



## PRESS RELEASE

### WINTER SOLSTICE BONFIRE TO BE HELD ON DECEMBER 20

*Belwin's annual celebration of the longest night moves to a new location*

November 23, 2021 (AFTON, Minn.) — Belwin Conservancy will hold its [Winter Solstice Bonfire](#) from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Monday, December 20. This annual celebration of the longest night is a major attraction for St. Croix Valley residents as well as those from the Twin Cities seeking a memorable outdoor event to mark the changing of the seasons.

This year, the event will be held at Belwin's Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields (15601 Hudson Road N., Lakeland, 55082). The new location features ample parking and room for the hundreds of people who typically attend.

One of the major draws is the huge bonfire around which activities are centered. Belwin staff construct the bonfire woodpile days ahead of time, using forklifts and excavators to move heavy pieces of wood and piles of brush into place.

As is customary in many cultures across the world, Belwin's Winter Solstice Bonfire also features storytelling. For the second year, Belwin is welcoming [Ikidowin Youth Acting Ensemble](#), a theater program for Ikidowin youth ages 12-18.

At 7:00 p.m., the young storytellers will share their own spoken word pieces, appropriate for listeners of all ages. "Inviting the Ikidowin Youth Acting Ensemble to perform at the Belwin Winter Solstice Bonfire helps uplift our mission to share Native stories, promote our culture, and provide education with the surrounding communities," says Curtis Kirby, director of the Ikidowin Acting Ensemble. "By allowing a platform, Native youth have unique opportunities to share accurate representations of Indigenous peoples."

Additional activities at Belwin's Winter Solstice Bonfire include guided night hikes through Belwin's surrounding forest and prairie, self-guided hikes to the Belwin Labyrinth, and hot cider and cookies in a warming tent.

The cost to attend is \$10 per car. More information is at [belwin.org/event/winter-solstice-bonfire/](http://belwin.org/event/winter-solstice-bonfire/)

**Photo:** [BelwinConservancy\\_WinterSolsticeBonfire.jpg](#)

*Held on Monday, December 20, Belwin Conservancy's Winter Solstice Bonfire marks the longest night with storytelling by Ikidowin Youth Acting Ensemble, guided night hikes, and more.*

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### **Additional events at Belwin in December:**

#### **Saturday, December 4**

##### **Hiking into the Night**

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Belwin's Education Center, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, MN 55001

Join us for an exploration into the other half of day, when darkness envelops our world. We will begin inside with a brief overview of winter night life at Belwin and then head out to witness the beauty of the dark. We will end our evening with light refreshments around a fire. Come dressed in layers for any weather. RSVP required.

\$20 per family. Open to ages 12 and older (youth must be accompanied by an adult).

[belwin.org/event/hiking-into-the-night/](http://belwin.org/event/hiking-into-the-night/)

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#### **Friday, December 17 and Saturday, December 18**

##### **Women Walking**

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Belwin's Education Center, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, MN 55001

Join us to celebrate the seasonal changes in the natural world. Vernal Equinox, Summer Solstice, Autumnal Equinox, Winter Solstice — each brings us to a new season, a new place in our annual trip around the sun. We will gather indoors for a welcome and some easy centering exercises. We will then move out to the woods and prairies for walking meditations and experiences in the natural world. We will end our time together with light refreshments around the fire. Wear comfortable layers and be prepared for any weather. RSVP required.

\$20 per person. Open to all women ages 16 and older (permission from a guardian is required for those under 18 years of age). [belwin.org/event/women-walking/](http://belwin.org/event/women-walking/)

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### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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### INFORMATION

[belwin.org/events](http://belwin.org/events)

[info@belwin.org](mailto:info@belwin.org)

651-436-5189

### ABOUT BELWIN CONSERVANCY

[Belwin Conservancy](http://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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