

Stewardship Facing Cuts in the State Legislature

Thanks in part to Gathering Waters Conservancy's efforts, Governor James Doyle has included full-funding of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund in his 2003-2005 biennial budget.

The budget is now being considered by the Legislature where there have been proposals to reduce, place a moratorium on, or altogether cut the Stewardship Fund. It is important for lawmakers to understand the importance of this program to the future of Wisconsin's natural resources.

Non-profit conservation organizations are eligible for matching grants in the program, which effectively doubles the money available for conservation. Federal and private funds as well as land donations from landowners are examples of how the state's investment is matched. Land trusts have received over \$25 million in Stewardship grants, which has in turn leveraged an additional \$75 million for conservation.

We appreciate Governor Doyle recognizing the value of protecting Wisconsin's natural resources by supporting the Stewardship Fund.

Thank you to everyone who contacted the Governor's office and expressed your support for this critical program.

Thank you to Governor Doyle for meeting with Gathering Waters Conservancy and members of the land trust community. We appreciate your support of the work we are doing.



“Even in tough times, we must carefully conserve our natural resources for our children and grandchildren. My budget protects the Knowles—Nelson Stewardship Fund so that we can preserve critical natural areas—forests and quiet shorelines. Our tourism economy depends on these special places. And so does every Wisconsin family that loves to hike, hunt, camp or fish.”

—Governor James Doyle

Budget Address, Feb. 18, 2003

From left to right, Scott Froehle, Beth Bier, Rick McMonagle, Cynthia Olmstead, Governor Doyle, Nan Fey, Vicki Elkin, Peter McKeever

Gathering Waters Conservancy's mission is to help the people and communities of Wisconsin protect their land and water resources by strengthening the state's land trust movement. As a statewide coalition and service center for Wisconsin's growing land trust community, Gathering Waters' goals are to increase the professionalism and build the capacity of the state's private, non-profit conservation organizations through technical assistance, training and continuing education.

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Partnerships Key in Preserving Stewardship



JOHN URBAN

"Partnership" is a word we hear used quite frequently these days.

But the word will take on new significance for the conservation community with unprecedented cuts in state government looming.

"As with any bureaucracy, there is sometimes a tendency for staff to see only two answers to a question: Can we do it or can't we," said Todd Ambs, newly-appointed Administrator for the DNR's Division of Water and former Executive Director of the River Alliance of Wisconsin.

"But given the current budget situation, partners will be increasingly important as a third answer," he said. "Several years ago, the DNR began to recognize the important role of partners. I am going to do all that I can to further enhance the importance of those partnerships."

Wisconsin's land trusts are particularly well poised to partner with the state and have plenty of experience to draw upon. With 45,000 members statewide, Wisconsin's 50 land trusts have protected 100,000 acres worth well over \$100 million. Much of this work has been accomplished through partnerships with local governments and state and federal agencies.

The most obvious example of this public-private partnership, of course, is the state Stewardship Program. The state gives out about \$7 million a year in matching grants to land trusts through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund. Land trusts match the state's investment dollar-for-dollar by raising private funds and leveraging federal and local grants. This has enabled land trusts to purchase lands and provide multiple benefits to the public such as places to hunt, fish, hike, learn about nature or simply relax.

Governor Doyle has proposed full funding for Stewardship in his 2003-2005 biennial budget. Because the Stewardship Fund is financed through long-term bonding, the annual costs of the program are miniscule -- less than one half of one percent of the total state budget.

But the value of the program to our economy and the people of Wisconsin is tremendous. As Governor Doyle points out, "our tourism economy depends on these special places. And so does every Wisconsin family that loves to hike, hunt, camp or fish."

Unfortunately the Legislature is seriously considering cutting, freezing, or eliminating Stewardship. To preserve the program, we must flex our political muscle as partners to ensure that Stewardship remains fully-funded. With 45,000 members in legislative districts around the state, and bipartisan ties in the legislature, land trusts can make a difference.

With your support, Gathering Waters Conservancy is leading the effort to ensure your voices are heard and the places that make Wisconsin special are protected. Let's make sure our elected representatives don't compromise our legacy by needlessly and senselessly cutting the Stewardship Fund.

—Vicki Elkin, Executive Director

Welcome



Darrell Bazzell

Gathering Waters Conservancy would like to welcome **Darrell Bazzell** to the Board of Directors. Darrell is the former Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and now serves as Vice Chancellor of Administration for the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

As Secretary, Darrell showed his commitment to Wisconsin's environment. Now he will be using his skills and professionalism to help our organization become an even stronger force for conservation.

