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nature photos: Gil Gribb



gathering waters conservancy

Continued Vigilance for the Stewardship Fund

Over the past year we have taken every opportunity to celebrate the increase in funding of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund. In difficult economic times, the 40 percent increase—from \$60 million to \$86 million a year—remains one of Wisconsin's greatest conservation victories.

But we certainly don't take that accomplishment or the Stewardship Fund for granted. We are engaged now in the administrative rulemaking for the reauthorized Stewardship Fund, trying to keep Stewardship as accessible to land trusts as possible. The law requires that, except under limited circumstances, Stewardship properties be open for public access for nature based outdoor activities including hunting and trapping. The Department of Natural Resources convened a Citizen Advisory Committee to assist with defining the new requirements for public access on places protected by the Stewardship Fund. Our policy staff had a seat on this Committee, as did several representatives from land trusts, local governments and other interested parties.

Gathering Waters wants to see more people out enjoying Wisconsin's special places and we support increased public

access on Stewardship properties. However, if Stewardship dollars are only used to protect lands where all users have unlimited access, those dollars would no longer be practical for great projects like the Mequon Nature Preserve, where joggers, hikers, birders and hundreds of school children share acres with hunters during certain specified seasons. From the outset, we have advocated for a flexible approach to the public access requirements that recognizes the important role that land trusts play, particularly in the more densely populated urban and urbanizing communities.

The members of the Citizen Advisory Committee found much common ground and came to consensus on nearly all the issues before them. The Committee made their final recommendations to the DNR in January and the formal rulemaking process is now underway. We anticipate opportunities for public comment on draft rules by April or May, so please stay tuned! Stewardship may again need your voice. Any and all input to the DNR on these rules will be welcomed and appreciated. For more information contact Mike Carlson—carlson@gatheringwaters.org.

Working Lands Workshops

One look around the room made it clear that a great number of people care a good deal about the future of Wisconsin working lands. Last December, the Wisconsin Towns Association, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the American Farmland Trust, along with many other sponsors, offered all-day workshops to discuss the fate of our state's farm and forest lands. Braving blizzards in some cases, 400 farmers, agency employees, town board members, county officials and more attended.

These workshops—in the Dells, Eau Claire, Kimberly, Stevens Point and Ft. Atkinson—delivered statistics about the importance of agriculture to local and state economies. Participants from the Ultimate Land Use Tour (see p. 3) and American Farmland Trust staff shared stories of farmland protection programs around the country. A representative from Wisconsin's DATCP outlined recommendations for updated Farmland Preservation policies and a proposed statewide Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program (PACE). In addition, farmers who have conveyed

conservation easements on working lands explained their decisions and experience.

The Workshops were designed to spark conversation about the best solutions to the loss of productive land around the state. How would a statewide or local PACE program work in the unique and complicated fabric of Wisconsin county, town, village and city government? Where should a community interested in working land protection start?

Having recently returned from the Ultimate Land Use Tour, Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Bill Bruins remarked that good working lands protection "has to be sought by urbanites who want to see land preserved, but created by farmers, developers and town, city and county leaders." The Workshops drew all those people and will seed discussion at kitchen tables and at town board meetings statewide about protecting the vitality of Wisconsin agriculture. Through our partnership with American Farmland Trust, we will ensure that land trust voices remain heard in those discussions.

Gathering Waters Conservancy's mission is to help communities, land trusts and landowners protect the places that make Wisconsin special. Our goal is to increase the amount of protected land in the state through private voluntary action.

Gathering Waters Conservancy

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From the Executive Director's Desk...

The last Crosscurrents featured three major initiatives Gathering Waters has been pursuing: the ongoing Campaign for Wisconsin's Farm and Forest Lands, working to expand options for permanent rural land protection, our efforts to keep the reauthorized Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund a viable resource for land trusts and a watershed-scope approach to conservation in the Yahara River Basin. These three are fairly large-scale and relatively high-profile projects.

