



the Meadowlark

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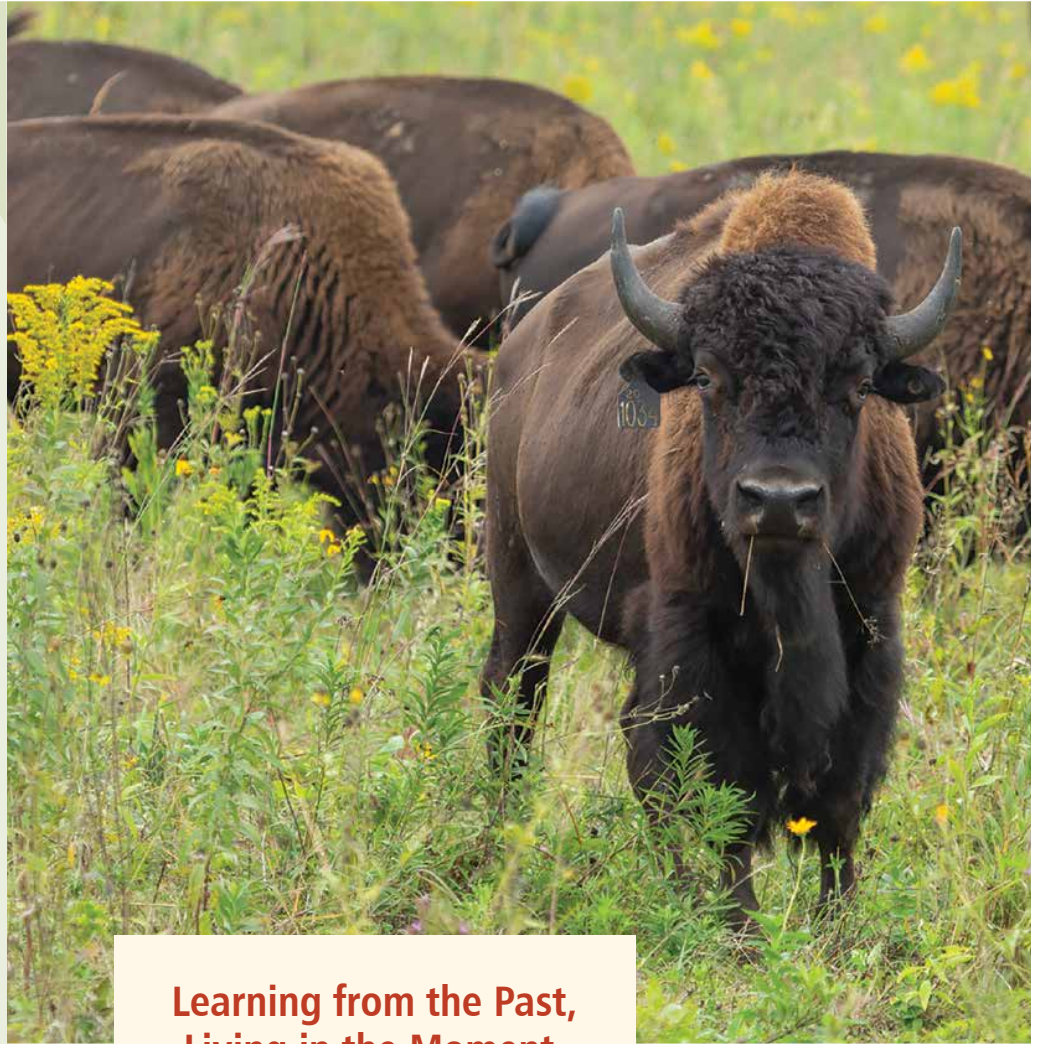
Fun Fact:

As you hike this spring and summer, watch for the turkey vulture and its side-to-side, teetering soaring style.

To identify a turkey vulture, look for the V-shape, or dihedral of the wings, long "fingers" at the ends of the wings, and the tell-tale red, bald head.



BELWIN CONSERVANCY
Inspiring through Nature



**Learning from the Past,
Living in the Moment,
Building a Better Future.**





Honoring Our History, Growing Toward the Future

BELWIN OWNS NEARLY 1,400 ACRES, roughly half of which are restored to native habitats of prairie, oak savanna, and mixed hardwood forest. We do our best each year to maintain those 700 acres, keeping invasive species at bay while cultivating greater diversity of native flora and fauna. We also tackle new restoration efforts each year, picking off a few more acres (or many more, if we have the funding) so we can continue moving toward the goal of restoring all areas of Belwin.

“How do we keep our wild places wild while encouraging more people to come in?”

