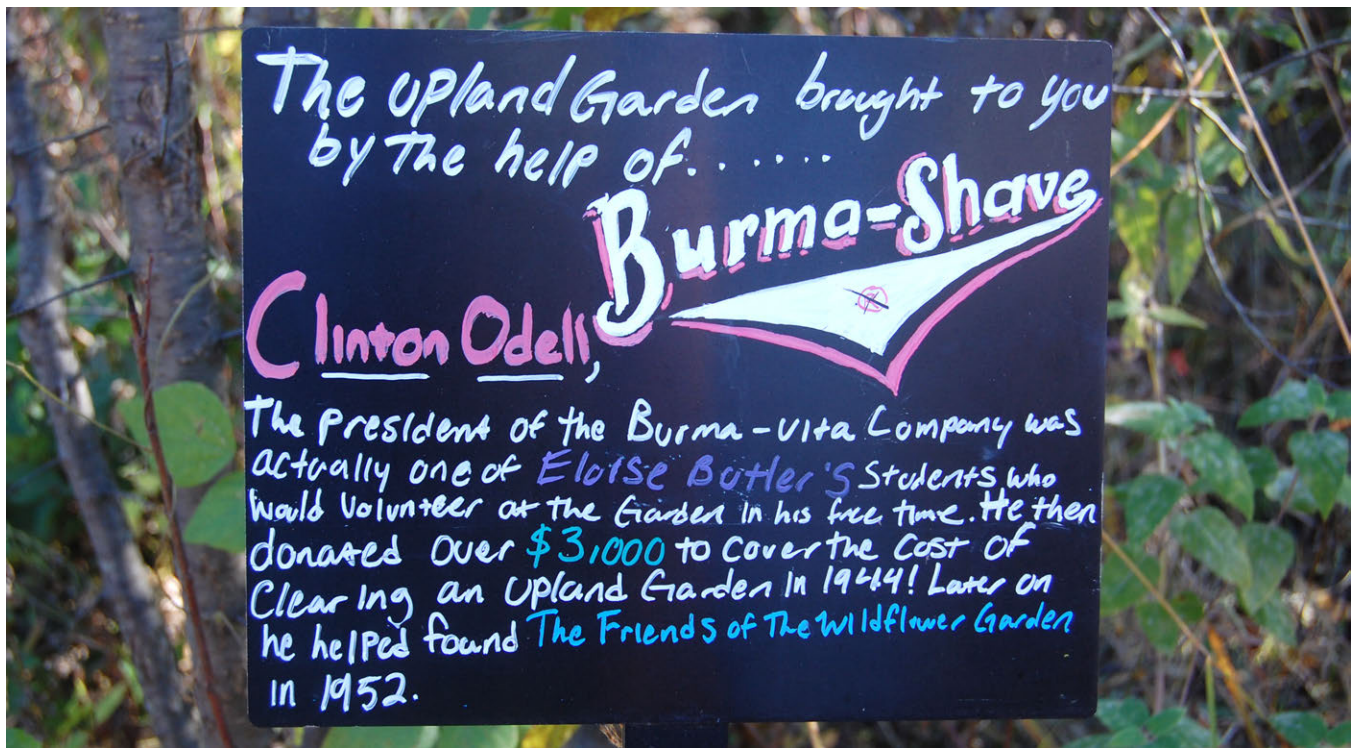




## 2025 History of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and the Friends of the Wildflower Garden

### Winter 2024/2025

2025 is the 119th year of the Garden, the 73rd year for the Friends and Susan Wilkins' 22nd year as Garden Curator. Jennifer Olson began her fifth year as Friends President.

Highlights of this year include the enhancements to staffed Garden positions supported by a Friends funding commitment; renovation work in the north meadow; a new name for FIPAG; the completion of Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden Florilegium; the Minneapolis Park and Recreation

Board's (MPRB) recognition of the Friends as a long-term supporting organization and the announcement of a renovation of the approach to the Wildflower Garden's south entrance.



Detail about the Wildflower Garden on the wayfinding sign.

**Elected MPRB Commissioners:** The newly elected Commissioners of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) took office at the

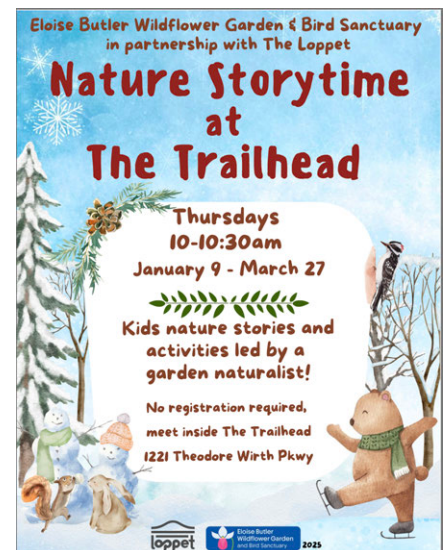


New wayfinding sign at the entrance path to the Garden from the Wirth Beach parking lot. Photo G D Bebeau

beginning of the year. Commissioner Tom Olson was chosen President of the Board.

