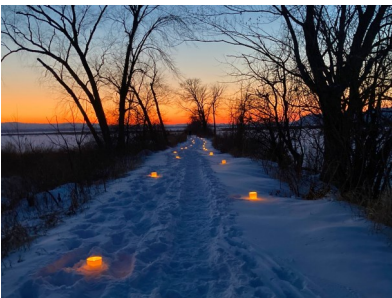


Spring  
2023

# Friends of Trempealeau Refuge

## Friends Focus...

### 2023 Luminary Hike



On Saturday, February 24th, we hosted our First Luminary Hike in the Refuge. Visitors were invited to snowshoe or hike a self-guided luminary trail on Pine Creek Dike. We were

surprised with the great attendance! Everyone that came was excited about hiking the trail. Visitors came from as far away as Rochester, MN. We were so excited to see so many enjoying this unique, after dark experience complete with an amazing sunset and perfect weather. Our hearts were happy to see participants of all ages including some furry friends at this evening Refuge event. Stay tuned for more 2023 Refuge events.

By: Ranger Dana M. Schelling

## Note from the Friends

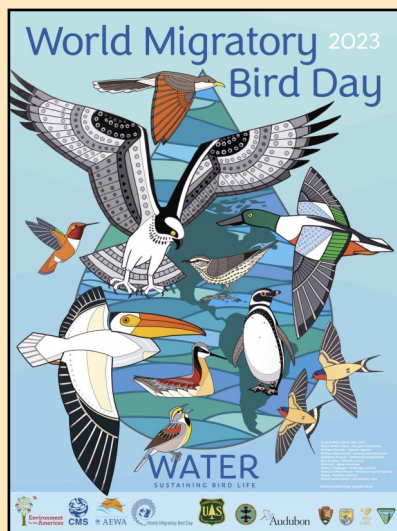
### Refuge Volunteering Opportunities

Would you or a friend like to become a volunteer at our Refuge? Spring is the time to recruit new volunteers. Being a weekend greeter on the observation deck is one opportunity. Deck volunteers usually spend an average of 3 hours on selected Saturdays or Sundays from May through October interacting with visitors. Training is provided along with a handbook loaded with useful information.

The observation deck is a busy place! In 2022, fifteen different volunteers greeted over 1200 visitors from 19 states and Canada, Belgium, Australia and Switzerland. Deck visitors might be photographers, hikers, bikers, birders, area campers, or sightseers. The deck is especially busy during bird migration.

For more information on Refuge volunteer opportunities, contact Dana Schelling at 608-539-2311 ext#1.

Submitted by: Jean Ledman, Deck Volunteer Coordinator



### Save The Date!

**Friday, May 12th – WMBD Kickoff at Elmaro Vineyard Social hour: 5:30-6:30p.m. Program: 6:30p.m.**

Craig Thompson, a long-time WI DNR specialist and migratory bird expert, has made numerous research trips to critical tropical areas where many of our migrant birds spend the winter. Don't miss his inspiring and informative program entitled "**Putting the Kibosh on Extinction: The Power of Birds**" at 6:30p.m. (Sponsored by Friends of Trempealeau Refuge.) Elmaro will be releasing their 2023 special Bird Day Red wine in conjunction with 2023 World Migratory Bird Day.

**Saturday, May 13th - World Migratory Bird Day Festival at the Refuge**  
Guided morning bird walks, live raptors, bird banding and fun for all ages.

## Fun Facts

By Scott Lee

Although many of you would rather never have to think about bats, this is actually the time of year that we ALL should be doing just that. They'll be showing up around here within the next few weeks and we'll be blessed with them into September. Love them or hate them, it's a fact that we all NEED them. Fewer bats mean more mosquitos and other pesky nocturnal insects and, in many parts of the world, a lot fewer beneficial plants being pollinated.

One little brown bat (the most common bat species on the refuge) can eat up to 3,000 insects (primarily mosquitos) every night. I don't know about you, but I'd rather have one bat around than 3,000 mosquitos. Then consider that they are active around here for at least 5 months, aka 150 days. Do the math – one bat will eat up to 450,000 mosquitos per year. One bat, or nearly ½ million mosquitos – hmm, the decision sure seems easy to me! The refuge has a bat “condo” in place near the woods in the field behind the maintenance buildings. A number of volunteers were involved in a “bat exit survey” last spring and summer. These hardy (maybe crazy?) folks took turns, each spending about one evening every week sitting near this condo counting the number of bats heading out on their nightly feeding frenzy so counts were done three to four nights each week. Before these counts, it had been estimated that the condo was home to maybe 200-300 bats. Thanks to this survey, it is now known that the condo is the summer residence to nearly 1,000 bats! (You might want to do the math on that as far as total mosquito consumption over this five-month time. I would do it for you, but I only taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade so it's kind of beyond my mathematical skills.). This is an amazing number of bats and we are extremely lucky to have such a healthy bat population these days. A disease called ‘white nose syndrome’ is killing off our bats at an alarming rate so they are in peril.

You're not being asked to go out and pet or cuddle with them, but we all at least need to respect them and do what we can to protect them - even if you choose to do that from a distance.

*Note: Friends recently provided materials to a student who assembled kits for a Refuge bat workshop so participants could build their own bat house.*

**Welcome Spring!** It's a great time to visit our Refuge. Swans, Pelicans and many migrating birds are enjoying it too! The Friends have been busy planning events for the spring and summer.

“Artists in the Refuge” will be Saturday morning, June 3rd . We are seeking more plein air artists. Please contact Val Critzman if you are interested in participating. We will notify you when the dates are set for future programs. Reminder that World Migratory Day activities will be held on May 12th and 13th . I hope you can join us! Enjoy the spring-like weather and visit your Refuge!

-Val Critzman, Friends President  
email: kvcritz@gmail.com



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<http://www.friendsoftrempealeaurefuge.org>



Would you like to contact the refuge? Here's how!

Call 608-539-2311

For more information visit our website:

<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/trempealeau/>

Or the refuge Facebook page:

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/TrempealeauNWR)

[TrempealeauNWR](https://www.facebook.com/TrempealeauNWR)

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The [Friends of Trempealeau Refuge](http://www.friendsoftrempealeaurefuge.org) is committed to providing an independent citizen voice for the protection, conservation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitats at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge.