



## gathering waters conservancy

### 2008 Conservation Award Winners *For additional Award Celebration highlights, see p. 6*

As we do every fall, we took a break from our busy office schedule to celebrate conservation successes. This year we honored, from among many worthy nominees, a great land trust, two esteemed Senators and one indomitable individual.

#### Land Trust of the Year

Grown from humble beginnings ten years ago, the **Mississippi Valley Conservancy** posted an organizational record in 2007. On December 31, they had protected 3,062 acres last year: that's almost as many acres as they had permanently protected in the previous nine. (Early in 2008, MVC hit the 7,000-acre mark.) By any



Mississippi Valley Conservancy Staff and Board

measure, MVC's recent accomplishments are extraordinary. Their membership has nearly doubled in the past two years, they launched an innovative corporate sponsorship program that is generating thousands of new dollars for conservation, and they are regularly featured in area media. Thanks to MVC, the grand and treasured landscapes of the Coulee Region have a thriving future.

#### Harold "Bud" Jordahl Lifetime Achievement Award

Anyone who's even rubbed shoulders in Wisconsin's conservation community knows about the energizing force and passion of **Emily Hornblower Earley**. Our Jordahl Award this year went to Mrs. Earley for her spirited leadership promoting environmental protection and land conservation throughout Wisconsin and abroad. She has served on and inspired countless conservation boards, councils and committees. From Wisconsin to Nicaragua, Emily has lived the last several decades of her life as an exemplary model of leadership, stewardship, activism, volunteerism, advocacy, philanthropy and so much more.

#### Policy Makers of the Year

The tireless efforts of Senators **Mark Miller** and **Rob Cowles** were crucial to Wisconsin's Legislative approval of the Great Lakes Compact, a historic agreement to protect one of the world's most precious natural resources by implementing an effective, multi-state water management regime.

The vitality of Wisconsin and the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem are indelibly linked. With that fact in mind, Senators Miller and Cowles worked through often contentious debate to represent many groups with common concern for the future of the watershed: environmentalists, industries, local municipalities, land trusts and more.



Sens. Mark Miller and Rob Cowles

Thanks to their bipartisan efforts, Wisconsin's legislature approved the Great Lakes Compact by a 129-2 margin. President Bush's signature made it law early this month.

Bud Jordahl and Emily Earley



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nature photos: K.G. Redman



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.

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**From the Executive Director's Desk...**

We exist to make Wisconsin's land trusts stronger. We do this because our land trusts are protecting the places that make this state so special. In service to that mission and with the support of our members we've been able to enhance existing or start new programs in the last year that create opportunities for strategic private lands conservation across the state. This newsletter highlights three of them.



All three are underway because the reputations and track records of Wisconsin's land trusts and Gathering Waters attracted the attention of funders who want to invest in lasting land conservation. We are honored by the votes of confidence, but even more pleased by the work underway...

With the land trust members of the Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance we have raised the profile of voluntary land conservation to elected officials, businesses and other community leaders attending the Great Lake Gatherings. We believe that influential people who care deeply about the future of their communities need to be connected to their land trusts: given the attendance at the Gatherings and the relationships strengthened in the planning process, we're clearly forging those connections.

In cooperation with American Farmland Trust, we're working to harness the significant interest percolating from towns, counties and farm families across Wisconsin to support creation of a statewide Purchase of Development Rights program.

In Dane County's Yahara watershed, we're helping coordinate the state, the municipalities of the watershed, the land trusts and other conservation organizations in a way that will bring the necessary support for coordinated restoration and protection. Our track record leading successful collaborative efforts has already attracted the support of key funders and we're working to leverage more.

There is no shortage of interest among private landowners around Wisconsin in lasting protection of important places. Land trusts tell us they have more interest from landowners than time and resources to meet it. In our evolving efforts to make land trusts stronger, these are just three ways we're working to connect them to new partners and funding sources that might amplify their capacity to help people protect Wisconsin's special places.

