

Bird Sanctuary to get a new group of ‘Friends’

The Douglas County Wildlife Management Area, a property known to local residents as the Bird Sanctuary has a new group of “friends.”

Still in the process of achieving formal non-profit status, the Friends of the Bird Sanctuary (FOTBS) board of directors is actively engaged in attracting volunteers and memberships, publishing descriptive materials, supporting stewardship efforts at the Bird Sanctuary, and fundraising.

“We’re just getting up and running” said David Biegel, FOTBS president. “I’m thrilled that a group of committed volunteers are gathering to provide citizen support for the Bird Sanctuary site.

The Bird Sanctuary, is located midway between Solon Springs and Gordon and is part of a unique Pine Barrens ecosystem that once covered 2.3 million acres of Wisconsin. Today fewer than 40,000 acres remain, and 4,000 of these remaining acres are in the Bird Sanctuary. These open areas are home to sharp-tailed grouse along with a wide variety of wildlife and plants that can only survive in this type of habitat.

FOTBS will operate in partnership with the Wisconsin DNR and the Douglas County Forestry Department. It has been formed to help protect and preserve the only Pine Barrens habitat management area in Douglas County. In recent months when the lease between the County and the DNR was renegotiated for another 25 years, it became apparent that a strong citizen voice of stewardship and advocacy was essential to ensure the continued preservation of this unique resource.

"Creation of the Friends groups is great news" said DNR property manager Fred Strand. Strand says that he welcomes the support and help of these interested and concerned people in maintaining and managing this unique property.

The board of directors includes David Biegel, Jim Evrard, Julie Fromm, Moira Moga, Scott Peterson, Douglas Reisner, and Ron Tuverson. Historic property ties to the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, the Northern States Amateur Field Trial Association, and the Gordon Flowage Association are being strengthened.

The group is gratefully accepting donations and membership requests. Membership levels are: Individual \$15, Family \$25, Sustaining \$50, and Patron \$100. FOTBS can be reached at P.O. Box 116, Gordon, WI 54838. The website address is www.fotbs.org

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