As a youth I relished the adrenalin flushing through my veins!



Barred Owl by Ron Jenson

As I matured, I would come to understand the premise that art is an imitation of nature: the ballet flight of the ruby-throat, the symphonic grace of the trumpeter, the warbler flautist. The margins of the woodland feature three of the most peculiar and un-reproducible of sounds that fascinated me: the bobolink's boinking, the meadow lark's chirtle-whistling, the yellow-headed blackbird's tweedle-deeing: challenges for any composer, any musician, in any time.

How about you? Do you listen seriously?

Here is how a scattering of TNWR fans responded when questioned regarding favorite "natural sounds of Tamarac."

Fran M relates that the sound of children from the school groups, when they express their excitement in nature as they explore the outdoors is her favorite. George R agrees, including the hoot of an owl when young and old push the quiz button in the display area.

Sounds about sounds of TNWR, one might

Vonnie J chooses the pileated wood pecker when he laughs while flying through the trees (she calls him "Woodie"!). Maybe his joke is

The Barred Owl's hoot is Dean McB's favorite. He points out that, uniquely, it can be occasionally heard in the daylight. He appreciates its willingness to return calls, and even come closer when called.

Interestingly, two respondents pointed to a group of sounds that signify the arrival of



Hundreds of Trumpeter Swans gather on the refuge lakes in the Fall. Photo by Volunteer Patsy

a season. For Don B, it is the "cacophony of water fowl in the spring...trumpeter swans, Canada geese, loons, mallards and wood ducks. Clearly one of the best signs..." Ric J says he likes "the little guys -evening sounds spring peepers – wood frogs – gray tree frogs -American toad, spring awakening of healthy wetlands!" (I'll bet Kelly B agrees!)

Now that I have lived much more than half my life, I find that the silence written by the moon brings a greater pleasure than the shattering ascent of the partridge. The pleasing nocturnal mantle of deep woods lunar solitude comes with its punctuation marks however: the yip-yip of the coyote, howls of its brother grey, and just a sprinkling of unidentified grunts, cries and calls that add just enough flavor to keep me from dozing.

The audio world of Tamarac is as beautiful as the visual. To enter its treasures we must teach ourselves to concentrate, to listen.

Friends of Tamarac & the Festival of Birds

By Vonnie Jacobson

The Friends of Tamarac produced another great group effort at the annual Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds. The Festival welcomes people from all over the US and Canada to Detroit Lakes and Tamarac NWR, as well as other area sites, for prime spring bird watching. Thirty plus members worked at everything from registration to clean up. A highlight this year was hosting 115 guests for a very special evening of a great dinner and

a wonderfully engaging speaker in Carrol Henderson. He captivated the large crowd in the shop with his unique history of trumpeter swans from finding funding to the great success of the reintroduction 25 years ago. We also hosted a welcome warm breakfast for 40 birdwatchers early one morning. Congratulations to all who participated; it was a grand success. We earned \$806.41 as a result of your efforts.

PAGE 10 TAMARAC TRACKS

### \*Wildlife Excursions are offered every Thursday at 10:00 am.

Meet at the Chippewa Picnic Area. Explore the refuge with a knowledgeable guide. Search for wildlife and learn about the natural and cultural history of Tamarac.

### \*Wild Wednesdays!

Programs will be offered every Wednesday at 10:00 am July 11 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 15, 2:00 pm The Scoop on Poop!

For kids of all ages! We may not see all the critters we want, but they leave plenty behind. Discover the wonders of scat. You'll even get to create your own animal scat to take home. Meet at the Chippewa Picnic Area.

### Sunday July 22, 2:00 pm

Leave it to Beavers! Discover the amazing adaptations this creature has acquired over thousands of years of evolution. Learn how this large rodent played a role in Minnesota history. Visit a large beaver dam and lodge. Meet at the Chippewa Picnic Area.

### Saturday August 4, 2:00 pm Tamarac History Tour

Take a journey into Tamarac's past. Before the refuge was established, the landscape was extensively settled. Who were these folks? Where did they live and how did they survive in the wilderness? Caravan tour to several sites. Meet at the Chippewa Picnic Area.

# INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

### Sunday August 5, 2:00 pm A Treasure of Trumpeters!

Learn how this bird was nearly decimated and how Tamarac played a key role in its recovery. We'll travel out on the refuge in search of these majestic birds. Meet at the Balsam Lake Overlook on County Hwy 26.

### Saturday August 18, 10:00 am Walk on the Wildflower Side!

Back by popular demand! Join refuge volunteer Nancy Brennan in search of sun-loving blooms of late summer. Meet on the Blackbird Wildlife Drive at stop #4 and carpool to walk location near Pine Lake.

### Sunday August 26, 2:00- 4:00 pm Beginning Birding

Discover the world of birding. Learn the basics of bird identification, how to get the most out of your binoculars and experience some birding "apps." Learn 12 new species and their calls. Meet at the Balsam Lake Overlook on County Hwy 26.

### 11th Annual Photo Contest

Start capturing those great images of nature here at Tamarac. The 11th Annual Photo Contest deadline is September 14. Categories include Wildlife, Plant Life, Scenic, Recreation, and Nature's Abstracts. Up to 5 photos can be entered, no more than 2 per category. For more information and contest rules, visit tamaracfriends.org.



### NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF TAMARAC NWR

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge 35704 County Highway 26 Rochert, MN 56578 www.tamaracfriends.org

Phone: 218-847-2641 Ext. 21

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.midwest/tamarac



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2011 Photo Contest Winner – 3rd Place Recreation "Reflections of Tamarac" by Gail Marsh