



the Meadowlark

A PUBLICATION FROM THE BELWIN CONSERVANCY

SPRING/SUMMER 2016

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● We've recently been conducting prescribed prairie burns – we have almost 200 acres planned for this year. These burns clear away old growth, set back unwanted species, warm the soil, create nutrients, and generally make for healthy prairies.

Kitten-tail (*Besseyia bullii*) just started flowering at Belwin. As a threatened species in Minnesota, we are pleased to have them in several of our restored oak savannas.



**BELWIN
CONSERVANCY**
Inspiring through Nature



Adaptation



A FEW MINUTES IN MY GARDEN always yields a discovery. Last fall in plain sight, once the leaves dropped, there was a nest – maybe a cardinal's as they like the

lilac hedge. What made the nest particularly interesting was its composition.

Lynette Anderson has a growing collection of nests she finds at Belwin – beautifully woven grass nests, intricately connected mud and branch nests, always made out of materials that distinguish the species. This lilac bush nest was different. The outer wrapping was made of traditional materials but the base included shredded plastic. Not what the birds would necessarily come upon browsing the prairies, woodlands, or oak savannas at Belwin.

The contrast set me to thinking about adaptation. The birds in Red Wing, where I live, seemed to find the shredded plastic a fine material for their nest, at least from a construction point of view. I don't know what the young birds think, or if the plastic has an adverse affect on the bird's development or longevity, but the resource bank of found materials, whether those be natural or man-made, didn't make a difference. The birds used what they found interesting and available for their immediate need – a space to lay eggs.

The birds used what they found interesting and available for their immediate need.

Who knows what materials will end up in this year's season of nest making in Red Wing but at Belwin, the nests you may see are likely to be constructed with traditional materials. My favorite find is a nest carefully made within the

crux of a Canada goldenrod stem in the bison prairie. Given the meandering of the 35 bison, how on earth did this nest survive? Maybe a bison roamed by and found it still in use so let it alone. How did the coyotes, hawks, osprey or eagles miss this incubator of potential food? Maybe they didn't ... in any event the nest survived the breeding season and it became a source of wonder for me.

A little too much anthropomorphizing for your taste? Here's the thing – we're always adapting. People use human-made products for purposes never originally envisioned: two-liter plastic bottles become bird feeders, worn out tractor tires become planters, crushed glass becomes a component of bituminous paving – a form of recycling and also a way of adapting. Adaptation is admired in some instances (perhaps the nest making) and mourned in others (say, the ability of invasive species to thrive in places we'd prefer they didn't).

Belwin is adapting by realigning our team to better take care of resources and engage our members.

So how is Belwin adapting to the ever present forces of change? Well, we're realigning our team to allow us to take better care of Belwin's resources and to engage our members more. In this issue of the Meadowlark you will meet the newest members of Belwin – Susan Haugh and Justin Sykora. Both came on board in November of 2015 and got up to speed quickly with Susan launching an artist residency program (see page 4) in March, and Justin leading reorganization of the shop, coordinating asbestos removal in the former Metcalf residences and convincingly lobbying for a utility vehicle with a cab that will make complicated tasks like herbicide spraying better!

Justin and Susan are not the only changes. Eric celebrated 21 years at Belwin and Martin 20 in January. Eric and Martin's roles have diverged in a clear way that puts Eric firmly in the lead as facilities and equipment specialist and Martin in the lead as land specialist. Once we confirm hiring of our development principal, Ned will transition from membership to outreach, communications, and technology. Lynette continues in her part-time roles as naturalist and land specialist. Alex remains in her role doing office administration and land management work, and I remain the executive director.

The spring *Meadowlark* is also when we share the financial results of the past year and provide you with the current year priorities

and goals as represented by the annual budget. Belwin completes its audit in June, so the numbers for 2015 are unaudited. The completed audit is typically available in July.

How did we do? The next page paints a picture of Belwin by numbers. Priorities in 2015 included growing our membership and member contributions, expanding outreach efforts through more events at Belwin (which included Open Saturdays, a variety of annotated walks, and A Night In Nature – our fall member drive), continued restoration across all areas of Belwin (prairie, savanna, woodlands, wetlands), improvements to our facilities and increased staff capacity with the hiring of Susan and Justin. We did well by all accounts including balancing our budget.