That growth in restored habitat mirrors the growth we need in awareness and participation. The problems we face today of water quality, land protection, wildlife conservation, and climate change are so big that they demand more people be engaged. Belwin can serve as a connection

point to the natural world to help us understand these issues and to become stewards of our environment.

As we expand our reach and operations, the question I ask about our future is how we grow. How do we attract new people while remaining true to our core mission of conservation? How do we keep our wild places wild while encouraging more people to come in? We have exciting plans to foster an innovative environment where science, nature, art, and education all intersect. In the coming months, I'll be gathering perspectives of staff, board, volunteers, neighbors, members, and newcomers to get feedback on these ideas and find the path that best strengthens Belwin.

Belwin has a rich past built on the generosity of people who care about conservation, partnerships with those

who value education, and the belief that one of the most vital things we can do is protect the land, waters, and wildlife. As



we implement new programs and increase access to Belwin, we will stay true to those core principles, honoring our history while growing toward the future.

Katie Bloome

Katie Bloome
Executive Director, Belwin Conservancy
katie.bloome@belwin.org
Direct: 651-435-0848



Angie Eckel
Development Director

- Building a comprehensive fundraising program that supports Belwin's education and conservation efforts.
- B.A. from College of St. Benedict; Masters in vocal music performance.
- Previously worked in philanthropic development at Minnesota Public Radio.

“I love that Belwin is protecting land not only for us and future generations, but for the plants and animals that have called this land home for ages. In this day and age, when we are constantly thinking about how much we can cram into each minute, it's inspiring to think of the long arc of time, and how our actions in this time and place will impact this area for years to come.”



Meredith Junker
Operations Associate

- If you call the office, most likely to answer the phone and field your questions.
- Is the administrative support for the programming, development, and restoration teams.
- B.S. in biology - field research and a minor emphasizing in nonprofit marketing communications and animal science.

“One of my favorite things about Belwin is the encouragement to get outside. Children have a natural instinct to pursue adventure and get immersed in nature. Unfortunately, this curiosity can dilute with time. I'm thankful for a workplace that incites an excitement for learning and motivates all generations to get outdoors.”



Michael Oakes
Land Assistant

- Hands-on assistance with all land management activities, from prescribed burning to wetland management.
- B.S. in natural resource and rangeland ecology with a concentration in wildlife habitat ecology and management.

“I am very excited and inspired to work with Belwin because our mission is connecting everyday people and kids with the outdoors. This is a big one for me because the younger generations will soon be the stewards of these lands. The best thing we can do is inspire children to love nature just as much as we do.”

Meet Our New Staff

Belwin is a small organization with an incredible staff. We're proud to introduce you to three of our newest team members.

On the Cutting Edge

By Greg Seitz,
Belwin Conservancy Communications Partner

SOMETIMES, SAVING A FOREST MEANS CUTTING DOWN A FEW TREES. That's what Belwin's staff was doing this winter, when approximately 100 red pines were cut from a planted stand near the Belwin Education Center.

In this case, pine bark beetles infested the cluster of trees, killing them and threatening the rest of the woodland. To control the pine bark beetles, Belwin staff cut the trees in late February, and destroyed them by chipping and burning before spring arrived.

"If we let those trees die and fade away, the bark beetles will reproduce more, and they will attack other trees," says Belwin Operations Director Justin Sykora. "If we remove the infested trees and other stressed trees surrounding them, it will slow the progress of the pest."

Restoration resource

Part of Belwin's strength lies in knowing how to control invasive species and other pests, as well as having the resources to do the work. However, like the rest of our land management colleagues, there are always more threats than time and money.

That's why we work smart, to accomplish the most we can. It makes Belwin a valuable resource for anyone dealing with the same challenges.

"There's a community that Belwin is part of, sharing information about land management," says Sykora. That means Belwin's staff members are some of the first to know when new pests are identified in the surrounding area, and when new strategies for combating them are developed.

In our case, we have about 1,400 acres, a diverse array of ecotypes from prairie to lowland forest, and decades of experience



managing it for natural character. Because Belwin is a private nonprofit, we can also experiment with new land management techniques, where public agencies are usually more restricted to traditional methods.

In this way and others, Belwin is a leader in crafting the future of conservation. Instead of focusing only on protecting new lands, Belwin's work highlights the importance of maintaining and managing what we already have.

For example, with the widespread harm caused by invasive species such as buckthorn, Sykora says it's critical to start controlling pests as soon as they are identified. That means staying up-to-date on what is showing up, spending time on the landscape to look for infestations, and knowing what to do when we find it.

