

2020 Impact Report

gathering waters
wisconsin's alliance
for land trusts





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!

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

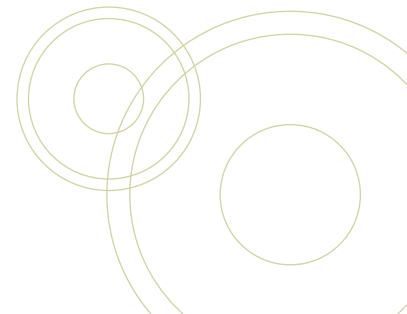


Photo (left) by Bruce Karr
Cover Photo by Lyn Carlson



You helped send hundreds of postcards to the Governor and State Legislators supporting the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

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.



Photo by Brenna Marsicek

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.



Photo by Leona Knobloch, Courtesy of Ozaukee Washington Land Trust

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).



Photo by Mary Paul



Photo Courtesy of Minocqua Winter Park

You helped show the value of protected land

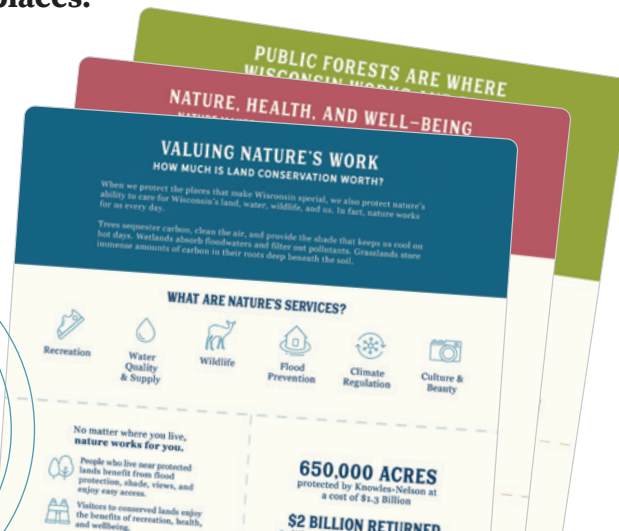
Because of your generosity, more people realized the value of protected land.

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](https://www.knowlesnelson.org/Research-Overview)



Photo Courtesy of River Revitalization Foundation

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



Photo Courtesy of River Revitalization Foundation

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.

You helped land trusts connect via Zoom meetings like this one.



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



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



Watch the episode online at GatheringWaters.org/DWLTD

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.



LAND TRUST DAYS A TIME FOR INDEPENDENT ADVENTURES AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2020

7 LAND TRUSTS HOSTED EVENTS

10 ADVENTURE DESTINATIONS

9 WEEKS

Of nature-based activities.

ACTIVITIES

- Hiking • Paddling • Biking • Trail Building • Self-guided Scenic Tours • Fishing • Open Houses • Historical Tours
- Road Rally • Picnics • Nature-inspired Yoga





You helped people find special places to visit throughout Wisconsin during 2020.

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.