**Friends Board Meeting:** A Friends board of directors meeting was held February 3 at the home of past president Pam Weiner. Director Steve Benson had retired last fall and two new director candidates were present and elected to the board - Joelle Hoeft and Mary Bolla. Melissa Hansen retired as volunteer coordinator and Wildflower Garden naturalist Debbie Keyes was introduced as her replacement.

Susan Wilkins reported that 17 wayfinding posts were being installed to help visitors find the Wildflower Garden from the Wirth Beach parking lot access. Historically, this was the way people found their way to the early Wildflower Garden before the current south entrance road was put in following the building of Theodore Wirth Parkway in 1910, or if they came by streetcar after 1910 as the line terminated at the beach. A large wayfinding sign giving directions was installed during the winter at the trail entrance from Wirth Beach. Four arborists were at work in the Garden over the winter trimming hazardous branches and trees that needed removal.



Posters promoting winter activities run by the Wildflower Garden from the Trailhead Building. This illustrates the type of programming that funding the winter naturalist program can put on. Photo - Winter Storytime at the Trailhead. Images and photo - MPRB.



The MPRB approved the creation of the permanent 3/4 time Garden Program Specialist position which Garden Curator Susan Wilkins had proposed last year. The Friends board discussed accepting financial contributions to help fund a second permanent 3/4 time Natural Resources position at the Garden so that a person could be active during the winter months and provide programs at the Trailhead center. While the MRPB debates making this current position a permanent part-time position, funding would be needed to support the 1/4 time needed for this to equal a full time position for the person currently in that role. This discussion was continued to the next meeting.

Jim Proctor, coordinator of the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG) increased the number of volunteer events by going to 2 per month all year long instead of just spring and fall. This not only allowed more to be accomplished but allowed volunteers to anticipate work dates since they would be the 2nd and 4th weekends of each month. To demonstrate what had been accomplished in the Volunteer Stewardship Area around the Garden, Jim led several hikes in January to learn what people envisioned as the future for the area.



Above: FIPAG volunteers clearing buckthorn in the area of Anwatin Pond.  
Below: A spring view of the area of "Anwatin" Pond showing the removal work. New growth that occurs on the cut plants is stripped off in summer. Photos Jim Proctor.



The MPRB refurbished and rededicated a bench on the entry path to the Garden Crone Shelter. The new memorial was for Craig Kruse.

## Spring 2025

**The Friends board** met on April 7th at Jennifer Olson's house. In her report to the board, Susan Wilkins said that Kimberly Ishkov was hired for the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time permanent Garden Program Specialist position. Returning naturalists this year were Keegan, Lynette and Debbie. Available subs were Maria, Katie, Jody and Cheyenne while Tammy Mercer continues as the birding naturalist. New is Lisette who is also a Spanish speaker. Fifty volunteers for the visitors shelter and the entry kiosk were to receive training the following week.

The wild turkeys were a continuing problem creating plant damage to new plantings. MPRB staff were attempting to see what solutions were available. Susan and Marilyn Garber of the Minnesota School of Botanical Art announced that the 111 drawings in the Eloise Butler Florilegium Project, begun in 2010 were now completed and two exhibitions were being developed for 2026.

In an example of unique Garden programming, the American Swedish Institute was collaborating with a Garden naturalist so kids could learn some Swedish words about nature and be part of a storytime program which was already sold out in advance. With a grant from the Hennepin History Museum, Blue Hummingbird Woman was coming to the Garden to lead two walks featuring medicinal plant information. Susan herself, was on the air on April 23 on a DNR webinar on the Garden's ephemerals.

Susan asked the Friends to formally commit to supporting the Natural Resources Horticulturist position discussed in the winter section. The board approved funding the difference between the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time cost and the full time cost for a period of 3 years after which there would be a reevaluation. An anonymous donor came forward with a 3-year pledge of \$9,500 per year. This was accepted by MPRB resolution on April 16. (copy at end of history)



Young Garden visitors at the entrance kiosk get information from a volunteer. MPRB photo.



Burning the prairie area in April 2025. MPRB photo.