Michael Strigel, Executive Director



**Board Member Profile:  
Chuck Haubrich**

Our Treasurer Chuck Haubrich joined Gathering Waters' board in 2001 shortly after retiring from S.C. Johnson as Asia Pacific Operations Director. Even while making over 100 trips to Asia and accumulating 2 million frequent flyer miles, Chuck developed a passion for the conservation of local treasures. In 2002 he was elected president of the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association Foundation, which runs the 212 acre Seno Woodland Education Center near Burlington. After donating the first conservation easement in Racine County to the Kenosha/Racine Land Trust (K/RLT), he now serves as its President. "When I first joined K/RLT, Gathering Waters was helping with the basics of conservation easements and running a land trust. Today they are assisting with our accreditation program and, more broadly, serve as the face of and advocate for the entire land trust community. My affiliation with Gathering Waters brings me in contact with many land conservation leaders who demonstrate how much each of us can accomplish and inspire me to do more." While all of his affiliations keep him busy, many days the best place to find Chuck is walking his dogs or planting trees on the 88-acre Haubrich Woods.



## Protecting Wisconsin's Farm and Forest Lands

It's been a busy and exciting six months since American Farmland Trust launched The Campaign for Wisconsin's Farm and Forest Lands. Gathering Waters Policy Director Vicki Elkin, who is providing in-state support for AFT, has worked her way around the state, meeting with farmers, local officials, builders, developers, land trust representatives and many others to gauge support and create momentum for the campaign.

Based on the unanimous recommendations of the 2005-2006 Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative Steering Committee, the campaign is focused on three main priorities: creating a state grant program to support local purchase of agriculture easements, providing new authority to designate Agriculture Enterprise Areas, and updating the state's existing Farmland Preservation Program.

We want to provide local communities with an expanded set of land-use tools so that they are able to direct development to the most appropriate areas, while investing in lands that are most suitable to long-term agriculture and forestry. At the same time, each of the recommendations is voluntary in terms of landowner participation. Fundamentally this initiative is about providing options to farmers.

The response to date has been promising. The package we are advancing is ambitious and contains several ideas that are new to Wisconsin. While there has been a healthy amount of questions and feedback, everyone Vicki and our policy team have talked to clearly wants to learn more and be part of the ongoing conversation about how we protect and invest in Wisconsin's working lands.

To that end, 50 leaders from across Wisconsin signed up for the Ultimate Land Use Study Tour – a six-day trip through Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania from October 15 – 20. Participants will see first-hand and talk directly with farmers, developers, planners, and local officials about how purchase and transfer of development rights programs, along with planning and other land use tools have protected farmland and local agricultural infrastructure while fostering growth and economic development.

American Farmland Trust and Gathering Waters Conservancy along with many other organizations are proud sponsors of this Land Use Tour which will be the third tour of its kind from Wisconsin. This year's trip will include a diverse and influential group of individuals, ranging from the President of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau to the Director of the Wisconsin Builders Association Development Council as well as numerous local officials, land-use planners, land trust representatives and active farmers and farm leaders from every corner of the state.

We expect Land Use Tour participants to return inspired and we look forward to a winter of productive momentum as the Campaign for Wisconsin's Farm and Forest Lands moves forward.

"Communities in the East, where development pressures have been far greater than in Wisconsin, have had 30 years of experience in determining what works and what doesn't. The Ultimate Land Use Study Tour is the fastest and best way I know to see this up close and ask your own questions directly of farmers, local government leaders and developers."

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary  
**Rod Nilsestuen**, who attended the Ultimate Land Use Study Tour in 2006

### Are you interested in learning more?

Consider hosting a local workshop to bring this conversation to your community. Local sponsors interested in exploring land use issues and land protection strategies will soon have an opportunity to apply for assistance to host educational workshops. American Farmland Trust is partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to present local workshops on issues ranging from land use planning, agricultural zoning, purchase of agricultural conservation easements and transfer of development rights. To learn more about sponsoring a workshop, email Vicki Elkin at [vicki@gatheringwaters.org](mailto:vicki@gatheringwaters.org) or call 608-251-9131 x 17.

Email [DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPWorkingLands@Wisconsin.gov) to receive regular updates from the Department of Agriculture on Wisconsin's Working Lands Initiative.

*photo courtesy of U.S.D.A*

## Greater Than the Sum of the Parts...highlighting collaboration

As Wisconsin's land trusts grow, we pursue the evolving challenge to help make them stronger. We regularly ask ourselves how can we continue to deliver capacity to Wisconsin land trusts? Connect them to new membership? Funding? Renewal? This fall we're working through two separate regional collaborations to position land trusts to attract additional attention, partners and resources.