This year represents the launch of significant investments, both capital and staffing, that you have helped Belwin envision for a future that more deeply engages our membership, donors, users and partners. Fundraising will be a top priority for the next five years. We won't stop our restoration and land management work – that is forever work. What we will be doing is biting off large pieces of capital improvements. In 2016 we will complete the first phase of the education center improvements. You contributed toward this work in 2015 (and are welcome to continue making contributions in 2016). The work will take place in late July and complete in August.

We're working on some exciting stuff at the Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields too – which we'll highlight in the next issue of the *Meadowlark*. Hope to see you soon!

All for now,

Nancy Kafka

Executive Director, Belwin Conservancy

(651) 436-5189

nancy.kafka@belwin.org

BELWIN BY NUMBERS

Income

Public Sources

	2015 Unaudited	2016 Budgeted
Membership Contributions	\$ 53,621	\$ 218,339
Foundations	33,500	15,000
Corporations (including in-kind contributions)	100	14,100
Government Grants	66,435	71,867
Other (rent, released from restriction)	21,560	21,800
LWBAF field use payment	90,260	77,950
Restricted for Capital Improvements	31,740	105,800

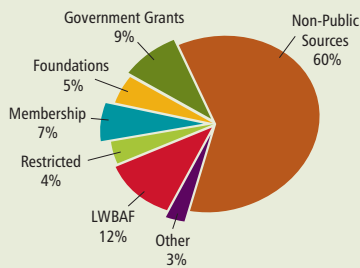
Non-Public Sources

(Including Belwin Supporting Fund)	440,777	682,985
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Total Income	\$ 737,993	\$ 1,207,841
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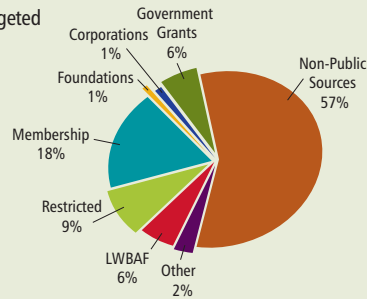
2015

Unaudited



2016

Budgeted



Expenses

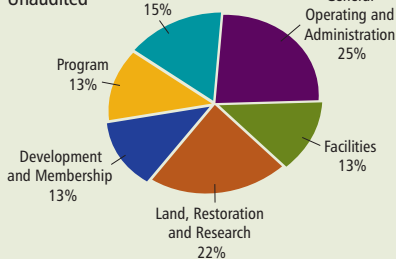
	2015 Unaudited	2016 Budgeted
General Operating and Administration	\$ 181,669	\$ 131,664
Land, Restoration and Research	157,926	170,586
Facilities	98,437	142,883
Development and Membership	92,349	127,572
Program (Art and Nature)	91,616	145,323
LWBAF facility management	108,048	140,556
Outreach & Communications	*	123,173
Capital Improvements		226,028

Total Expenses	\$ 730,045	\$ 1,207,785
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*Outreach & Communications was part of Development & Membership, and General Operating & Administration in 2015

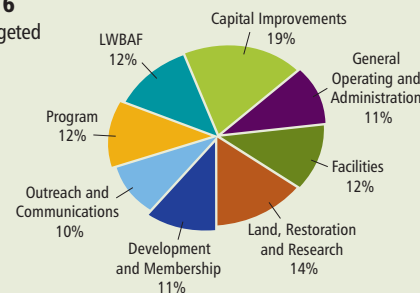
2015

Unaudited



2016

Budgeted



Amounts reported are rounded to the nearest percentage.

People Served

Belwin Outdoor Science	9,828
Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields	60,000*
Joseph J. Casby Observatory	228
Belwin Conservancy Events	1880

*This number is estimated and inclusive of baseball, football, soccer, and softball. It assumes two spectators for each athlete.

2015 Restoration Activities

Acres ongoing restoration	1007
Acres burned	146
Bison herd size	35
Hours of integrated pest management	1,399
Hand pulling, tractor mowing, chemical control	
Acres of site preparation and seeding	10
Acres of buckthorn removal	33
Acres of oak savanna restoration	117
Number of invasive species managed	19
Number of plant species collected	20

2015 Bird Monitoring

Afton Hills (number of species)	39
Bell Oak Savanna	63
Stagecoach Prairies	57
Valley Creek	44

Lake Edith not surveyed in 2015

77 species across all sites including native and migratory birds. Surveys conducted once a week for six weeks from May 1-June 15.

