



Another full and fruitful Wildflower Garden season has come to pass. It's a delight to reflect on the inspired work of the past 12 months carried out by staff members, volunteers and the Friends. I'm continually impressed with the dedication and good-spirit with which this community of educators, stewards and supporters approaches the day-in, day-out work of the Garden. What great fortune we have, to do our very best here, so that all—visitors, plants and animals—can revel and thrive in a wild native plant Garden, full of nature's splendor and sanctuary.

A few highlights from the late autumn and early winter

Extensive buckthorn removal in Wildflower Garden and surrounds

A great team effort created fabulous results. Staff members spent a large part of November and early December removing “second generation” buckthorn from the entire Garden, and it shows! We were fortunate to have the assistance of hard-working Minnesota Conservation Corps crew members helping us with buckthorn removal in the Garden's wetland and along the east fence line outside of the Garden, which is one of the areas the Friends have been caring for so diligently. On two days, staff members and the MCC crew worked in this area with many seemingly tireless volunteers from the Friends. We are all looking forward to sharing the renewed beauty of the Garden next spring.

Full Survey of Wildflower Garden: Wonderful Management Tool

Prompted by the planning process for the wetland boardwalk project, a full topographical survey of the Garden was conducted in December. In addition to elevations, the survey includes accurate trail, building, bench, fountain, utility and fence locations; and an updated inventory of all trees with a diameter (at 4.5' above ground) of 4" or greater. The wetland portion of the Garden will be surveyed in the spring. In addition to its usefulness for the development of the new boardwalk design and installation specifications, this information will be helpful in managing the Garden in future.

Wetland Boardwalk Project Developments: Great Progress

It is thrilling that we continue to make progress on the development of a plan to install a boardwalk through the wetland area of the Garden. The boardwalk project goes above and beyond the bridge replacement project outlined in the Garden's management plan and addresses a key need to improve the trail system through the heart of the Garden. In addition to the survey work, five soil borings were taken in December to assess several characteristics of the soil in the wetland. This was done to ensure that site-appropriate materials and footings will be used to stabilize the boardwalk in our unique wetland setting. The thoughtful design and installation of a boardwalk in this area will provide for an enduring and ecologically sound addition to the infrastructure of the Garden. As planning for the wetland boardwalk project continues, I would like to thank the Friends again for their ongoing commitment to and enthusiasm for this project, including sustained efforts

to raise funds to go toward materials and installation of the boardwalk. I would like to extend one grand end-of-the-year thank you to the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden for the tremendous amount of support and generosity this organization continues to bestow upon our treasured public Garden. The Friends support the Garden in so many vital ways, from helping to grow programming for young people, through transportation grants, to funding planting projects and fundraising for the wetland boardwalk project. The Friends have been staunch supporters of the Garden for the past 59 years. It's collaborative and sustaining relationships like these that make gardens like ours grow.

During this quiet and beautifully still time of year, as we continue to do our field work and planning and preparations for the next growing season, the wise words of Henry David Thoreau seem most welcome:

*“We are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us.
We can never have enough of nature.”*