Gathering Waters Conservancy also welcomes **Renay Leone** to the Board. Renay, an attorney, was the founding Executive Director of the Minnesota Land Trust and now works for the Conservation Fund.

Renay brings with her a wealth of experience in land trust issues from both a legal and a hands-on staff perspective. We are very fortunate that she's joining our board now. We want to have a greater impact in northwest Wisconsin and Renay will help do that.

Thank you, Darrell and Renay, for your service!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to **Sara Murphy**, Gathering Waters Conservancy's newest intern. Sara is a recent graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in Zoology, Biological Aspects of Conservation & Environmental Studies. She has gotten off to a great start working on our In Their Own Words project. Thanks, Sara, for all your hard work!



Sara Murphy

Congratulations

Gathering Waters Conservancy applauds board member **Chuck Haubrich** who, in the 2002 H.F. Johnson Community Service Award program, received the Retiree Top Award. This award recognizes those employees and retirees of SC Johnson who have made valuable contributions to society through their involvement in and service to their communities. We congratulate Chuck on a most deserved honor and thank him for selecting Gathering Waters Conservancy as his choice for the award's charitable donation.

GWC would like to welcome the newest member of the conservation community! Congratulations to our long-time volunteer **Willy Hutcheson** and his wife Jecca on the recent birth of their baby. Otis Allen Hutcheson was born January 10, 2003. Congratulations Willy and Jecca!



Otis Hutcheson

A Special Thank You To:

- **American Transmission Company** for providing funding for the Land Trust Staff Retreat
- **Chrysalis** for assistance with mailings
- **Clotho Advanced Media** for office furniture
- **Karl Hassrick** for helping set up new computers
- **Institute for Conservation Leadership** for a generous discount on their Board Leadership Seminar
- **Bud Jordahl** for hosting Gathering Waters Conservancy staff at his farm for a retreat
- **Daniel Mortensen** for leading a public speaking workshop at the Land Trust Staff Retreat
- **Vandewalle and Associates** for hosting GWC's January Board meeting

For assistance with Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance, we thank:

- Jenny Erickson for facilitating our January 10th meeting
- Ozaukee Washington Land Trust for coordinating the January 10th meeting
- Riveredge for providing a facility for the January 10th meeting
- The Nature Conservancy for producing GIS maps

Top 10 Things Land Trusts can do in the Year of Water

1. Organize your annual meeting around a water theme.
2. Target a critical watershed or shoreline property for proactive conservation work.
3. Work with Basin Partnerships and Regional Planning Commissions to map key resources and current conservation work within a watershed you work in (for an example of a map: <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/sheboygan>)
4. Host informational workshops for the general public and elected officials on the water resources you are working to protect and the conservation tools you use.
5. Partner with a local stream or river conservation group on water monitoring or riverbank clean up projects.
6. Use water images on your newsletters, brochures and website.
7. Link your website to the Year of Water website: www.wisconsinyearofwater.org/index.html
8. Hold a field trip on a lake or river within one of your project areas.
9. Work with County Conservationists and UW-Extension agents on outreach to river and lake frontage landowners on appropriate plantings and land management.
10. Go for a swim, drink a glass of water, stand outside in the rain, take a picture of snow-covered trees, paddle a kayak in Lake Michigan.

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund: A Good Return on Investment

The bipartisan Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship Fund was created to protect recreational lands, wildlife habitat, state parks, trails, forests and other natural areas. Since the program was established in 1989, Stewardship funds have helped protect more than 225,000 acres in 71 of Wisconsin's 72 counties.

Governor Doyle has included full funding of Stewardship in his budget; however, some in the Legislature have proposed cutting the program. The Joint Committee on Finance has begun consideration of the budget and has held a series of hearings around the state. Please support this program by sharing the many cost-effective benefits of Stewardship with those who will decide its future.

The benefits

Stewardship helps protect conservation and recreation lands across the state—from rural projects like the Peshtigo River Shores in Marinette County, to urban projects like Lakeshore State Park in Milwaukee. The Stewardship program has funded places to hike, bike and ski such as the Ice Age Trail, the Green Circle Trail in Stevens Point and the Great River Trail along the Mississippi River.