Satisfied Students

The instructors of Belwin Outdoor Science regularly receive 'thank you' notes from students who visit on field trips. This note both reflects the incredible talent of the educators and the impact that visiting Belwin Outdoor Science has on the students.

Deer Belwin staff, (see what I did there?)

Thank you for letting us come visit and learn about animals and their environment. It was really fun with Geoff because we got to do things that scientists would do. It was also interesting because I never knew that little animals like the scuds lived in the leaves in ponds. That was pretty surprising. The oxygen measurer thing was pretty cool because it changed colors. That was also pretty surprising. I felt like a scientist because I was treated like one and felt like one. Thank you for spending your own time and teaching us new things.

Sincerely, Mao C.

New Artist in Residency Program Launched

By Susan Haugh, Program Manager

With a goal to enhance people's discovery and understanding of nature and what we do at the Belwin Conservancy, we have been working hard to devise programs that uniquely interweave ecology and the arts.

AFTER SUCCESSFULLY PARTNERING WITH THE PHIPPS CENTER FOR THE ARTS and focusing on engaging new audiences at the Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields last year, we will be continuing exciting opportunities at the ballfields while also introducing new programs on other parts of Belwin's preserve.

We are thrilled to begin a long-awaited artist in residency program with poet and environmental writer Laurie Allmann. She will be here for the spring season, March through June, exploring and deepening a connection to Belwin's land:



"As a writer, it is a real privilege to be able to take inspiration from Belwin's remarkable land. What a wonder, to see that such a place exists, and that such care has been taken over the years to restore and protect it. In some sense this is the landscape of home – familiar because I have lived in the St. Croix Valley nearly all of my adult life. But I come to Belwin and to this artist residency with the awestruck eyes of a newcomer, humbled by the challenge of reflecting even a sliver of it in my work, thrilled at the chance to share some of its many stories," said Laurie.

Laurie is an environmentally-focused artist whose work has been featured in radio commentary, print media, song lyrics, video documentary, plays, and monologues designed for live performance. We are excited to work with Laurie this season, watching as she works to create a bridge between the scientific community and our members through creative projects. Join Laurie for her writing workshop May 21 (see page 6), and check out her work inspired by the Belwin Conservancy on her website: www.laurieallman.com.

As her residency begins, Laurie shares an earlier work, a poem titled *Minnesota Spring*.

Our Next Artist in Residence: Steve Heitzeg

Belwin's next artist in residence will be Emmy Award-winning composer Steve Heitzeg. Steve has been recognized for his orchestral, choral, and chamber music written in celebration of the natural world. His evocative and lyrical scores have included naturally-found instruments such as stones, driftwood, Joshua tree branches, manatee and beluga whale bones, and sea shells. Join him for Open Third Saturday in June!

Minnesota Spring

Part of me longs to be
Edwin Way Teale
chasing to some southern latitude
to rendezvous with spring, then
riding shotgun with it on the journey north
to chronicle its passage through
tidal swamps, tangerine groves, seashell islands
Better, though, to stay in place
and be pleasantly tormented by its emissaries,
appearing in fits and starts
while ice still lingers in the windbreaks
Better to stay,
to climb the fawn-colored bluffs of home
and greet the pasque flowers, their petaloso cups
set like fine china on the warming prairie soil,
to scan the roadside wires for meadowlarks by day
and lie awake at night
listening to the monkey-calls of
amorous barred owls
and the first whispered wings of moths
against the window,
to spread a feast of bait-shop worms
for early robins, laughing with my children
as the clouds of birds descend
No, I'd not be anywhere but here
to share the season's turning
with this snapping turtle newly risen from the muck,
the plain fact of its bouldered carapace in the road,
eyes bleary slits and
head a waving mass of dreadlock leaches
Ah, bless the axis tilt, I say,
the fateful 23½° departure from vertical
that here translates to spring
So that even as this sweet earth on its orbit
becomes daily more distant from the sun,
we feel it here returning
to heal, on some primal level,
those for whom the lovely days
perversely sharpen the point of grief,
and by the ever-higher arc it traces in the sky,
remind us all
to rise