But, of course, that's not all we do. As in any organization, much of what we do may not be as visible but could be just as important to our members and to Wisconsin in the long run: I want to share one example.

For two years we've tracked the progress of the Governor's Global Warming Task Force and other regional discussions on this important topic. As I visited with our members, some among you asked what role will exist for land trusts in the policies proposed or programs underway.

Land trusts are already sequestering carbon on protected lands, safeguarding key habitat corridors and preserving acres that may be valuable for future biofuels markets. But in coming years will there be financial resources available for land trusts that help mitigate the impact of climate change? How will land trusts access them? Those answers are yet unclear, so we spent time with individuals in state government and beyond, sorting through

the possibilities to make sure land trusts are appropriately positioned when answers emerge.



To share what we know thus far and further the conversation, we've worked with the Land Trust Alliance to create a half-day seminar at the Midwest Land Conservation Conference. We've arranged a panel of knowledgeable policy leaders and carbon market experts to share their perspective, focusing on what land trusts need to know. (Curious? The conference meets March 12-14 in Madison, see our webpage for details).

On our webpage or in the newsletter we don't typically feature day-to-day projects like this seminar, but it's one example of behind-the-headlines work that may have serious, positive influences on land conservation. Everyday we try to equip opportunities to protect Wisconsin. That means educating landowners, land trusts and policy makers. It means tracking emerging issues and staying prepared to help land trusts protect our state's natural heritage. Your questions and comments help us navigate through many issues affecting land conservation. So thank you for asking, and thanks for all you do to protect the places that make Wisconsin special.



Michael Strigel, Executive Director



Board Member Profile: Darrell Bazzell

Darrell Bazzell, our esteemed Board President, has a long track record of public service. He has held leadership positions at the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection and the Department of Natural Resources for over a decade. He served as DNR Secretary from 2001 to 2003 and was then appointed Vice Chancellor of Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He joined our Board in 2003 because it provides him the opportunity to share his expertise in conservation policy with, in his words, "an organization that does an exceptional job providing leadership in safeguarding our natural heritage."

Mr. Bazzell is a fervent advocate for environmental protection and strong urban communities and feels that Gathering Waters' coalition-building leadership is critical to the preservation of Wisconsin's natural resources. We feel lucky to have him! Darrell's time is dear: he serves on the boards of the Madison Community Foundation, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, United Way and the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County. When he finds rare spare time, Darrell enjoys fishing, biking, and providing urban youth opportunities to enjoy Wisconsin's great outdoors.



And on our staff... We welcome Communications Intern Becky Thompson. Becky grew up exploring the wooded hills of Wisconsin's coulee region. A Latin American studies graduate student, she spends much of her time studying our neighbors to the south. Becky is specifically interested in sustainable forestry. Her internship at Gathering Waters is an excellent start to understanding the relationships between forests and the communities that treasure and rely on them right in her own backyard. Becky also contemplates salsa dancing and downhill skiing, her new favorite winter activities.

The Ultimate Land Use Tour

“Everyone told us the same thing: Now is the time to protect your farmland.” - Dick Cates of Cates Family Farm in Spring Green, and Director of the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers.

Last October, 50 people from around Wisconsin embarked on a 6-day bus journey across Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey. The goal of the trip “out East” was to observe first-hand some innovative, successful land-use programs that preserve farmland and consolidate growth and development.

Gathering Waters Conservancy, American Farmland Trust and many land trusts were among the 50 sponsors who helped fund the Ultimate Land Use Study Tour—the third of its kind from Wisconsin.

The tour loaded a bus with influential individuals who logged long hours to meet farmers, local and state officials and developers to talk about the details of working lands protection programs, some of which have been running for almost 30 years. How are county-run programs structured? What roles do land trusts play? How are they funded? How do they manage the waiting list of farmers interested in participating?