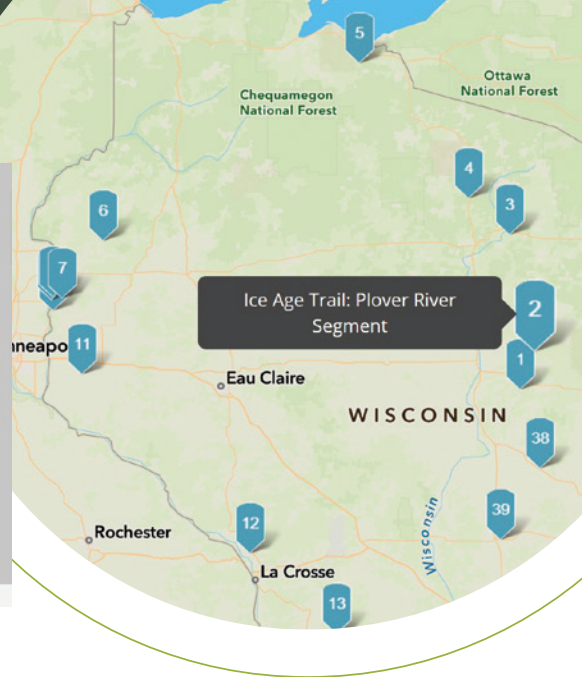
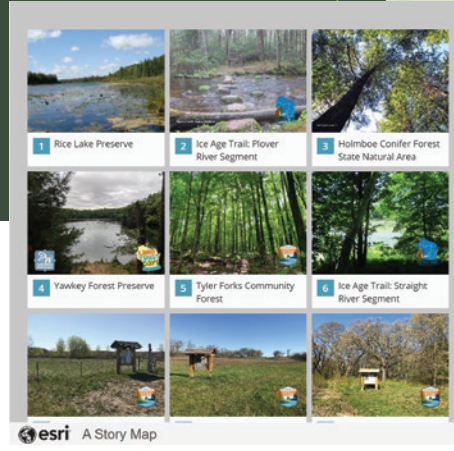
But thanks to people like you, there were other special places to explore.

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.



Photo by Victoria McHugh Photography, Courtesy of Geneva Lake Conservancy

You helped honor Wisconsin's conservation leaders including: the 2020 Land Trust of the Year, Lake Geneva Conservancy (left) and Land Legacy Award winners, The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (right).

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



Photo by Victoria McHugh Photography, Courtesy of Geneva Lake Conservancy



Courtesy of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

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 increase awareness of the relationship between healthy bird populations and the protection of Wisconsin's important bird nesting and resting sites.

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.



BIRDS AS CONSERVATION CATALYSTS

89 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE ASK AN EXPERT WEBINAR

WISCONSIN LAND TRUSTS PARTICIPATED IN A STUDY OF 93 IBAs

In collaboration with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership.

GATHERING WARBLERS TOOK FLIGHT

Gathering Waters' inaugural birding team took part in the Great Wisconsin Birdathon 2020.

Your gift helped land trusts recognize the value of protecting land for the birds.



This interesting pair is standing by to welcome you to Gathering Waters' office, once it's safe to meet in person.

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.



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.



In fond memory of Geoff Maclay

Feb 9, 1924 – April 17, 2021

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

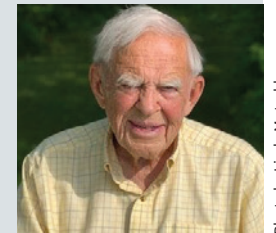


Photo by Linda Mutschler

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!

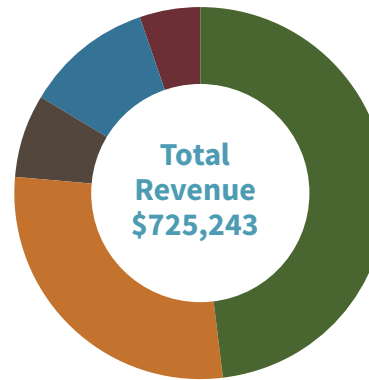
THANK YOU!!

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

You helped make sure people in Wisconsin have natural places to enjoy and explore.

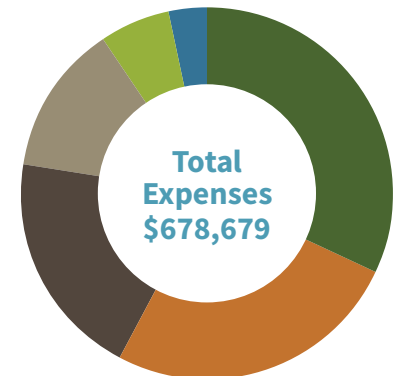


Revenue

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

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



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**

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 the Council at: gatheringwaters.org/council





gathering waters
wisconsin's alliance
for land trusts

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Helping you

protect

Wisconsin's *land,*

water, wildlife,

and way of *life*



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