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Petaloso? In 2016, I updated this poem with a new word, replacing 'petalled' with 'petaloso,' in honor of 8-year old Matteo Trovo, who lives in Copparo, Italy. The word was invented by Matteo, and means 'full of petals.' Italy's national language academy, the Academia della Crusca, has told Matteo that his word must be in common usage in order to be adopted as part of the language. People around the world are helping Matteo to put his word in circulation. Had I known such a beautiful word existed, I would have used *petaloso* in the original version of the poem! If you'd like to hear about the story as I did, check out this link on National Public Radio:

<http://www.npr.org/2016/03/04/469149247/italian-schoolboy-invents-new-word>

New Beginnings

By Alexandra Yeager, *Administration and Property Management*

As the sun starts shining and spring becomes a reality, one of the surest signs of change for the Belwin Conservancy has been the addition of two new staff members

IN NOVEMBER OF LAST YEAR, we welcomed Susan Haugh as our Program Manager and Justin Sykora as our Land and Facilities Manager. While both are experienced and passionate people, each brings a completely different skillset and fresh outlook as Belwin moves forward this year.

Justin Sykora comes to the Belwin Conservancy from Prairie Restorations, Inc. where he worked as Land Management Coordinator at their Scandia office. For the past 12 years his work has been focused on prairies, woodlands, and savannas, but he looks forward to the diversity of ecosystems on the preserve. “Belwin has a little of everything from lakes to streams, and prairies to woodlands. This variability drew me to Belwin,” he said.

We are excited to bring Justin's expertise in restoring and maintaining natural landscapes to Belwin.

Already, Justin has hit the ground running getting to know and starting to manage our acreage. At Prairie Restorations he helped develop a buckthorn removal and long term management program which he will begin implementing at Belwin, and of course, the return of spring means prescribed prairie burning. He reiterates the importance of burns to the fire dependent ecosystem, pointing out that “in the absence of fire,

prairies will fade away over time. We burn our prairie areas on a rotating schedule, ensuring there are plenty of unburned areas for the wildlife.”

In fact, Justin plans to bring the flame to one of his favorite places at Belwin so far – a savanna remnant on our Afton Hills Natural Area. “Savanna is one of the rarest ecosystems on the planet,” he states. “It was very exciting to work up there this winter and find native plants mixed in with the buckthorn. I am really looking forward to burning this area this spring to help release more native plants.”

He knows there will be challenges moving forward, “staying current – not getting lost in the ever-changing invasive weed mess – and being the leader in research,” he said. “We feed on new research and new ideas. Belwin is a leader in this by allowing many different projects to run across the property.”

While we are excited to bring Justin's expertise in restoring and maintaining natural landscapes to Belwin's large preserve, he will also be balancing land management with facilities upkeep. Although our facilities have always been important, they have never been the focus of our work. Due to the implementation of our new master plan, these buildings will be brought under active management and focused improvements, in part to serve new programming spearheaded by Susan Haugh.

Beginning with the long-held plan to unite art and nature at Belwin, the master plan called for an entirely new position of Program Manager. Susan founded the Renaissance City Women's Choir and Dreams of



Justin Sykora and Susan Haugh

Just for Fun...

We asked Justin and Susan what people would be surprised to learn about them:

Justin: I spent a summer teaching at a Girl Scout camp. I was the camp nature director – I set up and maintained a small nature center and taught girls about the world around them at the camp. It was an extremely rewarding experience.

Susan: I love quiet. I am a composer and conductor but do not listen to music often at home unless I am working on music.

Hope, both in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At Dreams of Hope, a multidisciplinary arts organization for LGBTQ and allied youth, she served as the executive/artistic director for nearly a decade. Susan is now leveraging her experience with creating innovative arts programming to design new programs that integrate art into our work.

Susan is designing new programs that integrate art into Belwin's work.

Susan's interest in working at Belwin stems from childhood memories on the East Coast, attending outdoor concerts where she would “run around the nearby woods and climb trees above the blankets, dancing to the music's crescendos and diminuendos, so happy to be at once outside and a part of the music. Belwin has this feeling!” she noted.

Her enthusiasm for combining the scientific aspect of land preservation with an emotional connection to art and creative expression is what will make Belwin's new programming a success. Susan chose to work at Belwin because her two greatest loves are wilderness and the arts, with a particular affinity for music. “I was captivated by the idea of joining these two at Belwin with the goal to impact the audience's experience of nature in intimate and new ways and focusing on environmental issues and climate change. For me, there is no issue more important,” she said.

