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BELWIN



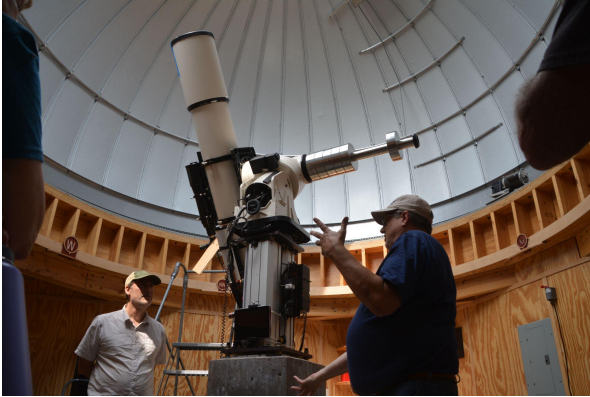
A NIGHT OF MIDWINTER FAMILY FUN AT BELWIN

*On February 3rd, Belwin Conservancy Will Host Midwinter Family Fun:
An Evening of Guided Hikes, Campfires, Stargazing, and More*

Afton, MN — On **Saturday, February 3rd, from 5 to 7 pm**, Belwin Conservancy will host Midwinter Family Fun. This night of outdoor activities features hikes through the snow guided by Belwin naturalists, **stargazing with Minnesota Astronomical Society**, and s'mores around the campfire. Children's education will be front and center this year, with a **guided hike** by Jenny Hanlon of Stillwater Early Childhood Family Education at 5:45 pm, and representatives from the **University of Minnesota's "Bugs Below Zero" team** present throughout the evening. The event is free and will take place at the Hilltop Classroom at Belwin's Education Site (1553 Stagecoach Trail South, Afton, MN, 55001). Warm drinks will be available for visitors indoors.

One of the most popular attractions each year is the Joseph J. Casby Observatory, which has one of the largest refracting telescopes in the state. The telescope, located

in the Observatory, will be available for guests who wish to see the night sky with the help of Minnesota Astronomical Society volunteers. With February marking the unofficial start of the Milky Way season, guests of all ages are sure to enjoy seeing the winter stars from a new perspective.



In addition to stargazing, a guided night hike will be available every half hour starting at 5:15 pm. For families with children 5 and under who want to experience Belwin's snowy woodlands and moonlit prairies, a single hike will be led at 5:45 pm by Jenny Hanlon of Stillwater Early Childhood Family Education. Hanlon, who led a similar hike last year, will help families have a deeper understanding of how Minnesota transforms in the winter, while incorporating interactive songs and activities.

New this year is the presence of the Bugs Below Zero research team from the University of Minnesota. This team will help guests of all ages meet Minnesota's winter aquatic insects and learn about their important role in winter stream food webs. There will be an interactive insect demonstration for adults, kids, students, and families that connects weather, streams, aquatic insects, and fish.

Though this event has developed over the years, its central mission has always stayed the same: to enjoy midwinter in good company. "Last year, my family loved finding deer beds in the snow and listening for owl calls on the edge of the woods," says Angie Eckel, Development and Communications Director. "My kids are still talking about it months later!"

We invite guests of all ages to join us for a fun night of family activities on Saturday, February 3rd, from 5 to 7 pm at the Hilltop Classroom (1553 Stagecoach Trail South, Afton, MN, 55001). The event is free. No dogs are allowed at this or any Belwin event. Warm drinks and restrooms will be available indoors in the Hilltop Classroom.



INFORMATION

Please note: No dogs allowed at this or any Belwin event. Alcohol is not permitted. Restrooms will be available for guests. Snow will be groomed but attendees should plan on dressing appropriately and traversing through snow. This event will not be accessible to people in wheelchairs or who need walkers.

www.belwin.org/events
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ABOUT BELWIN CONSERVANCY

[Belwin Conservancy](http://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.