It also supported the once-in-a-lifetime purchase of the 22,000 acre Turtle-Flambeau Flowage in Iron County, as well as hunting and fishing spots in communities across Wisconsin.

Can we afford it?

Stewardship is less than half of one percent of the state's overall annual budget. Because the Stewardship Fund is financed through long-term bonding, less than \$5 million is spent annually to fund the Stewardship program at \$60 million. Cutting the program will save very little in actual borrowing costs. For a small investment, we are saving some of the best of what remains of outdoor Wisconsin. This investment is critical to our state's \$7 billion tourist industry and our high quality of life.

Money needed now

Land protection is like a continuously closing window. The Department of Natural Resources and local land trusts need to be able to act when land comes on the market. If we are hobbled by lack of funding, we will lose out on our chance to protect this land, probably forever.

Who supports the Stewardship Fund?

The public overwhelmingly supports Stewardship. Independent public opinion polling has consistently shown strong support for acquiring conservation lands among both Republicans and Democrats. Wisconsin's 53 land trusts and the 77 member organizations of the Alliance for the Stewardship Fund represent hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin voters: environmentalists and campers—people who live and vote in every legislative district.

What you can do

Voice your support for the Stewardship Fund now. Send letters or make phone calls in support of Stewardship to members of the Joint Finance Committee, your local legislators and Governor Doyle.

The Stewardship Fund is an investment that will pay dividends for generations to come. Land protection is permanent! We are fortunate today that our predecessors had enough foresight to protect Devil's Lake, Peninsula and Wyalusing State Parks, and wildlife areas around the state. We should show the same foresight for our children and grandchildren.

Contact Your State Legislators!

Website: www.legis.state.wi.us
Hotline: 1-800-362-9472

Coalition Building in Southeastern Wisconsin

Peter McKeever, GWC Project Coordinator

With support from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the Root-Pike Watershed Initiative, Gathering Waters Conservancy has been working to build the capacity of land trusts in southeastern Wisconsin. Aimed at building support for the more than 600 sites identified in the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's (SEWRPC) 1997 Natural Areas Plan, we are working to form broad-based conservation coalitions in seven counties in the area.

The goal is to bring land trusts, supportive public officials, hunters, anglers, environmental activists, birdwatchers, and those who value open space, together to become a force for natural area and open space protection. Within one year, we hope to see at least one site protected in each county. We plan to use the efforts to protect that site as a vehicle for groups with varying interests to work together.

The Milwaukee County Conservation Coalition is off to a great start. After three meetings, groups and individuals that have never worked together, or in some cases even met one another, are now working enthusiastically to assure protection for Potters Woods and a buffer for Seminary Woods. The group is also developing a position in support of proposed legislation that would permit the establishment of park districts in Wisconsin. More than 70 different people have attended at least one of the meetings.

Similar efforts are underway in Washington, Walworth, and Racine counties. Ozaukee and Kenosha counties will begin work soon. For more information, contact Peter McKeever, Project Coordinator, at 608-223-1275.

Jam for Charity

Angie Curtes, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust

Every year students from Cedarburg High School in Ozaukee County stage an annual musical event called 'Jam for Charity' to benefit local charities. This year the students chose the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWLT) as its honorary recipient. An enthusiastic audience of more than 300 people enjoyed the sounds and talents of more than 20 student bands, including big names such as Les Ketchup, Stealin Strings, Shannon Buss, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Jeneral Jambalaya. The acoustic and electric rhythms of bluegrass, folk, jazz and rock amped the airwaves while a PowerPoint presentation showed images of lands preserved by the Land Trust. The evening was not only enjoyable and inspiring, but also very lucrative with over \$4,700 raised!!

The OWLT has become a growing part of Cedarburg High School since 1999 when the Trust acquired a 40-acre parcel outside of Cedarburg called the Cedarburg Environmental Study Area (CESA). The OWLT utilizes volunteer students as land stewards to help maintain and restore the natural features of the property. A long-term goal is to incorporate CESA in the school's science program, providing a prime outdoor classroom for generations of local school kids. The OWLT is grateful to the students of Cedarburg High School for their commitment to the environment and their incredible musical abilities.



Cedarburg High School students participating in the Jam for Charity event.