Susan has already put an artist in residency program into action beginning with working artist Laurie Allmann, poet and environmental writer. Touring parts of the property together, including the oak savanna restoration at Lake Edith, nature's impact on art struck a chord as Susan

– continued on page 7

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Come join the fun! All members of Belwin are invited to participate in any of the events listed below. All events are free for members but some require preregistration.

Visit our website www.belwin.org/events/, call (651) 436-5189, or email events@belwin.org for more information or to register.

Open Third Saturdays

Once a month all the trails at Belwin are open for every member to come and walk from 11 am to 3 pm. This includes the trails by the Education Center. Fun and ever-changing activities are also planned.

May 21

Trails Open 11 am - 3 pm

Garden Tool Sharpening

Belwin's Martin McGough will help you ready your tools for gardening season. Bring a tool to sharpen – loppers, hand pruners, spades, lawnmower blades, and chain saws are welcome!

Telling Wild Tales: A Writing Workshop

Are you fascinated by the natural world? Would you like to explore environmental themes through poetry, creative nonfiction or memoir? Do you have a story you'd like to tell about your own experiences in wild places? Join environmental author and poet Laurie Allmann for an afternoon of engaging discussion, time outdoors and writing exercises inspired by the beautiful natural setting of Belwin Conservancy. Opportunity will be provided for participants who wish to discuss works-in-progress. Participation in public reading is optional.

Please dress to be outside. Experienced and beginning writers of all genres welcome! Open to ages 16 & up. Space is limited, pre-registration is required.

Telling Wild Tales:

Public Reading & Reception

Later the same day, the public is invited to attend a reading of selected works hosted by Laurie Allmann and interested workshop participants. Light refreshments will be provided. Free and open to the public.

Location for Workshop and Public Reading: Metcalf House, 795 Indian Trail, Afton MN

Laurie Allmann is an environmental writer and spoken word artist with a keen interest in bridging the gap between the scientific community and the general public. She was the recipient of a Minnesota Book Award and has written for programs on both TPT and MPR. She is currently co-editor of Agate (www.agatemag.com), an online magazine focused on the people and environment of Minnesota and the surrounding Great Lakes region, and is Belwin's spring 2016 artist in residence.

June 16

Guided Trout Fishing and

Stream Ecology Along Valley Creek

Due to the feedback we solicited in our last newsletter, we are gearing our first guided trout fishing workshops

to families. Join experienced fly fisherman David Folkert for a workshop covering flyrods, reels, and equipment; casting and mending; insect stages and river/stream ecosystems; fish location and fishing strategies; and an opportunity to put it all together by spending time on the river!

Rods will be provided if needed. Space is limited, pre-registration is required.

David has been fly fishing for almost 30 years in the rivers of NW Wisconsin and Montana, and has extensive experience with stream ecology and river ecosystems.

June 18

Trails Open 11 am - 3 pm

Bison Buggy Rides *

All members are invited to join us for short rides on the Bison Buggy and tour up close with the bison. Look for an email with more information as the date gets closer.

Sounds of the Solstice

Join Belwin's summertime artist in residence, Steve Heitzeg on a sound walk at Belwin. Learn how to start a listening journal or sound diary, and hear and see Heitzeg's conceptual ecoscores composed in honor of nature. Cold drinks provided; please bring lunch.

Steve is an Emmy Award-winning composer known for evocative and lyrical scores written in celebration of the natural world.

July 16

Trails Open 11 am - 3 pm

Guided Trout Fishing Along Valley Creek *

Bison Buggy Rides *

*Times to be announced

August 20

Trails Open 11 am - 3 pm

Guided Trout Fishing Along Valley Creek *

Bison Buggy Rides *

September 17

Trails Open 11 am - 3 pm

Early Morning Bird Hike

6:30 - 8:30 am

Space is limited – registration required.

Guided Trout Fishing Along Valley Creek *

Bison Buggy Rides *

October 15

Trails Open 11 am - 3 pm

November 19

Trails Open 11 am - 3 pm

December 17

Trails Open 11 am - 3 pm

Other Events

June 11

Bison Release 12 noon

Come and cheer as we once again release a herd of Bison at Belwin!