"We're doing it for humanity, but we're also doing it for those plants and animals that have been here, should be here, and are threatened by these invasive species," says Lynette Anderson,

Belwin interpretive naturalist and land management assistant. "We're helping create a place for Vesper sparrows and Henslow's sparrows, because our job is to speak for those species."

It's hard to lose trees, but the pine grove project illustrates Belwin's commitment to restoring healthy landscapes. By cutting and destroying the infested pines, Belwin could prevent the spread of the beetles, ensuring the long-term health of the land it has committed itself to protecting.

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This is a condensed version of a longer article. To read the article in its entirety, go to <http://tinyurl.com/OntheCuttingEdge>

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Please join us at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 1 at the Belwin Education Center for a discussion about red pine management. Visit belwin.org for complete info.

Committed to Staying on the Forefront

Whether regarding new or known invasive species, Belwin is committed to being a resource for our surrounding neighbors and community. Some of the resources we use include:

- **Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin:** IPAW.org
- **Midwest Invasive Species Information Network:** MISIN.msu.edu
- **Minnesota Department of Agriculture:** mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects
- **Washington Conservation District:** mnwcd.org



Music in the Trees

By Susan Haugh, Program Director

MUSIC IN THE TREES, OUR INAUGURAL TWO-DAY OUTDOOR MUSICAL EVENT, will be held August 17 and 18, 2019, in the four-acre red pine forest next to Belwin's Education Center.

Along trails and in small wooded gathering spaces, audiences will be treated to a variety of ecological/musical experiences, like groups of musicians performing from hunting stands in the trees and recorded sound installations with participatory stations.

These installations will be designed in rhythmic patterns to entice everyone to participate! We hope people of all ages will have fun, dance, sing, and play natural instruments like rocks, dried seed pods, dried pine cones, sticks, and dried leaves.

Through these experiences, we will highlight the changes in the ecosystem, creating an event with space to mourn the death of this pine grove (see the Land Management article on page 3) while celebrating new growth and change. Music in the Trees will be held each year as Belwin transitions the grove to a more sustainable habitat.

In addition, Belwin is partnering with the Center for Hmong Arts and Talent (CHAT) for a special performance on Sunday, Aug. 18 at 1:00 p.m. Much of traditional Hmong music is influenced by nature, a perfect synergy with Belwin's landscape and mission to inspire through nature.



This fully accessible and sensory-friendly performance will feature Hmong musicians performing both traditional and contemporary music.

See page 5 for more details or visit belwin.org/events.

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.



Ephemeral art, like this native-seed paper bison skull, will be a focus of Rory's residency at Belwin. The skull is a collaboration between Rory Wakemup and Keith BraveHeart.

Artist In Residence: Rory Wakemup

Energized by the work and vision of artist Rory Wakemup, we have invited him to be our 2019 Artist in Residence. We look forward to sharing Rory's work with you via our website and at an event later in 2019.

Rory is a multidisciplinary artist whose work turns the script of cultural appropriation on its head. He has morphed his experience in American Indian ceremonies with his studio art practice, becoming a conduit between conceptual ideas and the materials at hand.

Spring Awakening

By Lynette Anderson, Interpretive Naturalist

The pleasures of spring after a long winter are not only visual and olfactory; a vernal auditory delight is the chorus of amphibian mating calls.



Wood frogs are the earliest breeders, beginning just after frost-out, and lasting only about two weeks. You can hear the males "quacking" in ephemeral ponds created by snowmelt and spring rains.

Warmer water temperatures bring out other parts of the amphibian choir, like the toads and tree frogs. Listen for these singers throughout the month of May and into June. Toads provide a constant high-pitched trill as background to the melodic short-burst trills of the Gray and Cope's Gray treefrogs.

3 Things to Know About Amphibians:

1. **They are bio-indicators.** Like the canary in the coal mine, if something is amiss in the wetlands, amphibians will be affected first and act as an alarm.
2. **Not all adult frogs live around water.** While they are all born in the water, mature frogs inhabit wetland edges, forests and prairies.
3. **Adult amphibians are valuable as pest control,** eating many of the insects that drive humans crazy!

Visit belwin.org/events for a list of upcoming hikes led by Belwin naturalists.

Photos: Meredith Junker (top), Woodfrog courtesy of Brian Gratwicke, Rory Wakemup (bottom). Opposite: Sharon Sykora (top), other photos are the property of Belwin Conservancy.

Don't miss these major events at Belwin!