Treasurer Gary Bebeau presented a budget and the annual Minnesota Charities Report for approval. Both were approved and the Charities Report was filed.

Jim Proctor's group, FIPAG, has continue to work the oak savanna area SE of Eloise Butler. After removal of buckthorn and other invasives reseeding with natives and some planting of native shrubs gets underway.

The discussion of changing the organization of the Friends to a supporter / donation organization instead of a membership plan was continued, picking up from discussions in 2024.



FIPAG volunteers clearing roots and stripping growth from the remains of a buckthorn cut in the oak savanna area. Photo-Jim Proctor.

**At the Garden**, there was a burn of the prairie before the April 15 opening day. Garden staff were busy removing a quantity of vinca along Violet Way so that natives could be planted. Plants had been purchased and were ready for planting.

Below: Hillside along Violet Way after a section of non-native vinca was removed. Photo-MPRB.



The spring issue of *The Fringed Gentian*<sup>TM</sup>, Volume 73 No. 1, featured articles about white-nose syndrome in bats, the background on how Eloise Butler began the Wildflower Garden, a review of the book *Birding to Change the World*, an interview with new Friends board member Joelle Hoeft, and notes on Steve Benson's retirement. Susan Wilkins discussed rare plants in the Garden, and Jennifer Olson reviewed the Friends website.

Below: Retiring Friends director Steve Benson and new director Joelle Hoeft - Friends photos.



## Summer 2025

**The Friends held a summer board meeting** on June 23 at Jennifer Olson's house. The 50 volunteers for the shelter and the kiosk had been trained and 34 were frequently active. Susan reported that by June 1 the Garden had 17,000 visitor engagements, held 95 public programs with 1,500 participants.

Jim Proctor set up a meeting with MPRB and Garden staff with Dan Shaw senior ecologist and vegetation specialist for MN Board of Water and Soil Resources to discuss wetland restoration in the north meadow and surrounding area. Jim's group (FIPAG) had started working in this area.

One of Jim's volunteers, Gabriel Bertilson, discovered Kittentails growing in an area near the entrance road. Kittentails had not been in the Wildflower Garden since Cary George discovered a secluded group in Wirth Park and brought a few into the Garden in 1990. Eloise Butler had originally introduced them in 1912. Photo next page.



An evening firefly walk in the Wildflower Garden in July. Photo-MPRB.

The board continued the discussion of becoming a supporter / donation organization with what changes to the bylaws were needed. Planning was started for the upcoming 2026 celebration of Eloise Butler's 175th birthday.



Kittentails, *Synthyris bullii*.  
Photo Christopher Noll.

The summer issue of *The Fringed Gentian*<sup>TM</sup> covered barn swallows, slime molds in the Garden, the confusing white-throated sparrow, FIPAG activity, spring events at the Garden and Jennifer Olson's searching Minnesota for rare plants.



Evening star party talk in the Garden. Photo-MPRB.

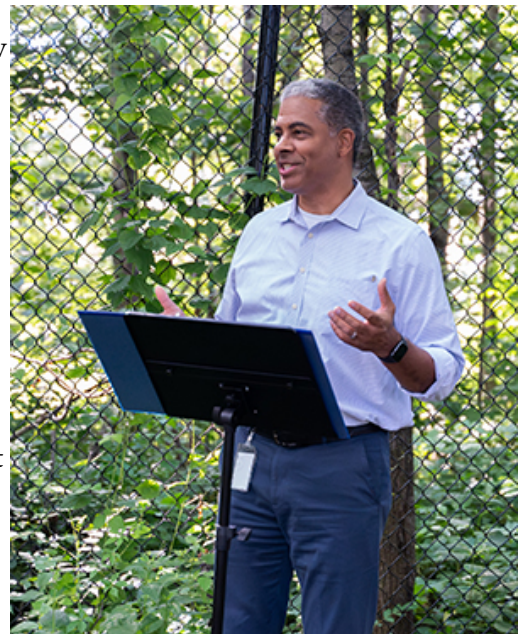
**Recognition of the Friends:** On Thursday evening July 17 the leadership of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) held an event celebrating the work of the Friends of the Wildflower Garden over the past decades.

Superintendent Al Bangoura specifically highlighted two recent efforts - the Friends \$95,000 contribution for completing the new fencing on the east side of the Wildflower Garden and the 20



Jim Proctor speaking to the group touring the restoration work area.  
Photo MPRB

years of effort of the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG), initiated and led by Jim Proctor, in removing invasives and restoring native habitat in the Volunteer Stewardship Area surrounding the Garden. Fittingly, the event was held on the southeast hillside next to the new fence and overlooking the hillside where the volunteers of FIPAG have been restoring the oak savanna habitat that once covered that area of the Wirth Park.