The trip was powerful testimony to the fact that agriculture is a “developed” land use. The tour visited not just farmland, but neighborhoods where residential development had been encouraged. Their hosts spoke eloquently about how the preservation of farmland was directly tied to the health of their urban areas and vice versa. This is why taxpayers in places like Lancaster County, PA have overwhelmingly supported using tax dollars to purchase development rights on working lands. To date, over 1,000 farms totaling 78,000 acres have been preserved in perpetuity in Lancaster County.



Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Bill Bruins and Gathering Waters' Policy Director Vicki Elkin on the bus “out East”

Among the participants were town board members and planners, farmers including representatives from Wisconsin Farm Bureau, the Farmers Union, Wisconsin Pork Producers and Cattlemen’s Association, land trust staff, state agency officials and members of the Towns Association and the Builders Association. All aboard the bus are committed to finding solutions to the challenges facing Wisconsin working lands. As you’ve read, they have already participated in regional workshops to continue the discussions begun on the bus and to get to work here in Wisconsin.

“I found it interesting to note how supportive most of the communities were of such programs. The train museum [in Lancaster, PA] donated some of each fare to maintain the rural atmosphere along their right of way... We as farmers know the talking points of how the money we generate typically turns in the local community 7 times—these citizens seemed to understand that PDR/TDR wasn’t about farmers, it was about a firm foundation for a local economy.” – John Koepke, Koepke Farms, Oconomowoc



Author Ben Logan's Seldom Seen Farm, protected in 2008 by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy

Land Trust Show and Tell

We send this newsletter to our members to keep you informed about how Gathering Waters is working to help keep Wisconsin's special landscapes vital and beautiful. Since we do that by making Wisconsin Land Trusts stronger, we would like to take a page or two to show off land trusts' accomplishments. We asked them to share some of their favorite projects from 2008. This is a sampling, hardly a comprehensive year-in-review of land conservation success. Nevertheless, here are some 2008 highlights.



Cherokee Marsh, photo courtesy of Natural Heritage Land Trust

Natural Heritage Land Trust

Cherokee Marsh is Dane County's largest wetland. It continues to be one of the healthiest and best protected in the area thanks to a 260-acre acquisition by the land trust last year—the largest conservation purchase in Madison's history. The purchase, made thanks to the Stewardship Fund, contributions from the City of Madison, Dane County and individuals, includes a 23-acre parcel that will separate new residential development from a city conservation park. It will also protect 660 feet of Yahara River shoreline and will eventually include a trail for biking and hiking between neighborhoods on either end of the park. This conservation deal is going to keep nearly 3,000 acres of wetlands and uplands a permanent fixture in the center of one of the state's fastest-growing communities.



Three Springs Preserve, photo courtesy of J. Schartner

Door County Land Trust

Speaking of big wetland stories, our last newsletter reported briefly the Door County Land Trust's purchase of 421 acres soon to be open for birding, hiking and hunting as the Harold C. Wilson Three Springs Natural Reserve. Good news bears repeating, of course. Thanks to the land trust, the Stewardship Fund, US Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy, the preserve will be forever wild. Permanent protection of this Preserve is great news for its natural inhabitants. It lies in a region with the state's highest diversity and density of rare species and natural communities. It hosts springs and headwaters that feed North Bay, a major spawning ground for Lake Michigan whitefish. The Preserve is habitat for the endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly.

The preserve holds a unique place in local and state history, too. In 1940 it was owned by Harold C. Wilson, whose family owned Ephraim's popular Wilson's Ice Cream Parlor. A passionate citizen-naturalist, in 1947, Wilson also opened the family-friendly Three Springs Nature Center on the property to educate visitors about the wildlife and ecology of Door County. Wilson and subsequent landowners stewarded the property into the 21st century. Now the Land Trust "is honored to follow in the footsteps of Harold Wilson by once again making this property available for all the public to enjoy" explains Terrie Cooper, their Land Program Director.

