You made a huge difference in 2020!

Your gift helped:

Build the campaign to renew the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program .................. 2
Show the value of protected land .......... 4
Strengthen and sustain land trusts during uncertain times ......................... 6
Introduce more people to land trusts and protected land ...................... 8
Inform people about natural places to explore and enjoy ...................... 10
Celebrate conservation leaders ........ 12
Connect the dots between land protection and bird conservation ...... 14

PLUS

Fond farewells and welcomes ........ 16
Why your gift counts ..................... 18

Thank you

Your gift reaches far and wide to protect land, water, and wildlife in Wisconsin.

Thank you for all that you made possible in 2020!

Photo (left) by Bruce Karr
Cover Photo by Lyn Carlson
You helped build the campaign to save critical state funding

The battle for the future of land protection in Wisconsin is in full swing—and you supported a strong, statewide campaign to save it.

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, Wisconsin’s best source of conservation funding, is at risk of expiring.

If it is not renewed during the state budget debates, it will be much harder to protect Wisconsin’s land, water, and wildlife.

Thanks to your generous support, people across Wisconsin have joined Team Knowles-Nelson.

And people are taking action for land protection at KnowlesNelson.org.

Thank you for making this possible.

YOU CAN TAKE ACTION AT KNOWLESNELSON.ORG

54 ORGANIZATIONS SIGNED ON
To a letter sent to the Governor last fall.

500 POSTCARDS
Delivered to the Governor.

1000 MESSAGES
Delivered to elected officials in support of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Because of your support for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, protected places like the Kickapoo Caverns provide habitat for endangered wildlife.
You helped people see the value of protected land in Wisconsin like Lion’s Den Gorge in Grafton (left), Minocqua Winter Park in Minocqua (center), and the Englewood Preserve in Osceola (right).

You helped show the value of protected land

Because of your generosity, more people realized the value of protected land.

You helped fund research that shows how nature works for Wisconsin every single day.

Protected land helps:

• filter pollutants from the air and water
• provide homes for wildlife
• absorb carbon and regulate the climate
• boost the forestry, recreation, and tourist industries

Thank you for all you do to protect Wisconsin’s natural and wild places.

NATURE WORKS FOR US EVERY DAY

ON AVERAGE, ONE ACRE OF CONSERVED LAND RETURNS $3,000 EVERY YEAR

From clean air and water, to recreation, to climate regulation, nature gets the job done!

NATURE MAKES PEOPLE FEEL BETTER

We’re happier, more creative, and less stressed out with a regular dose of nature.

IT’S NOT JUST FOR US

Conserved lands protect wildlife, migration routes, native plants, and more!

Thank you for helping people understand the value of protecting land, water, and wildlife. See more at KnowlesNelson.org/Research-Overview
You helped strengthen and sustain Wisconsin’s land trusts

Land trusts are conservation leaders in communities across Wisconsin.

Your faithful generosity gave land trusts a way to share ideas, get expert advice, and help one another in the midst of uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

You helped bring staff, board members, and volunteers “face-to-face” through virtual forums.

Educational opportunities kept land trusts up to date on resources and tools to meet urgent needs and plan for conservation success for years to come.

Thanks to you, land trusts are better prepared to serve their communities and protect Wisconsin’s precious landscapes.

Because of your support, Wisconsin land trusts had the tools and resources they needed to advance conservation during a very challenging year.

LAND TRUST SERVICES

19 ZOOM FORUMS
80% of Gathering Waters member land trusts connected with their peers.

5 “ASK AN EXPERT” CALLS
Over 375 people attended.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION
A three-part series sponsored in partnership with Wisconsin’s Green Fire and the Natural Resources Foundation.

TRAINING TOPICS INCLUDED
Emergency Financial Assistance
Contingency Planning • Volunteer Management
Easement Monitoring • Virtual Events • Next Generation Leadership • Birds as Conservation Catalysts
You helped people plan their own Wisconsin Land Trust Days adventures

Land Trust Days promotes local events hosted by Wisconsin land trusts during August and September each year, and typically draws hundreds of participants. But because of the pandemic in 2020, Land Trust Days wasn’t business as usual. Many events were canceled. Fortunately, you helped people learn about Wisconsin land trusts in a whole new way.

The network broadcast of Discover Wisconsin’s Land Trust Days episode introduced more than 600,000 people across the Midwest to land trusts and the work they do. Because of you, many people saw the value of protected places during the television broadcast. You also helped them create their own adventures and find places to have fun outside with the Land Trust Days Adventure Guide.

Because of your support, people experienced Wisconsin Land Trust Days through self-guided tours (left) or by watching the Discover Wisconsin broadcast (right).
You helped people get outside and explore

In 2020, people visited Wisconsin's great outdoors in record numbers!

So much so, that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources had to close some popular state parks because of overcrowding.

But thanks to people like you, there were other special places to explore.

Your gift helped launch GatheringWaters.org/Places.

This interactive web page helped people find properties protected by land trusts, including prairies, blufflands, lakes, shorelines, forests—and even a Wisconsin desert, complete with cacti.

Because of you, more people discovered these special places in their own communities.

Protected natural areas took center stage as more people turned to nature for relief from the stresses caused by COVID-19.

GATHERINGWATERS.ORG/PLACES
LAUNCHED IN APRIL 2020

HIGHLIGHTS 42 PLACES TO VISIT

19 PROPERTIES
Protected by the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Program.

PROTECTED AREAS OFFER LOTS OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
Paddling • Biking • Hiking • Bird Watching

Your faithful support helped people explore places like the Ice Age Trail along the Plover River in Central Wisconsin.
You helped recognize five land conservation leaders

Countless people and organizations work tirelessly year-round to protect Wisconsin’s land, water, and wildlife. Their dedication, service, and passion are inspiring and worthy of celebration.

