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## **Friends of Trempealeau Receive 2017 Molly Krival Friends Group of the Year**

(Washington D.C.) – The Friends of Trempealeau Refuge have been announced as the recipient of the 2017 Molly Krival friends Group of the Year Award, sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association. The award, named to honor the late Molly Krival, a pioneer in the Refuge Friends Group movement, aims to recognize outstanding contributions by a group of dedicated volunteers in Friends organizations who provide essential services to the Refuge System.

The Friends of Trempealeau have proven to be an essential asset to the small staff at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin. With only four full-time personnel, the refuge could not possibly meet the needs of visitors and wildlife without the determination and perseverance of the Friends. The Friends of Trempealeau work side-by-side with the visitor services staff to provide for the needs of school children, disabled duck hunters, birders, bicyclists, and weekend tourists. They work with the Refuge Manager to address neighboring landowner concerns and encourage environment-friendly best practices. This Friends Group has consistently gone above and beyond to help their Refuge.

In 2016, the Friends of the Trempealeau worked endlessly to construct an environmental education classroom for the thousands of school children that visit the refuge every year. The Friends Group secured three different grants for the project: a grant from Trempealeau County to completely fund the construction, another grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to build an adjacent outdoor classroom, and a third grant from the Town of Trempealeau to deliver teacher orientation and training. Working with local contractors and suppliers, the Friends Group built the facility to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service specifications under budget and on schedule. The Outdoor Wonders Learning Center has now become an asset not only to the refuge but the entire community, thanks to the Friends of Trempealeau.

The Friends of Trempealeau strive to make the most of the resources the refuge has to offer by providing more accessibility for everyone. They made a generous contribution to the refuge to purchase an eBird station, the first electronic birding station on the Mississippi River. They have also constructed an accessible photography blind with a grant from North American Nature Photographers

Association, who they partner with every year to provide meals for a waterfowl hunt for people with disabilities. The Friends were also quick to respond to threats posed by invasive plants and continue to work with adjacent landowners and high school students to address the issue.

This Friends group embodies a strong positive influence within the refuge and the surrounding community. They support the refuge in every way that they can and have clearly have worked tirelessly to help their refuge grow and prosper. We are proud to present them with this esteemed award.

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*The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to conserve America's wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect, enhance, and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries.*