

July 1, 2008–June 30, 2009

# 2009

## annual report



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 211 S. Paterson St., Suite 270  
 Madison, WI 53703  
 www.gatheringwaters.org  
 608.251.9131

## From the Executive Director

Friends and colleagues have asked me in the last year how Gathering Waters Conservancy has weathered the economic climate. They asked cautiously, eyebrows raised suggesting sympathy. They assumed that inquiring about the financial health of a non-profit was going to bring up bad news. Not at all.

Gathering Waters Conservancy is thriving. That's a very satisfying announcement for this executive director to make, but I can't take too much credit for our success. Nor can I claim that we had some clever or unique strategy to pull through a financial downturn (although we do have a first-rate, creative staff). Gathering Waters is thriving because in this, our 15<sup>th</sup> year, our mission is relevant and our supporters concur: land conservation is an essential service to Wisconsin communities and land trusts are powerful service providers.

This annual report reflects a year of investing in land trusts' potential. We helped Wisconsin pass into law a significant farmland conservation program, one which will channel resources to land trusts and will need land trust partners to be most effective. Through our Great Lake Gatherings, we created opportunities for land trusts in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Basin to make connections with hundreds of community leaders through the Great Lake Gatherings. We welcomed Wisconsin land trusts to the best-attended Wisconsin Land Trust meeting to strategize the movements' support of the Stewardship Fund, the Working Lands Initiative, land trusts' approach to accreditation and more.

As this report shows, many of you helped us make that investment in land trusts' astounding potential. Thank you. You've done more than simply keep a non-profit's doors open. Your investment in Wisconsin land trusts last year helped us lay the groundwork for big programs ahead. In our 16<sup>th</sup> year, you'll see us pursuing many opportunities to make land trusts stronger. Some highlights in the coming year will include:

**Educating land trusts and local governments** about the tools best suited to working lands protection to ensure that the new Working Lands Initiative can boast standard-setting farmland protection projects in its first few years.

**Positioning the land trusts of the Lake Michigan Basin** to help direct federal money from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to strategic land conservation in Wisconsin.

**Delivering resources** to the several Wisconsin land trusts planning to apply for Accreditation by 2011.

**Expanding our outreach** on behalf of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund to galvanize public awareness of its value to all Wisconsin communities.

As our first 15 years come to a close, I am inspired. The returns on our collective investment in land conservation have been impressive. We are energized by successes, we feel well equipped by our committed members, and we're motivated by the growing, vibrant land trust community we serve. I hope you feel the same.

## 15 Years of Supporting Wisconsin Conservation

2009 marks Gathering Waters Conservancy's 15<sup>th</sup> year. To honor the achievements of the land trust movement in our first 15 years, and to ensure that we have the resources to strengthen Wisconsin's land trusts over the next 15 and beyond, we've launched our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign.

The keystone of the campaign is an opportunity for 15 donors to give \$15,000 or more. We're honored that the Forest County Potawatomi Community Foundation contributed a generous lead gift to the campaign. In addition to the Potawatomi's generous pledge, we have secured just over half of our 15-donor goal.

In addition to the contributors to our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign, we also recognize the generous and loyal support of members who have given significant cumulative support to Gathering Waters Conservancy throughout our 15 years—our Hall of Fame. Their commitment to Wisconsin land conservation has had an indelible effect on the future of our state's natural resources. Thank you.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign will run through the end of this calendar year. If you are interested in being one of our campaign supporters, please contact Mike Strigel, Executive Director, at [mike@gatheringwaters.org](mailto:mike@gatheringwaters.org) or call 608.251.9131 x 14.



Michael Strigel, Executive Director



**15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign Contributors**

**Lead Contributor**

Forest County Potawatomi  
Community Foundation

Brico Fund  
Tom & Carol Ehsam  
Enbridge Energy Corporation  
The Joyce Foundation  
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation  
Michele Parker  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Energy Foundation

**Gathering Waters Conservancy's Hall of Fame: 15 Years of Giving**

**\$75,000+**

Brico Fund  
Alice Godfrey  
The Joyce Foundation  
Wisconsin Department  
of Natural Resources

**\$60,000 – \$74,999**

Lux Foundation

**\$45,000 – \$59,999**

Julie Gallagher & Ted Rolfs  
McKnight Foundation  
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin  
Quixote Foundation

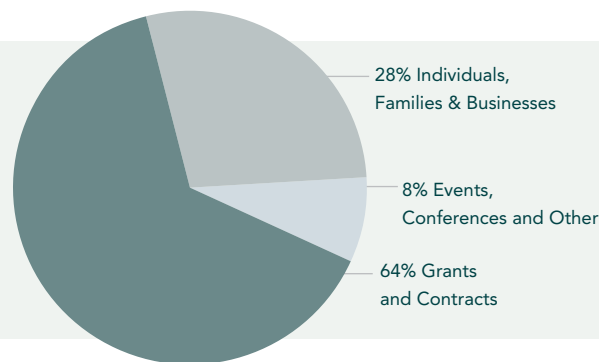
**\$30,000 – \$44,999**

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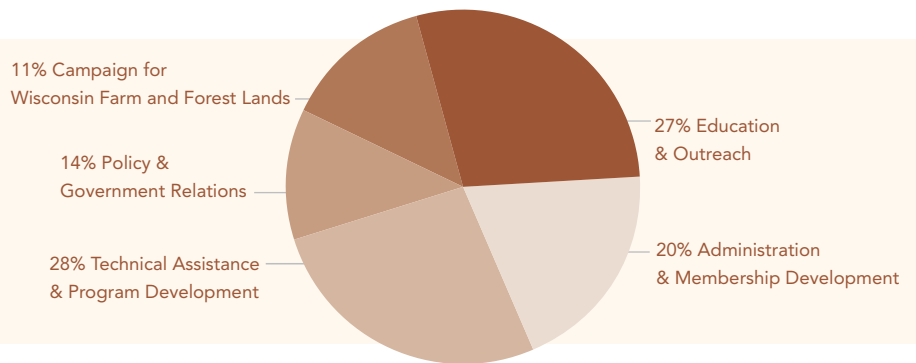
**\$15,000 – \$29,000**