MPRB Superintendent Al Bangoura speaking to the gathering. Photo - MPRB.

Besides Mr. Bangoura, Commissioner Meg Forney, Friends President Jennifer Olson and Jim Proctor spoke, followed by a tour of the restoration area led by Jim Proctor.

Below: MPRB Commissioner Meg Forney speaking at the Friends celebration. Superintendent Al Bangoura at right. Photo G D Bebeau.



**FIPAG has a new name.** The Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG) was officially formed in 2007 with the leadership and industriousness of Jim Proctor. The purpose of the group was to protect the Garden itself from the influx of invasives from the buffer zone around the Wildflower Garden.

It was now announced that the Volunteer Stewardship Area (the old buffer zone) which surrounds the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden has been renamed "The Greater Eloise Volunteer Stewardship Area." Improving the natural habitat in this area which buffers the Wildflower Garden has been the focus of the Friends Invasive Plant Action Group (FIPAG) since 2007. In accord with the renamed area, FIPAG volunteers will now be called "Greater Eloise Stewards."

The Greater Eloise Stewards have been busy every month this year primarily east and southeast of the Wildflower Garden, clearing buckthorn, garlic mustard, planting, protecting the slopes with wattles and controlling new buckthorn growth.

The photo on the next page shows the development of the area tentatively named "Anwatin savanna," near a large pond with all the non-native woody plants removed or cutback for further treatment.



Photo - Jim Proctor

Seeds of dozens of species that were spread in the fall and over the winter have germinated on the green slopes.

In late summer The Greater Eloise Stewards were uncovering parts of the past in the meadow north of the Wildflower Garden's back fence and gate. This area was once open marsh and meadow with scattered trees on higher spots. It was kept moist by springs, seeps and water draining from Eloise Butler's wildflower reserve. In recent decades views of the area have been obscured by the growth of dense forests of buckthorn. The paths in the area which lead to the Garden's back gate, once a tunnel of buckthorn are now being cleared so the native plants that once were abundant there can receive sunlight and regenerate or be re-introduced as necessary. Historically, this is the area where Eloise Butler created her Mallard Pool in 1932.

Below: GES (FIPAG) volunteers at work in the north meadow clearing buckthorn. Photo-Jim Proctor.



Jim Proctor wrote to the GES volunteers: In a wetland, buckthorn and other woody plants act like straws, drawing water out of the soil and releasing it into the air (a process called evapotranspiration). Removing them helps restore the natural hydrology of the site. We need to restore permanent soil saturation near the soil surface to stop the decay of any remaining peat in these wetlands.

Peatlands store more carbon than any other landscape, but their decay releases powerful greenhouse gases. We hope to reverse the trend here. In Eloise Butler's time, well-known and beloved springs poured into these wetlands. Although the "Great Medicine Spring" and the "Bubbler" are gone now, the area is still dotted with small groundwater seeps lower down. These seeps certainly aren't as active as they once were, but our actions should help. As we address the phenomena that are exporting water too quickly from the system, they just might get more active again!



Bird nest summer display in the Crone Shelter. Photo J. Olson.

Below: American mink in the wetland at the Garden in 2025. Photo MPRB.



## Fall 2025

As part of the Friends position to support funding the Natural Resources Horticulturist position as discussed above, \$9,500 was forwarded from the Friends to the Garden in September, funds from an anonymous donor. A second anonymous donor came forward to support the project, pledging \$15,000 per year. This donor pledged to provide support for a two year period 2025/26 and 2026/2027. The pledge of the 2nd donor was accepted by MPRB resolution on September 25. (copy at end of text)

**A Friends board meeting** was held on September 29th at Jennifer Olson's house. A new project was being planned by MPRB to renovate the approach to the Wildflower Garden's south (main) entrance.

Michael Jones, design project manager for the entrance project, was present and showed drawings of the two alternate proposed design concepts.

The board was highly favorable of the project, most of which would be funded by MPRB. Later, in November, Jennifer Olson wrote an approval letter to the MPRB superintendent and commissioners giving the Friends approval of the concept. Mr. Jones held several public opportunities to see and comment on the plans on October 2 and October 4 at the Garden. In addition an online survey was carried out. He then made a formal request to the Park Board on December 3, with Jennifer present and giving support. The project concept was cleared to proceed.