July 20

Lake Edith Special Event 6-8 pm

September 14

Night in Nature 6-8 pm

September 24

Renew Yourself 9 am - noon

Space is limited – registration required.

November 12

Renew Yourself 9 am - noon

Space is limited – registration required.

December 20

Winter Solstice Bonfire

Free and open to public.

2016 will be the ninth year that we have hosted a herd of bison at the Belwin Conservancy and NorthStar Bison has been our partner since the first bison release in 2008. We can't thank them enough for their continued partnership!

Find out more about North Star Bison and purchase their grassfed bison meat at <http://www.northstarbison.com/>





Thank you!

AGAIN, WE TAKE PRIDE IN THANKING EVERYONE who has made contributions to the Belwin Conservancy and become members of our organization. In order to simplify how we publish our members and supporters, we are now including only the names of those who have donated since this list was last published.

In addition, some members have made donations specifically to assist with improvements to the Education Center – these donations are designated with an asterisk*.

Donors from December 23, 2015 to April 14, 2016

Gary Albrigton*	Elizabeth Hixon	Lori & Patrick Rafferty
Ines Alonso & Clayton Lindsey	Phil Holladay	Diane & Timothy Rivas
Brian & Bonnie Alton	Martha Huizenga	Darcy Rowe & Char Greenwald
Penny Anderson	Joe Hunt	Bob & Matilda Rupp
Anonymous*	Bruce & Jean Johnson	Patricia Ryan
Caroline Baillon	Sherwood Johnston & Laurie Maher	Karen & Nicholas Schmit
Rene & Douglas Barclay	Michael Jones	Carol Schoenecker & Cathy Geist
Jacob Behm	Andy Joyce & Kristin Raab	Sherrill & Paul Schottler
Gail Behr	Dr. Arthur & Martha Kaemmer	Julian Sellers
Thomas & Judy Behr	Nancy Kafka in honor of	Anne Simpson*
Johanna Bell	Jerry and Olivia	Melissa & Jeremy Snell
Michele Bevis & Steve Wardell	Heidi Kassenborg	James Stahnke
Mrs. & Mr. G. C. Bird	Kathleen Kelley	Mark Stedman & Nancy Bode
Helen Bond & Kathryn Weese	Kathryn Kent	Sue Steinwall
Wiley Buck & Erica Lepp	Julie & George Kinney	Jean Stewart
Karen Buggs	Gerald Konkol	Valerie Stoehr & Carol Iwata
Alberta Burns	Jill & Chuck Koosmann	Jerome Stransky
Susan & Robert Burns	Ruby & Marvin Koski	Colleen Swedberg
Gary Caldwell	Caroline Kostroski	Graham & Anna Marie Thatcher
Marjana & Robert Callery	Jill Krueger	David & Rita Thofern
Rose Collova Bussjaeger	Kenneth & Janyce Kurttila	Jason Thompson
Julia & Mike Costello	Mitch & Jeanne Leppicello*	Hal Tiffany*
Pat & Steve Cox	Harry & Pegi Levey	Patrick & Helen Tinucci
Lou & John Cunico	Leroy & Sharon Looser	Michelle Vaillancourt
James & Susan Davis	Jim & Nancy Malkowski in memory of	John & Sue VonDelinde
Ruth Ebbens	Julie Malkowski	Patricia Walker & Rebecca Enos
Georgia Entenza	Tony Manzara in memory of	Laurie Waterman
Ann Fallon & Anna Gerenday	Sally Manzara	Gwen Welch
Colleen & Peter Findlay	Laurel March	Kathy Widin
Caroline & Dutton Foster	Howard Markus	Grant & Carol Wiessner
Eric Foster & Daniela Bell	Anita Martin & Paul Sinclair	Shawn Willy
Paul Gade & Kathy Sidles	Jim Mayer & Rochelle Gunn	Tina Wittmer
Pat Gannon	Loring & Lucy McAllister*	Jen & Lucia Wroblewski
Robert & Judy Gardiner	Jamie McBride	
Rick Gardner & Susan Taylor	William & Carolyn McCarthy	
Roger Gay	Nadine McKenna	
Mike & Mary Pat German	Beth McLaughlin	
Don Gettinger	John & Deidre Mead	
Stan & Anne Glad in honor of	Ronald & Cynthia Melzer*	
Cindy & John Glipin	Alida Messinger	
Brian Graff	Judith & Robert Michaelis	
Maria Guion	Roger Miller	
Georgia Haft	Rebecca Morris	
Jim Hagstrom	Susan Nelson & Jim Rue	
Lindsay Halleckson	Diane & Dale Nichols	
David Hallstrom	George Niehaus	
Craig & Karen Hansen	Yvette & John Oldendorf	
Trudy & Bill Harper	Marla Ordway	
Julie Harper-Wylie	Mary & Annie Perkins	
Susan Haugh & Jane Ramsey Miller	Frank & Nancy Petersen	
Greg & Colleen Hayne	Carol Peterson	
Priscilla & Kirk Hedberg	Bill & Kristy Petrich	
Elizabeth & William Heegaard	Susan & Donald Place	
Carolyn Herman	Irene Qualters	