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& The Outrider Foundation  
Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation  
Door County Land Trust  
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The Nature Conservancy  
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West Bend Community Foundation's Ziegler  
Family Foundation Fund  
West Bend Mutual Insurance Company  
& Charitable Foundation  
Wisconsin Energy Foundation

**FY 2009 Income \$786,000**



**FY 2009 Expenses \$744,000**



**operating surplus: \$42,000\***

**Balance Sheet**

	June 30, 2009	June 30, 2008
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and investments	\$ 505,800	\$ 429,300
Unconditional promises to give	\$ 193,300	\$ 412,100
Other	\$ 9,600	\$ 12,600
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 708,700</b>	<b>\$ 854,000</b>
<b>Less</b>		
Liabilities	\$ 39,700	\$ 25,400
Temporarily restricted net assets	\$ 208,100	\$ 409,700
<b>Unrestricted net assets</b>	<b>\$ 460,900</b>	<b>\$ 418,900</b>

\*We're proud of this surplus and grateful to our donors for your commitment to the land trust movement. With your continuing support and our ongoing efforts to serve land trusts as efficiently as we can, we're looking forward to the year ahead. Thank you.

**Land Legacy Society**

We are grateful for the leadership of the following contributors:

**\$10,000 and above**

Tom & Carol Ehram  
Arthur Harrington  
Terry F. & DiAnne Hatch  
Arline Paunack

**\$5,000 – \$9,999**

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Alice Godfrey  
Jean & Walter A. Meanwell  
Glenn Reinl  
& Sara Krebsbach

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*Thank you to the individuals and organizations who fulfilled pledge installments to our 3-year Stewardship Campaign in the 2009 fiscal year. All contributors are recognized in dark brown.*

**\$500 – \$999**

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*A Prairie Enthusiast conservation easement near Prairie du Chien.  
Photo courtesy of Althea Dotzour Photography.*

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## Fiscal Year 2009 Highlights:

**Great Lake Gatherings** With the Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance (LMSA), the ten land trusts in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Basin, Gathering Waters organized four large community forums on conservation priorities. In Green Bay, Sheboygan, Mequon and Milwaukee, the Gatherings introduced hundreds of attendees, including elected officials, philanthropists, corporate and community leaders, conservationists and more to the land trusts and the ways in which their work benefits basin communities. The momentum of those Great Lake Gatherings earned LMSA an invitation to the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center in Racine to strategize how LMSA can attract leadership and resources to critical land conservation.

**A State Commitment to Working Lands** American Farmland Trust wanted to invest in the growing momentum for a state-wide farmland protection program, so they turned to Gathering Waters Conservancy and our earned reputation as an effective, solution-oriented advocate for conservation policy. Gathering Waters and AFT ran a successful grassroots campaign to see the Working Lands Initiative become law. The new program includes opportunities for land trusts and local government to match state dollars to purchase easements on working farms.

**The 2009 Midwest Land Trust Conference** The Midwest Office of the Land Trust Alliance also turned to Gathering Waters last year to cohost their regional Land Conservation Conference. Gathering Waters helped build the program and bring expert presenters and keynote speakers to the best-ever attended meeting of its kind.

**The 2009 Wisconsin Land Trust Meeting** Last March, board and staff from more than half of Wisconsin's land trusts lined the walls in a standing-room-only meeting. They came to boast about projects and forecast needs that Gathering Waters can help address. They came to discuss strategy for seeing the Working Lands Initiative passed. They shared with our government relations staff success stories and suggestions to improve Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grants. This annual meeting—the best peer-to-peer learning opportunity of the year—continues to be a keystone of our service to Wisconsin land trusts.

## Our Continuing Commitment to the Stewardship Fund

Since the Stewardship Fund's reauthorization in the 2007 state budget, Gathering Waters has represented land trusts in a year-long administrative rule making process. Our staff served on an advisory committee as the DNR crafted new rules about public access on land purchased with Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grants. We continue to invest in communication with land trusts and DNR leadership to ensure that the Stewardship Program continues to help Wisconsin communities protect their most important natural lands.

## Land Trust and Conservation Organization Members

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 Caledonia Conservancy  
**Door County Land Trust**  
 Driftless Area Land Conservancy  
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 The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin  
 The Prairie Enthusiasts  
 The Ridges Sanctuary  
**Waukesha County Land Conservancy**  
**West Wisconsin Land Trust**

*Thank you to the individuals and organizations who fulfilled pledge installments to our 3-year Stewardship Campaign in the 2009 fiscal year. All contributors are recognized in dark brown.*



Three Springs Preserve, a project of the Door County Land Trust. • Photo courtesy of J. Schartner



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we help **people**  
**protect** the places  
that make  
**Wisconsin** special

*"We began Gathering Waters hoping to provide a boost to an eager group of new land trusts. I look at the land trust movement in Wisconsin today and am amazed: it's bigger and more influential than I think any of us imagined."*

Robert Chambers, *Gathering Waters Conservancy's Founding President*



**Gathering Waters Conservancy's founding board** • From left to right, Harold "Bud" Jordahl, Robert Chambers, Jean Meanwell, Bill O'Connor & Geoff Maclay