Thanks to the land trust, the Stewardship Fund, US Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy, the preserve will be forever wild. Permanent protection of this Preserve is great news for its natural inhabitants.

Mississippi Valley Conservancy

On the other side of the state, the the Mississippi Valley Conservancy closed another conservation deal protecting far more than just acres. The hilltop farmstead memorialized in author Ben Logan's memoir *The Land Remembers* will remain undeveloped: Logan donated a conservation easement to the Conservancy that will forever keep Seldom Seen Farm available for farming.

Logan's writing celebrates the connection between land and people who spend their working hours outside. In a recent interview, Logan explained that he wrote his lauded book to "give rural people a voice" and chose to protect his land to "give it a voice and breed respect for the land." His donation means that the rhythms of rural life he so poetically recounted will continue on that ridgetop, not just in his many readers' imaginations.



MVC staff and Author Ben Logan signing the conservation easement that will forever protect Seldom Seen Farm.

Glacial Lakes Conservancy

The Glacial Lakes Conservancy discovered a hidden treasure of community support last summer. The Point Creek Natural Area is a research and educational area on the shores of Lake Michigan owned by Manitowoc County and protected by a conservation easement held by Glacial Lakes Conservancy. The Conservancy and its management partners are in the process of habitat and native species restoration on the property. All the abandoned tires, gradually deposited onto the property for years, were not in keeping with the Management Committee's restoration plans. The Conservancy looked hard for a no-cost solution for the tire removal, and Richard Larson was the answer. Owner of Whitewall Tire Co. and GreenSky Energetics, Larson offered a day of his time to load and haul and generously offered to cover disposal costs.

Larson, county staff and volunteers expected to haul out about 500 tires but found many more hiding under tall grasses and shrubs. Their original estimate nearly tripled! Nevertheless Larson and his crew decided to donate a second full day to get the job done. The 1,300 tires will be recycled and ground into playground surfacing and horse-arena footing.



Photo courtesy of Glacial Lakes Conservancy

Kettle Moraine Land Trust

Kettle Moraine Land Trust was pleased to receive \$22,000 from the Donnelley Foundation to educate the residents of Walworth County on the benefits of Conservation Subdivisions.

In 2004 Walworth County adopted a voluntary Conservation Subdivision ordinance to encourage conservation of environmental corridors and the rural character of the county. The ordinance requires that up to sixty percent of new related subdivisions be set aside as an open space that will be managed to assure that its environmental quality will be maintained. The open space is permanently restricted from further development through deed restrictions, donation of a conservation easement, or through another agreement acceptable to the Town and the County. The land trust recently saw an outreach opportunity to educate Town residents and elected officials. Through their grant, KMLT will be giving presentations to the sixteen Town Planning Commissions and Boards across the County and hosting a Workshop led by Randall Arendt, the international Conservation Subdivision expert, on May 7th.



Kettle Moraine Land Trust President Jerry Petersen with Town of Walworth Planning Commission Chairman Bill Martin

Big Plans in a Big Basin: News from the Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance

As you probably heard, last fall the land trust members of the Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance (LMSA) and Gathering Waters co-hosted a series of "Great Lake Gatherings," public forums on conservation issues in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Basin. They were a resounding success, and the momentum of those Gatherings led to a conservation leadership summit last November at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine. There, participants discussed the most important next steps for LMSA and for land conservation in the basin.



Kimberly Gleffe and Mike Strigel at the Milwaukee Great Lake Gathering

Out of that summit, LMSA's objective is to plan for strategic and lasting conservation of the basin's most important resources. With input from economic development experts, elected officials and foundation representatives, LMSA leaders discussed how they can continue engaging corporate citizens, policy makers and other community leaders and craft an updated conservation plan for the basin. (LMSA created a regional conservation plan in 2003, *Landscapes of Opportunity*, and is eager to plan for the next five years and beyond). In coming months we'll share more about LMSA's ambitions and accomplishments. For information on LMSA, contact Liz Walsh—liz@gatheringwaters.org.