One document that may have moved the MPRB toward the front entrance project was the resolution of the Friends Board in November 2024 re-affirming the Friends opposition to the Garden Shelter Improvement Project which at that time, was still being worked on by MPRB planners. That resolution requested the MPRB to focus on the front entrance which had been a portion of the Shelter Project. (copy follows text)

Below: Alternate entrance plan concept #1. Concept #2 is shown later in the text. Drawing MPRB.



ELOISE BUTLER WILDFLOWER GARDEN  
DESIGN CHARACTER

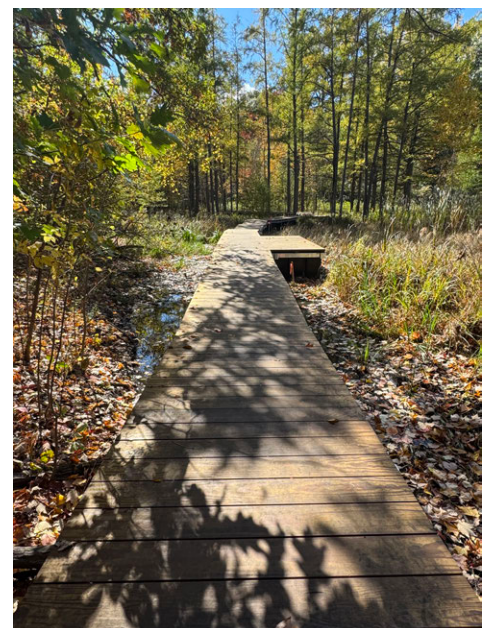


Sowing native seeds in the oak savanna in October. Photo Jim Proctor.

The board meeting had more discussion about the organization bylaw change.

Fall activity by GES volunteers involved work around the north meadow and seeding natives in the oak savanna.

Twelve volunteer Friends again staffed a table at the Horticulture Building at the Minnesota State Fair, the 3rd year of this display representing the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden.



The first portion of the new boardwalk in the Quaking Bog. The project will finish in 2026. Photo Colin Bartol.

In the fall issue of *The Fringed Gentian*™, Volume 73 No. 3, articles covered the boardwalk replacement in the Quaking Bog, mink in the Wildflower Garden, a review of Phyllis Root's new book *Chasing Wildflowers*, the history of Maria Sibylla Merian, the first ecologist. Summer events at the Garden were covered along with a review of galls on the Garden plants.

**The Annual Friends of the Wildflower Garden Guest Lecture and Meeting** was Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 7PM in the Fireside Room, Eddie Manderville Chalet, Theodore Wirth Regional Park. Phyllis Root spoke on her new book *Chasing Wildflowers*, describing her adventures of chasing wildflowers



Photo G D Bebeau

throughout their unique Minnesota habitats. Big Hill Books in Bryn Mawr was on hand selling Root's books and sold out all copies of the book. At the end of the lecture, a meeting of the Friends members was opened. An election of directors took place, directors to serve until the next election. Following the meeting, the Friends board elected the officers. Directors and positions are shown in the table at right.

**Another great volunteer event:** Sunday October 26 was the date of the 2025 volunteer event sponsored by the Friends and the Wildflower Garden and the MPRB. Eighty volunteers were able to register for the event, held at 5PM at Lake of the Isles Lutheran

| Director       | Responsibility       | 1st Year |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| Jennifer Olson | President            | 2013     |
| Gary Bebeau    | Treasurer            | 2001     |
| Candyce Bartol | Secretary            | 2014     |
| Colin Bartol   | Newsletter editor    | 2013     |
| Mary Bolla     | at large             | 2024     |
| Joelle Hoeft   | at large             | 2024     |
| Bruce Jarvis   | at large             | 2022     |
| Jim Proctor    | Invasive Plant Group | 2005     |
| George Lawton  | at large             | 2022     |
| J. Pam Weiner  | at large             | 2001     |
| Susan Wilkins  | Ex-officio           | 2004     |

Church. The Friends provided food from Christo's, beverages by Friends board members, and over 60 raffle gifts. The Wildflower Garden provided dessert and a take-home gift, this year a pack of Garden notecards. Garden Curator spoke of this past season at the Garden, Friends president Jennifer Olson spoke, introduced special guests from the MPRB administration and conducted the raffle. A special guest was Michael Jones, MPRB planner, who presented the final design concept for the Wildflower Garden entrance area renovation.



2025 Volunteer Appreciation Event, held on October 26. Photo G D Bebeau

The Minnesota School of Botanical Art announced in the fall that a Florilegium exhibit of 32 drawings would be held at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts January 3 to March 8 2026. Planning was also underway for a full exhibit of all drawings later in the year.