Spring Galaxy Party

Friday, April 26 (Rain date April 27)

8:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Join Minnesota Astronomical Society members to view galaxy superclusters like Markarian's Chain in the Virgo, Leo and Coma Berenices constellations, and to learn about photography using telescopes. Featuring music by **Red Eye Ruby**. Sponsored by **Bent Paddle Brewing**. *Belwin Conservancy Joseph J. Casby Observatory, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton. \$5/car. RSVP by April 26 to events@belwin.org.*

Belwin Bison Festival

Saturday, May 18

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

This free community festival celebrates the bison's critical role in helping Belwin maintain and improve our restored prairie. Includes: bison release, interactive eco-arts, 5k "Run with the Bison" fun trail run (entrance fee), machinery petting zoo, live music, and food trucks. *Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields, West Lakeland. Free and open to the public.*

Education Center: New Summer Hours!

Open Every Saturday, Memorial Day – Labor Day

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Participate in programs, meet Belwin staff, explore the trails, and connect with nature.

Guided Experiences will be held on the third Saturday of the month at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. In June and July, we're excited to offer special programming for families with young children. *Check website or call 651-436-5189 for each month's topics and cost. Belwin Education Center, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton.*



Music in the Trees

Saturday, August 17 and Sunday, August 18

11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Celebrate new life and mourn the death of a four-acre red pine grove adjacent to Belwin's Education Center. Audiences at this free, two-day outdoor event will experience music performed at five stations, including a fully accessible performance at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 18, in partnership with the Center for Hmong Arts and Talent. Free transportation to and from Belwin on Aug. 18 from Woodbury's Central Park. *Belwin Education Center, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton. Free and open to the public.*

EVENT INFO


Call: 651-436-5189

Email: info@belwin.org

Visit: belwin.org/events

 Like @belwinconservancy

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If you have a specialty you would like to share at an upcoming Belwin event, please email susan.haugh@belwin.org.

Giving that Goes Farther

Belwin has two exciting opportunities to double the impact of your giving.

Help Belwin purchase equipment!

Traversing all 1,400 open acres of Belwin on foot is a dreamy prospect for many, but even the most hearty of us would admit there are times when more horsepower is in order. Clearing invasives, hauling materials, and facilities maintenance are just a few of the reasons Belwin staff use that horsepower, and at the moment it's in low supply. Our old truck finally retired this winter, and we are in need of equipment to replace it.

You can help! Thanks to an anonymous donor, **any gift toward Belwin's equipment fund will be matched, as long as we reach our goal of \$20,000.** So you can double your giving and help us round out our fleet!

Grow your giving and share Belwin with a friend

This year, consider increasing your annual gift to Belwin and inviting a friend to become a new member. If we reach our goal of \$30,000 in new and increased giving by the end of the year, a generous anonymous donor will match both. So make that extra \$50 into an extra \$100, and know you're going even farther to support connections to nature.

Visit belwin.org/support to learn more.



Many Hands Make Light Work

By Kate Seitz, Belwin Conservancy Communications Partner

Volunteer David Mrozinski has been busy building benches. They're popping up all over Belwin's trails at the Creative Center (formerly Metcalf Property) and at Stagecoach Prairie.

Since the start of the year, the former metal worker has been happily building benches, 21 in total.

"After my wife, Sharon, passed away, I was looking for somewhere out in the sticks to get back to the basics," David says. "At first Belwin was a place for me to get away in nature. I also found a fun group of people. I'm a nature nut and love being here."

Come and see David's handiwork, and enjoy the benches for yourself. Thank you, David!

Welcome Polly Carlson!

Starting this spring, Polly Carlson has taken on the role of Belwin's volunteer coordinator. We are grateful to former coordinator Steve Martin for his organizational help with our volunteer program – and also for connecting us with Polly.

"Until I came to Belwin, I didn't realize how much I missed being outside in natural areas, rather than local city parks and my own yard," says Polly, who lives in Oakdale. "When the opportunity to help Belwin Conservancy presented itself, I knew it was something I wanted to do."

Welcome to Belwin, Polly!

On Wednesday afternoons in September and October, we need volunteers to help with seed collection. If you're interested, please contact Polly Carlson at volunteers@belwin.org.



YES, WE CAN USE THAT!

You can support Belwin with a tax-deductible, in-kind donation. Please contact us at 651-436-5189 or donations@belwin.org if you want to donate any of the following items. Thank you!

- 4 x 4 truck
- Large anvil
- Vehicle hoist
- ATV with tracks
- Matching set of kitchen dishes
- Yard & shop tools
- Gas-powered golf cart
- Mountain bike
- Generator
- Vacuum

ALWAYS FREE AND OPEN

Stagecoach Prairie features 4.5 miles of trails great for hiking and bird watching.