We and LMSA land trusts are deeply appreciative of the many people who made the Great Lake Gatherings successful.

Great Lake Gathering Advisory Teams

Jim Baumgart • Debbie Beyer • Kim Biedermann • Ashley Brenke • Kimberly Gleffe • Shawn Graff • Vickie Hall
Delene Hanson • Vicky Harris • Stacy Hron • Mary Jo Knauf • Greg Kowalski • Chris Krieg • Pat Marchese
Maureen Meinhardt • Deborah Nett • Mequon Mayor Christine Nuernberg • Gail Epping Overholt • Eric Paulsen
Patrick Robinson • Kevin Shafer • Guy Smith • Franklin Mayor Tom Taylor • Kristen Wilhelm

Great Lake Gathering Sponsors

Hosts

The Joyce Foundation • WI Department of Natural Resources • Argosy Foundation • Brico Fund
Wisconsin Energy Foundation

Benefactors

West Bend Community Foundation's West Bend Mutual Insurance Company Charitable Fund

Partners

Wisconsin Coastal Management Program • Harris Bank • West Bend Community Foundation's Marianne and Bill Shane Fund
Wisconsin Energy Foundation • Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Great Lakes Environmental Fund

Contributors

Sanimax • UW Sea Grant Institute • Sheboygan River Basin Partnership • Waukesha Co. Dept of Parks & Land Use

Speakers & Moderators

Ed Wiesner • Mayor Jim Schmitt, City of Green Bay • G. Tracy Mehan, III • Mike Grimm • Steve Lambert • Ron Vander Velden • Fred Schnook • Gary Delveaux • Patrick Robinson • Mayor Juan Perez, City of Sheboygan • Paul Linzmeyer
Greg David • Jon Gumtow • Karl Klessig • Vickie Hall • Deb Beyer • Mayor Christine Nuernberg, City of Mequon
Secretary Rod Nilsestuen, WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection • Anthony Warren
Marcus White • Shawn Graff • Claus Dunkelberg • Gail Epping Overholt • Delene Hanson • Kimberly Gleffe
Ann Brummitt • Milwaukee County Supervisor Gerry Broderick • Rich Meeusen • Nancy Frank

Field trip hosts

Richard Barloga • Mike & Kristin Marek • St Ann Center for Intergenerational Care • Kristin Gies • David Kuckuk
Paul Hartman

For their assistance at Wingspread, we thank:

The Johnson Foundation • John Pohlman (WI DNR) for providing maps

Wingspread moderators and presenters

Dan Burke, Rebecca Smith, Caryn Ernst, G. Tracy Mehan, III, Vickie Hall, Paul Linzmeyer, Shawn Graff, Fred Schnook
and Todd Ambis

Introducing Gathering Waters Conservancy's Sustainers Circle

This winter we are thrilled to announce a new opportunity for those who want their conservation ethic reflected in their long-term financial plans: we are launching the Sustainers Circle of our Land Legacy Society. For those of you who are interested in the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy of peaceful forests, bountiful lakes and picturesque vistas for your children and grandchildren, this is the program for you.

The Sustainers Circle is a group of benefactors, dedicated to perpetual and sustainable support for Wisconsin's special places, who have pledged a planned gift to Gathering Waters Conservancy.

Beyond the significance a legacy gift will have on the future of Wisconsin's natural heritage, planned gifts to Gathering Waters can also bring tangible benefits to you and your family. If you want to leave a conservation legacy, we encourage you to discuss giving options with your financial and estate-planning advisors. Types of gifts you may consider include:

- Bequest provision
- Charitable remainder trust
- Retirement plan or IRA beneficiary designation
- Insurance beneficiary designation
- Charitable gift annuity
- Gift of real estate or other tangible property

If you have already made plans to provide for Gathering Waters Conservancy in your estate, let us know! We would love the opportunity to extend our sincerest thanks and welcome you to our Sustainers Circle.