#### **Release of concept plan for the Garden entrance renovation.**

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) released the preferred concept drawing for the major renovation of the entrance approach to the Wildflower Garden. This will be the first real change to this area since the steps were put in during 1975 and the current front gate constructed in 1990.

The purpose of this is outlined in the following MPRB project plan:

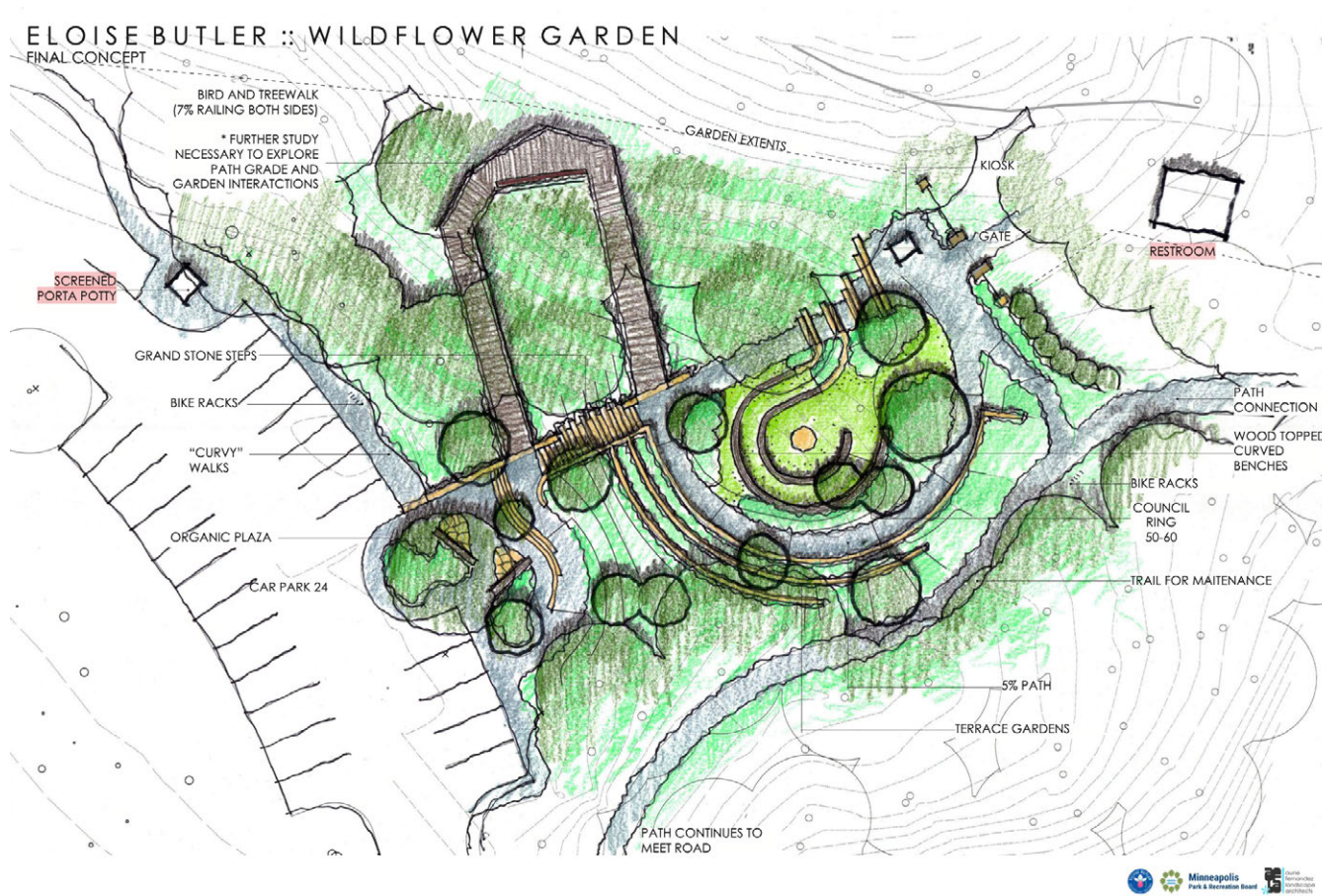
The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden Entrance Renovation Project looks to renovate and reimagine the entrance into the wildflower garden. This project will improve the entry experience and access from the beginning as soon as visitors exit off Theodore Wirth Parkway all the way through the garden gates. Areas of focus include:

1. Improved walking trails and ADA access to the garden entrance gate from the existing parking lot.
2. A public gathering space for outdoor learning and education.
3. Enhanced welcoming experience by bringing the garden beyond the renovated entrance gate.