Current partners of Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance

- Caledonia Conservancy
- Door County Land Trust
- Kenosha Racine Land Trust
- Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy
- Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust
- Ozaukee Washington Land Trust
- Sheboygan Area Land Conservancy
- The Nature Conservancy – Wisconsin Chapter

Update on Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance David Clutter, GWC Project Coordinator

This past January the Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance (LMSA) met with representatives from the Oneida Tribe, regional planning commissions, conservation organizations, and state and federal agencies to begin the process of developing a regional conservation plan for Wisconsin's Lake Michigan basin. One of the primary goals of this planning process is to discover the extent to which non-profit organizations and state agencies conservation efforts are integrated across the landscape. By understanding the different priorities and areas of focus among the different stakeholders within the region, it makes it easier for all partners to strategically approach conservation efforts within the basin. Stay tuned!

Land Trust Staff Retreat & Board Leadership Seminar

Thank You

We would like to extend our thanks to new DNR Secretary Scott Hassett and his wife Chris for attending our dinner Friday, February 7th. With nearly 60 members of the land trust community in attendance, we were extremely pleased Secretary Hassett was able to share some of his thoughts on conservation with us. We are excited to work with him in the upcoming months.

The 4th Annual Land Trust Staff Retreat was held at the Heidel House Resort on Green Lake, February 6-8th. Beginning with a Public Speaking workshop, twenty-five of Wisconsin's best and brightest non-profit staff representing 15 land trusts gathered to learn from one another and share their recent successes. As one participant said, "I enjoyed meeting new committed people and appreciated the times of organized sharing and the in-between times of personal conversation."

Land trusts provided updates on the implementation of the skills learned at last fall's Major Donor Fundraising workshops and made presentations on new conservation projects and strategies. In addition, Gathering Waters staff provided an update on funding programs and policy initiatives.

This year's Land Trust Staff Retreat was paired with a workshop led by the Institute for Conservation Leadership (ICL) on Board Leadership. Board members and Executive Directors from seventeen land trusts participated in a lively, informative session led by Brad Webb of ICL. Groups worked through self evaluations, talked about the stages of organizational growth and addressed "The Leap" - hiring the first staff person. We also discussed Board renewal - how to build leaders from among an organization's members and volunteers and how to identify needed skills and representation for the Board. A workshop devoted to strengthening Boards was much appreciated and Gathering Waters Conservancy plans on holding similar workshops annually.

Friday evening, land trust staff and board came together for a semi-formal dinner at the Grey Rock Restaurant with new DNR Secretary Scott Hassett. Those land trusts who adopted the Wisconsin Land Trust Statement of Principles were awarded certificates signed by GWC's President, Bud Jordahl. As always, there was good food and great music shared by all!



New DNR Secretary Scott Hassett speaks to land trust staff and board members.



Numerous land trusts were represented at the 4th annual staff retreat.



Mingling at the Grey Rock Restaurant before the land trust staff and board dinner.



Left to right: Kate Wipperman talks with Leslie Taylor and Ruth Oppedahl during a break at the staff retreat.



Left to right: John Bernstein, Randy Stadtmueller, and Leslie Taylor receive assistance from Brad Webb (standing) of the Institute for Conservation Leadership.



Karen Bassler, left, of Gathering Waters Conservancy presents Rick Gauger and Linda Keefe of West Wisconsin Land Trust their signed Land Trust Statement of Principles certificate.



Left to right: Willa Schmidt, Bryan Pierce, Linda Keefe, Leslie Taylor, Brad Webb, Doug Booth, Jo Seiser, and Chris Goebel enjoy lunch at the Board Leadership seminar.

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Stewardship Feature, Mississippi Valley Conservancy

The stewardship fund offers the opportunity for public and private entities to join together for the greater good of the community. A perfect example is the Roe Preserve at Cassville Bluffs State Natural Area in western Grant County. The Mississippi Valley Conservancy purchased 190.6 acres with the aid of a DNR Stewardship grant, funding from the Stry Foundation & McKnight Foundation and an \$82,000 land value

gift from the Roes, whom the preserve is named after. The DNR purchased the remaining 53 acres. This preserve directly abuts a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refuge and contains an eagle roost and one of the largest bird effigies in the region. The Roe Preserve also opened up a new area for public hunting.



The Roe Preserve

Mark Your Calendar!

Gathering Waters Conservancy is pleased to announce its 1st Annual Land Trust Awards Celebration on September 25, 2003 at Monona Terrace. We will be honoring:

- Land Trust of the Year - \$1,000 award
- Conservationist of the Year
- Legislator of the Year

Nomination information will follow shortly. We hope you will join us in September!