Companies, Foundations & Organizations

Charles H. Bell Charitable Lead Annuity Trust
David Winton Bell Foundation
James Ford Bell Foundation*
Boston Scientific
Salesforce*
Smikis Foundation

New Beginnings

continued from page 5

“watched two eagles circling against a soundscape of geese honking, grass rustling and songbirds foraging.”

Both Susan and Justin have been quick to realize and embrace Belwin's role in protecting precious habitat while educating and sharing inspirational experiences to help further our mission. They recognize Belwin's unique ability to provide opportunities for all walks of people, whether through research projects, educational activities, or games at Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields and how, in turn, our members create a community promoting what Justin feels makes Belwin's work important: protecting natural resources for future generations.

Susan agrees, noting the work we do on the land affects us all directly and indirectly. Belwin works toward creating healthy ecosystems along Valley Creek and into the St. Croix Valley, eventually impacting the environment on a larger scale. “We are connected; all things are connected and Belwin is connected to the health of the earth. I believe this is the most important work of today – the most immediate,” Susan said.

We are thrilled to have Justin and Susan on board and are excited for their fresh ideas and dedication to the land we treasure. Be sure to look out for the new programs, facility upgrades, and management implementation as they help us start the new season and a new year at Belwin!

Kestrel Boxes

Last fall we erected two Kestrel nesting boxes, one near the Lucy Winton Athletic Fields, and one near



the public trails at our Stagecoach Prairie Natural Area. We are currently monitoring these boxes and we need your help! If you see any Kestrel activity at Belwin, particularly

around these nesting boxes, please let us know at info@belwin.org!



BELWIN CONSERVANCY

1553 Stagecoach Trail South
Afton, Minnesota 55001-9703
651 436 5189 651 436 2899 *fax*
www.belwin.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Afton, MN
Permit No. 2

Inspiring through Nature

The mission of the Belwin Conservancy is inspiring our connection to the natural world.

Student Poems and Photos

Sometimes after students visit Belwin Outdoor Science, they are asked by their classroom teachers to reflect on their experiences through poetry. The following poems and photos were written and taken by David Barrett's 7th and 8th grade classes at Farnsworth Aerospace Magnet School in St. Paul.



Turkey Feather

Brown and white
with some spots
and some stripes
soft as baby skin
spread equally
on the deciduous floor

WATER

Be like water, its is shapeless, formless.
If you put water into a cup
It BECOMES the cup.
You put water into the bottle
It BECOMES The bottle.
Water can flow or
water can crash.
Water can be soft and gentle, or
Water can be strong and limitless.
Just Like You, We are limitless with no limited power.
We Crash, we destroy,
But We can save and enlighten.
Water is the root to life, But It too
can be as sharp as a knife.

Belwin Poem .

Whistling winds breathing insects flying
leaves quite bright red
forests animals underground sleeping
sun fading to into a
sunset turning into the moon animals quietly sleeping

River side .

water shouting when the wind blows against the current,
going through every hole that's open, fish swimming in the current
going as fast as they can, they act like there racing to see who will win

B eautiful land
E xciting activities
L uscious trees
W onderful teachers
I nspiring lessons
N o negativity

Forest

The leaves crunch beneath my feet
listening to birds chirping
openings to a green meadow
blue skies not a cloud in sight
by the river bank
rocks falling to the water
the water gleaming by the suns reflection
back up the hill you see dancing tree tops
the sunlight makes the view breath taking
then it came to the end of the path