In 2020, you helped honor five deserving award winners:

- **Geneva Lake Conservancy** – Land Trust of the Year
- **Charles & Diana Colman** – Conservationists of the Year
- **Making Allies for Healthier Communities** – Rod Nilsestuen Award for Working Lands Preservation
- **Peter McKeever** – Harold “Bud” Jordahl Lifetime Achievement Award
- **The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration** – The Land Legacy Award

Find more details at: [GatheringWaters.org/Awards2020](http://GatheringWaters.org/Awards2020)

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**2020 Wisconsin Land Conservation Leadership Awards**

5 awards honored individuals, organizations, and a partnership

2 events were held for award presentations

Where possible, Gathering Waters presented the 2020 awards at local events so the award winners could invite family and friends.

You helped celebrate conservation successes.
You helped the birds

Tragically, North America has lost nearly 30 percent of bird populations since 1970—more than 2.9 billion birds!

That’s sobering news when you consider birds indicate the health of our land and water resources.

Your faithful support made a difference for land conservation and our fine feathered friends.

Land trust leaders participated in an Ask An Expert webinar entitled Birds as Conservation Catalysts. The presentation highlighted how birds can help promote land protection.

Thanks to your generosity, land trust leaders also learned more about Wisconsin’s Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

Undertaken in collaboration with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership, a study was commissioned to help land trusts and other conservation partners prioritize the protection and management of critical nesting sites and key stopover areas for birds during migration.

You helped the birds and conservation.
**Fond farewells and welcome to new team members**

In 2020, the land trust community said farewell to two long-time friends and hello to some new friends and colleagues.

In November, we said goodbye to **Dana Chabot** as he started his new adventure: retirement. Dana served as Gathering Waters’ financial manager for 20 years. He was a guide and mentor to many in Wisconsin’s land trust community. We’ll miss Dana and his wife, Pat. We wish them well.

**We also welcomed two new team members.**

**Creal Zearing** joined our team in January 2020, as Associate Director of Development, pairing her passion for environmental work with helping people meet their philanthropic goals.

Previously, Creal worked at the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association, the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, and taught outdoor environmental education in Minnesota.

She adds valuable skills and her vivacious personality to the team.

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**Emilee Martell** is a graduate student at the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. She joined Gathering Waters in August 2020. Emilee’s enthusiasm for protecting land shows in her role as Outreach and Development Intern.

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**In fond memory of Geoff Maclay**

Feb 9, 1924 – April 17, 2021

We honor Geoffrey Maclay, one of Gathering Waters’ founders.

Geoff lived his passion for conservation. His life’s work led to the creation of Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation and the protection of over 2,500 acres of wetlands, woodlands, and other natural areas in the Cedar Lakes region.

He also served as an early architect of Wisconsin’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

We are grateful for Geoff Maclay’s impressive and enduring legacy. He will be missed.
Every Gift Counts!

Your gift to Gathering Waters in 2020 helped protect land and water in Wisconsin.

You Helped:
Prepare for the 2021 state budget battle, show the value of protecting land, strengthen land trusts, connect people to nature, celebrate conservation leaders, and support habitat for bird populations!

THANK YOU!!

Fiscal Year 2020 Overview

Net Assets
Net assets available for future operations $1,133,645
Endowment fund (to support internships) $10,750
Total Net Assets $1,144,395

Revenue
Grants and contracts $350,266
Contributions from individuals and businesses 205,245
Contributions from land trusts 52,690
Forgiven PPP loan 79,700
Investment income 37,342
Total Revenue $725,243

Expenses
Education and outreach $218,253
Land trust services 175,013
Policy and government relations 133,795
Fundraising 88,741
Management and general 40,508
Program development 22,369
Total Expenses $678,679
Gathering Waters is here to help you protect Wisconsin’s land, water, wildlife, and way of life.

608.251.9131
gatheringwaters.org

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Learn more about our Board Members at: gatheringwaters.org/board

Staff
Mike Carlson, Executive Director
Charles Carlin, Director of Strategic Initiatives
Meg Domroese, Director, Programs & Impact
Cathy Hart, Office Manager
Emilee Martell, Outreach & Development Intern
Patricia McMurtrie, Annual Giving & Outreach Manager
Kira Regner, Development Associate
Creal Zearing, Associate Director of Development

Land Trust Council
Carol Abrahamzon, Chair, Mississippi Valley Conservancy
Susan Buchanan, Tall Pines Conservancy
Tom Clay, Door County Land Trust
Jennifer Filipiak, Driftless Area Land Conservancy
Kimberly Gleffe, River Revitalization Foundation
Lindsey Ketchel, Landmark Conservancy
Clint Miller, The Conservation Fund
Trisha Moore, Northwoods Land Trust
Linda Mutschler, Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation
Tom Stolp, Vice Chair, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust
Alison Volk, American Farmland Trust
Jim Welsh, Groundswell Conservancy
Bur Zeratsky, Green Lake Conservancy

Learn more about the Council at: gatheringwaters.org/council

LOOKING FORWARD IN 2021...

Join us for:
Wisconsin Land Trust Days events in August and September. Keep an eye out for an updated list of events at HaveFunOutside.org in July.

Take action! You can help prevent the loss of millions of dollars in state funding for land and water protection!

Governor Evers and the Wisconsin Legislature are debating the state budget. If they don’t agree to renew the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, funding will end and ongoing land and water protection efforts in Wisconsin will be devastated.

THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY:

1. SIGN UP TO RECEIVE ACTION ALERTS AT KNOWLESNELSON.ORG
2. CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS WITH THE CLICK OF A BUTTON AT KNOWLESNELSON.ORG
3. SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE STEWARDSHIP AT GATHERINGWATERS.ORG/HELPTODAY

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