The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden Renovation Project will build upon the vision outlined with the 2015-approved Theodore Wirth Regional Park Plan. This project will also follow guidance by the 2022 community findings that were developed and recommendations at that time.

Two public meetings, an on-line survey, and an open house were held for interested parties to comment.

Below: Alternate concept plan #2, chosen by MPRB and approved by the Friends for the renovation of the Wildflower Garden entrance approach. Image courtesy MPRB. Alternate concept plan #2, chosen by MPRB and approved by the Friends for the renovation of the Wildflower Garden entrance approach. Image courtesy MPRB.



#### Garden highlights of the year were these:

- 55,276 visitor engagements were logged half were at the Kiosk
- 272 volunteers provided over 2,000 hours at and around the Garden
- 5,500 persons participated in a Garden program
- Historical records are being digitized
- The winter bird count tallied 39 species.

#### Wrap-up of the year for the Friends:

Total Friends mission spending was \$20,421 The funding included \$2,335 for the educational program, \$2,686 in volunteer support, \$15,500 for the Naturalist Resources position support. As usual, administrative and fund raising expenses (2.6% of revenue) were funded from non-contribution revenue.

Support other than annual memberships during the year was \$51,259 from 83 donors, the 2nd highest in Friends history. Annual membership support was \$10,545 from 110 annual supporters.



The Friends membership group has a large number of loyal long-time supporters:

The 50+ year supporters are Jerry and Lee Shannon, J. S. Futcher.

**Memorials:** Name plates added to the Eliason Honor Board in the Crone Shelter were for Clarence Shallbettter, June Ortendal & Dorothy Lucas, Tricia & Dale Thompson, Michelle Weigand with in-honor-of from her husband Sidney Gasner. That completed the 3rd memorial board at the shelter.

| Tenure      | Number |
|-------------|--------|
| 50+ years   | 2      |
| 40-49 years | 5      |
| 30-39 years | 20     |
| 20-29 years | 25     |
| 10-19 years | 45     |

At the end of the year the Friends active paying membership was 115 plus 54 life members. Thirteen new members joined. Financial assets at year-end were \$251,846. Financial assets increase or decrease from year to year depending on contribution inflow vs mission expense outflow. During the years 2001 to 2010 the Friends consistently put more funds into our program than were received as contributions, spending down assets. After 2016, the contributed funds increased in amount and turned into a surplus as the mission projects for the Wildflower Garden were more spaced out and funds needed to be accumulated to fund those projects. Recent projects where this was evident were the two boardwalk segments in 2015 and 2019 and the fencing in 2024. The entrance renovation project will be the next one.

**Website:** Website activity during the year:

- Average monthly visitor count: 67,320
- Average unique monthly visitor count: 47,008
- Average monthly number of web pages accessed: 104,635

Email's announce all of our publications - 3 issues of *The Fringed Gentian*<sup>TM</sup>, 440 receiving, 11 issues of *Twig and Branches*, 486 receiving.

**Photo top of first page:** Information sign in the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden upland about Friends founder Clinton Odell. Photo G D Bebeau

Other references:

Minutes of the Board of Directors and other documents of the Friends of the Wildflower Garden, Inc.

*The Fringed Gentian*<sup>TM</sup> Newsletter:

Vol. 73 No. 1 Spring 2025

Vol. 73 No. 2 Summer 2025

Vol. 73 No. 3 Fall/Winter 2025

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**Resolution 2025-77**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A RECURRING DONATION FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE WILDFLOWER GARDEN TO THE MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD TO SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN PROVISIONAL NATURALIST STAFF HOURS (NOVEMBER-MARCH) TO PROVIDE ENHANCED WINTER PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A THREE-YEAR PERIOD FROM 2025 THROUGH 2027**

Whereas, The mission of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is to permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations of our region including people, plants, and wildlife;

Whereas, MPRB is committed to providing environmental education program opportunities throughout the park system year around;

Whereas, The staff from the from Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary (Garden) have successfully worked with the Loppet Foundation to offer nature-based programs at the Trailhead and in Theodore Wirth Regional Park in the winter months since 2023;

Whereas, Additional staff support for leading these successful programs will benefit the public by allowing for additional programs and new programming opportunities to be developed;

Whereas, A private donor has offered to gift an amount of up to \$9,500.00 per year for three years to support the employment of provisional naturalist staff at the Garden in the winter months, thus permitting Garden naturalist staff to contribute to high-quality nature education programming year-round;

Whereas, The private donor will donate these funds to the Friends of the Wildflower Garden (Friends), a 501(c)3 established in 1952 to support the Garden;

