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BELWIN



BELWIN CELEBRATES THE WINTER SOLSTICE

This December, Belwin Conservancy Will Ring In the Winter Solstice with Live Music, Guided Night Hikes, and a Roaring Bonfire

Afton, MN — On Wednesday, December 20th, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm, Belwin Conservancy will host the annual **Winter Solstice Bonfire**, a celebration of the year's longest night. The evening will feature a roaring bonfire and live music, beginning with a performance from Imniza Ska Dakota Drum Group, and followed by stories and songs of Nordic Solstice performed by Kari Tauring and Carol Sersland. Guided night hikes led by Belwin naturalists will also be available. This celebration will take place at the Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields (15601 Hudson Road N., Lakeland, MN 55082). Cookies and hot cider will be available in a nearby warming tent.

Now a yearly tradition, the Winter Solstice Bonfire began in 2017 as an opportunity to help the community connect during the coldest nights of winter. To help guests stay warm, Belwin constructs a massive bonfire, whose light can be seen from Hudson

Road. The wood for this fire is made of downed and damaged trees that have been cleared throughout the year by local Afton business, SavATree.

As guests gather around the bonfire, they can listen to live music and storytelling. The program will begin with Imniza Ska Dakota Drum Group, who will play a welcoming song, followed by a song in honor of the Solstice. This rousing group performed at last year's bonfire to great acclaim.



Imniza Ska Dakota Drum Group

The Drum Group will be followed by the evening's main act, Kari Tauring and Carol Sersland. The duo will perform traditional Norwegian music and storytelling through winter calls and nature instruments from the Northland. They will also lead audiences in participatory songs and percussion.

In addition to the roaring bonfire and the rousing music, night hikes will also be offered every half hour starting at 6:15. To help guests of all ages appreciate the outdoors, Jenny Hanlon of Stillwater Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) will lead a short hike at 6:15 pm geared towards families with children 5 and under.

"It never ceases to amaze me how many people come out to play, hike, and just be together at this event," says Angie Eckel, Belwin's Development and Communications Director. "It's a rare opportunity to be outside together in the midst of a Minnesota winter. No matter how frigid the temps are, it's always warm by the bonfire!"

We invite guests of all ages to join us on the eve of the Winter Solstice on December 20th, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields (15601 Hudson Road N., Lakeland, MN 55082). Parking will be \$10 per car.



INFORMATION

Please note: No dogs allowed at this or any Belwin event. Alcohol is not permitted. Restrooms will be available for guests. This bonfire requires a short walk through packed down snow to reach.

www.belwin.org/events
info@belwin.org

ABOUT BELWIN CONSERVANCY

[Belwin Conservancy](#) 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.