This summer, a new pond trail is coming to Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields. Look for info on the sports buildings. Visit belwin.org for more info.

Upcoming Events at Belwin

Education Center: New Summer Hours!

Every Saturday, Memorial Day – Labor Day, the Belwin Education Center will be open 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

April 26	Galaxy Party
April 27	Galaxy Party Rain Date
May 7	Frog Walk
May 12	Mother's Day Bird Hike
May 18	Belwin Bison Festival
May 21	Twilight Hike
May 25	Summer Saturdays Begin
June 1	Red Pine Management Talk
June 15	Third Saturday: Children's Programming
June 18	Twilight Hike
June 21	Women Walking
July 16	Twilight Hike
July 20	Third Saturday: Children's Programming
August 17–18	Music in the Trees
August 20	Twilight Hike
August 31	Summer Saturdays End
September 15	Saturday Seed Collection
September 17	Twilight Hike
September 20	Women Walking
September 21	Third Saturdays Resume

Visit belwin.org/events for complete info.

HONORING

Lucy Hartwell

By David Hartwell

I think it's fair to say that, without the outdoors, the life my mother lived would have been much different – and far less fulfilling.

The natural world was a central part of Lucy Hartwell's life. Her parents (Belwin founders Charlie Bell and Lucy Winton Bell) loved nature and exposed her to its joys from an early age. My mother became an avid fly-fisherwoman and a passionate birdwatcher with a life list of 4,043 birds.



Lucy Hartwell loved fly fishing, birding and spending time in the outdoors.

While Lucy traveled the world, watching the migrating warblers in Afton each spring always brought a special and great joy.

From Belwin's very beginnings, Lucy played a key role. In 1958, she joined her father when he was invited to fly fish Valley Creek on a -30 degree day. Charlie wanted to cancel the trip but Lucy, six months

pregnant at the time with my sister, Jill, wouldn't hear of it. That day was their first visit to the original property the Bells purchased in Afton; land that would lead to the creation of Belwin just 12 years later.

Lucy served on the original Belwin board from 1970 to 2006. She had a strong connection to the mission of land and wildlife conservation. However, the ability to reach children and create a connection and passion for the outdoors was what truly excited her about Belwin's work.

On December 8, 2018, Lucy visited Belwin for the last time, walking by

herself, taking in the natural beauty and solitude – something she never tired of.

My mother had time to prepare for her own celebration of life and wanted to share three big questions that were always foremost in her mind:

“What is my purpose?”

Lucy wanted to be sure she was making a difference in big and small ways. After she was diagnosed with esophageal cancer, this question became pressing in a new way. She wanted to know how she could make the best use of the time she had left.

“Is there a better way to look at this?”

Without being a Pollyanna, Lucy embodied the truth of one of her favorite quotes: “You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses.”

“Who needs my help?”

Lucy asked this every day of her life. Lucy Hartwell led quietly, and by example, and will be missed by all who knew her.



From left: Belwin founder Charlie Bell, David Hartwell, Lucy Hartwell, and unknown.

Your Support Is Appreciated!

This is an exciting time at Belwin.

We are looking to the future with enthusiasm and hope, and we are grateful to the individuals, businesses, and foundations whose generous financial support has helped us get here.

As we look ahead, we are trying new things in the *Meadowlark*: refraining from printing donor lists and moving our

annual report online. Let us know what you think of the changes we're making to your newsletter by contacting our office at 651-436-5189 or angie.eckel@belwin.org. We'd love to hear your feedback.

But rest assured one thing won't change: You are making a lasting difference as members and contributors to Belwin.

Because of you, we are keeping the wilderness wild, teaching children the wonders of the natural world, and giving so many the chance to connect with nature. We are truly grateful!

Belwin Conservancy Board of Directors

- David Hartwell, President
- Doug Johnson, Vice President
- John Satorius, Secretary
- Jill Koosmann, Treasurer
- Jerry Allan
- Irene Qualters
- John VonDeLinde



BELWIN CONSERVANCY

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Inspiring through Nature

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

BELWIN CONSERVANCY PRESENTS



Belwin Bison Festival

Festival Includes:
Bison Release, Eco-arts, 5k Run, Machinery
Petting Zoo, Live Music & Food Trucks

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2019
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

This is a **FREE Event!**
Entrance fee for 5k

LOCATION: Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields,
15601 Hudson Road, West Lakeland, MN 55082
belwin.org/events (651) 436-5189

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