



PRESS RELEASE

50TH CELEBRATION OPEN HOUSE IS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9

All of Belwin Conservancy's trails will be open and will host unique outdoor activities

(AFTON, Minn.) — Belwin Conservancy is 50! In honor of our milestone anniversary, we are opening all of our trails to the public for a day of fun outdoor activities. Come join in the unexpected: pop-up music and dance performances, eco-arts activities for all ages, poetry readings, and a disco dance on the prairie along with naturalist-led hikes, kid-friendly science-based activities, and a celebratory gathering!

“There will be something to surprise and delight at each Belwin Conservancy location,” says Susan Haugh, Belwin Conservancy Program Director.

Event Details

Belwin Conservancy's 50th Celebration Open House

Saturday, October 9, 2021

Trails open 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Celebratory gathering starting at 2:00 p.m. at Belwin's Education Center.

belwin.org/event/50th-open-house/

info@belwin.org

651-436-5189

We invite the public to join us at sites across Belwin's 1,500 acres for a wide variety of family-friendly festivities. With the help of our partners, we'll share the best of the tallgrass prairie, oak savanna, wetlands and woodlands that have been home to our programs for 50 years. Highlights include:

- Kid-friendly science activities with Saint Paul Public Schools staff
- Sun spotting and telescope instruction with the Minnesota Astronomical Society
- Poetry readings and activities led by Leslie Thomas, Vice President, Afton Historical Museum
- Art installation in the ArtReach St. Croix Mobile Art Gallery
- Self-guided tours of Minnesota Nature Photography Club's larger-than-life photos
- Meet-and-greet at the Belwin labyrinth with designer Lisa Moriarty
- Eco-arts activities for all ages, in partnership with The Phipps Center for the Arts
- Pop-up music and dance events throughout the day
- Guided hikes with Belwin staff



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- More than 17 miles of trails to explore on your own
- ADA trails open to the public
- Handicap access and ASL for the 2:00 p.m. celebration

Visit our [website](#) for more details on location and time of events throughout the day.

This event will be held rain or shine; dress for the weather. Bring your own food and non-alcoholic drinks. No dogs. No bicycles on the trails. See our [general guidelines](#) for complete information.

50 Years of Connecting People to Nature

In 1970, Charles Bell and Lucy Winton Bell signed an agreement with Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) that would dedicate their land to outdoor science education for children. They established the Belwin Foundation (a combination of their names, Bell and Winton) and donated 225 acres of their land to it. **With the arrival of students in 1971, Belwin Outdoor Education Laboratory, now Belwin Outdoor Science, was born.**

Belwin built and continues to maintain the 5,000-square-foot Belwin Education Center; SPPS designs and delivers program curriculum through its trained staff, and provides student transportation to and from the property.

In 1975, Belwin Conservancy caretaker John Palmen devised a vehicle to transport students with special needs into the woods, the creek, and out on the prairie. The early success of these outings led to Belwin's adapted outdoor education program, one of the first of its kind, which continues today.

As the outdoor science program became more successful, it grew to include students from other area schools, including Afton-Lakeland Elementary and Bayport Elementary (now Andersen Elementary). **Since 1971, more than 600,000 children have participated in the Belwin Outdoor Science program.**

PHOTO: [Belwin_Kettelkamp Prairie_SPPS_By May Vang.jpg](#)

Belwin Conservancy's 50th Celebration Open House is from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 9, 2021. Visit belwin.org/events for complete information. Photo by May Vang.



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CONTACT

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ABOUT BELWIN CONSERVANCY

[Belwin Conservancy](https://www.belwin.org) is a nonprofit organization with a mission of inspiring connection and engagement with the natural world. At Belwin, we spark passion for wild places through a variety of innovative experiential programs that include the arts, astronomy, athletic fields, bison, education, and public access to our restored lands. Through land protection and habitat restoration, we revive threatened ecosystems so wildlife can thrive for generations to come. Located in Afton, Minnesota, on the ancestral home of the Wahpekute Dakota people, Belwin's 1,500 acres of permanently protected land includes woodland, prairie, oak savanna, ponds, streams, and wetlands.

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