Whereas, A Letter of Commitment regarding this donation has been submitted by the Friends on April 8, 2025, delineating the commitment from the Friends on behalf of the private donor; and

Whereas, The Letter of Commitment is supported by Goal 4 to "Work from our strengths and determine our role in partnership" of the Parks for All MPRB Comprehensive Plan 2021 - 2036;

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners accept the recurring donation from the Friends of the Wildflower Garden to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to support an increase in provisional Naturalist staff hours (November-March) to provide enhanced winter

programming opportunities for a three-year period from 2025 through 2027; and

RESOLVED, That the President of the Board and Secretary to the Board are authorized to take all necessary actions to implement this resolution.

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Agenda item details

Acceptance of Donation From Friends of the Wildflower Garden

 Agenda item

**Number:**  
Resolution 2025-196

**Department:**  
ENV: Environmental Management

**Description:**  
RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A TWO-YEAR RECURRING DONATION FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE WILDFLOWER GARDEN TO THE MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD TO SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN PROVISIONAL NATURALIST STAFF HOURS (NOVEMBER-MARCH) TO PROVIDE ENHANCED WINTER PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROJECT SUPPORT

**Attachments**

| Name                                                                               | Download                                                                          | Ext. | Filesize |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------|
| Attachment A - 2025 Letter of Commitment from the Friends of the Wildflower Garden |  | pdf  | 458 kB   |

**Discussed at meetings:**

[Meeting MPRB - 18/2025](#), Point 17 on 9/25/2025 by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board



## Friends Of The Wild Flower Garden

September 10, 2025

MPRB Board of Commissioners:

The Friends of the Wildflower Garden have received a second donation of funds to support Wildflower Garden naturalists doing winter programming in the months of November through March to build capacity for program delivery and support in Theodore Wirth Regional Park.

This anonymous donor's goal is to support sustainable year-round education of the natural world by employing the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden naturalists November -March, extending their season that has historically been focused on work April-October. The persons in this role will support Garden programming initiatives and efforts, including supporting and leading new and existing winter programming opportunities in Theodore Wirth Park.

The donor plans to gift \$15,000 per year for two years: 2025-2026 winter and 2026-2027 winter. This gift will total \$30,000 over the next two winter seasons. The donor may continue to offer an additional donation for this purpose after this initial two-year term.

The Friends of the Wildflower Garden will receive the funds from the donor to maintain their anonymity. The Friends will donate these funds on behalf of the anonymous donor to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for the above exclusive purpose annually for two years.

We celebrate that people of our community recognize the value of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and that they support the high-quality educational programming being developed and offered by Wildflower Garden staff at the Garden and in Theodore Wirth Regional Park.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Olson

President of the Friends of the Wildflower Garden

**Resolution to Reappropriate Approved Funds  
for the Eloise Butler Improvement Project**

November 2024

Whereas the Board of Commissioners approved funds for the Eloise Butler Improvement Project in 2020, 2021, and 2024, for Expansion of the Visitor Center and Front Entrance Project, more information is now available.

Whereas architectural plans were drawn for the Expansion of the Visitor Center in 2021 to provide staff more workspace and expand public educational space; the one bid came in over budget, partly to having to hand transport materials in and out of the Garden and required more excavation than expected.

Whereas the experience from the Covid pandemic taught the Garden staff that people were visiting the Garden to be outside for the fresh air and its calming and meditative atmosphere. The welcoming Kiosk at the Front Entrance was very successful in welcoming visitors and providing information.

Whereas in remodeling of the tool shed and the Visitor Center storage room was repurposed for staff workspace, it eliminated the need for new workspace construction.

Whereas the two utility sheds built in the summer of 2024, proved more excavation than expected happened with damage to surrounding trees, and a large mass of dirt was placed on the hillside. A small project became a much larger project.

Whereas a recent review of the Visitor Center project, recommended a 14-foot-wide temporary road to be built which would cause destruction of trees, plants and the soil. Also, it was determined that more excavation and the road would require a larger construction site for the Visitor Center with the destruction of a significant part of a historical 117-year-old botanic garden.

Whereas the Eloise Butler Improvement Project includes upgrades for the Front Entrance Area, funds should be focused on the development of safer entrance access, an accessible bathroom, and a possible outdoor amphitheater for visitor programs and visitor picnic space.

Whereas the Eloise Butler Improvement Project included both the Visitor Center and the Front Entrance Project. The Visitor Center addition is no longer needed for staff workspace and would be destructive while the Front Entrance Project would provide benefit for the public and preserve the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_