Planned Giving Q&A

What is planned giving?

Planned Giving integrates the personal, financial and estate planning goals of donors with their desire to bestow current or future financial charitable gifts. Some planned gift options are made by a designation in a will or trust. Others, like charitable gift annuities, require additional planning and are designed to create present or future income streams for the donor or other beneficiaries, tax savings for the donor and a legacy gift for the charity.

What is a charitable bequest?

The term "charitable bequest" describes a gift to charity from your estate through a will or a revocable trust. This is the most common type of planned gift and one of the easiest to implement.

What are the benefits of making a planned gift?

Planned giving is attractive to donors for many reasons. It may allow you to make larger gifts than you can from your current assets. It may also let you receive a stream of income for life, earn higher investment yield or reduce your capital gains or estate taxes. Planned gifts often appeal to people who want to benefit a charitable organization but aren't certain which of their assets they'll need during their lifetimes.

What is an endowed gift?

An endowed gift is a gift that a charity holds in perpetuity. The gift is invested and a portion of its annual return is used to support the charity's operations. The principal maintains its value over time, so a donor can be sure her gift will continue.

I have already created my will. Do I need to redo it to add GWC as a beneficiary?

Adding GWC as a beneficiary of your estate can be as simple as adding a line in your will. One method for adding GWC to your will is through the use of a codicil—a document that amends rather than replaces a previously executed will.

If you would like more information about planned giving, please contact Michael Strigel, Executive Director, at 608.251.9131 x 14 or mike@gatheringwaters.org.

Thank You!

Gathering Waters extends sincere appreciation to:

Geoff Maclay for hosting us at the University Club in Milwaukee

Chris Hughes for co-presenting a CLE seminar

3rd Wave Research for their data analysis services

Don't They Deserve an Award?

Inside this newsletter you can read about just a few of Wisconsin Land Trusts' many accomplishments. Every one of those projects has a great land trust and heroic individuals behind it.

Don't you think they deserve an award? Gathering Waters Conservancy's Land Conservation Leadership Awards recognize outstanding accomplishments of individuals, policy makers and land trusts that protect the places that make Wisconsin special and offer inspiring examples to all conservation supporters.

We want nominations for the 2009:

- Land Trust of the Year
- Policy Maker of the Year
- Conservationist of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award

Awards will be presented at our annual Awards Celebration **October 1, 2009**. For more information about the awards and nomination forms, a listing of past award winners and the generous sponsors who have made past awards celebration possible, visit www.gatheringwaters.org/awards. The nomination deadline is Friday, May 22, 2009.

crosscurrents

a newsletter to serve the land conservation
community of Wisconsin



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Announcements

It's a busy season!

Wisconsin land conservation is packing the calendar this spring. Call it spring fever, maybe cabin fever or simply evidence of how many people around the state are serious about protecting Wisconsin's special places. Mark your calendars and please join us.

Gathering Waters is pleased to be co-sponsoring the 2009 Midwest Land Conservation Conference. Registration is open! We invite you to attend the Midwest Land Conservation Conference—it's the best opportunity all year to share ideas and wisdom with other innovators and leaders of land conservation in the Heartland. The conference will be held at the University of Wisconsin Extension's Pyle Center in Madison, March 12-14. To Register, visit www.landtrustalliance.org/learning/training/rc/Midwest

Interested in the Campaign for Wisconsin's Farm and Forest Lands? There are several upcoming workshops exploring tools and strategies to protect Wisconsin's working lands. These events are sponsored by land trusts and partners around the state with support from the American Farmland Trust and Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. For more information visit www.wisconsinfarmland.org.

Working Lands Workshops

February 24 Madison • February 25 Oconomowoc
February 25 Juneau • February 26 Burlington
February 26 Saukville • March 11 New Richmond
March 12 Wausau • Date TBA Ashland