### Great Lake Gatherings

## "If the land trusts didn't exist, we'd have to invent them."

G. Tracy Mehan III made that remark last month at the Great Lake Gathering in Green Bay. Mehan, a former EPA Assistant Administrator for Water, spoke of the essential role land conservation plays in the complicated problem of Great Lakes restoration. The Great Lakes region's future has been a hot topic this year. Environmental advocates continue to lobby for federal legislation supporting Great Lakes restoration. Organizations like New North, the Greater Milwaukee Committee and the Milwaukee 7 strategize to position communities in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan basin for sustained economic expansion. As all this big-picture thinking is afoot, we believe that land conservation and land trusts should be integral to plans for healthy regional growth.

So, this fall we and the land trust members of the Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance (LMSA) hosted four open community forums on conservation concerns. In Green Bay, Sheboygan, Mequon and Milwaukee the Great Lake Gatherings were designed to encourage creative partnerships to protect places important to the region's quality of life. We invited anyone interested in the preservation of the basin's special places to come meet the land trusts, elected officials and community leaders concerned about protecting resources in their shared backyards.

Each Gathering gave local land trusts and their partners an opportunity to describe their work and successes to an audience of mayors, state and federal lawmakers, economic development leaders, planners and more. Keynote speakers, including Mehan, touted the value of land trusts to watershed health and the role land conservation must play in lasting regional economic development. Panelists shared models of local and regional conservation success, seeding ideas for what might be the next great local conservation partnership.

Vickie Hall, Executive Director of the Glacial Lakes Conservancy shared, "the Gathering was valuable even before it happened: the planning process helped our Conservancy connect with new community leaders and strengthen our relationship to ones we already knew. More people know the name 'Glacial Lakes Conservancy' now than did 6 months ago. That's going to help us build our membership and raise our profile in this region. That's good!"

Following the Gatherings, LMSA has been invited to The Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center for a summit addressing strategic conservation planning for the basin's resources. This summit will convene land trusts, community leaders, agency staff, foundations and others who care deeply about the health of the basin to discuss conservation measures, effective policy engagement and ways to build the capacity of the land trusts working to protect the places that make the region special. A Wingspread invitation is an honor. We'll share the outcomes of the Summit in an upcoming issue of *Crosscurrents* or you can be in touch with Mike Strigel – [mike@gatheringwaters.org](mailto:mike@gatheringwaters.org).



*Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust Executive Director Deb Nett greets Representative Karl Van Roy at the Green Bay Gathering*

## Thank You

### For help with our Great Lake Gatherings video:

River Revitalization Foundation and participants in the Earn and Learn Program:

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Senator Rob Cowles

Allison Schill

### And a thank you to:

Karen Bassler and Andrea Ward for extra hands at the Gatherings

For a final round up of Great Lake Gathering highlights and a list of the many people who made them possible, please look for our next newsletter in your mailbox this winter.

## The Yahara Lakes Legacy Partnership

For the last year, Gathering Waters has helped facilitate a collaborative effort in Dane County – the Yahara Lakes Legacy Partnership (YLLP). YLLP is an unprecedented cooperation among the many private and public entities working to improve the Yahara Lakes watershed.

The Yahara Lakes are gems that help define the Madison region. As is true so many places in Wisconsin, the features that enhance quality of life in the watershed are challenged by the region's vitality. For the Yahara lakes, significant urban growth and a healthy agricultural economy are pressuring the ecosystem. Lake communities struggle with beach closings, invasive species, foul smells in the summer months and more. The challenge is find ways to protect and enhance the economic, ecologic, and cultural health of the region simultaneously.

Fortunately, there are many active players at work in the watershed: the Natural Heritage Land Trust cooperating on a successful Purchase of Development Rights program and protecting property in the upper watershed, busy friends groups, actively engaged business and agricultural communities, committed lake associations and numerous government agencies. But watershed-

scale problems beg large-scale solutions. The Yahara Lakes Legacy Partners are exploring what a truly regional, watershed-scale approach would look like.

Gathering Waters recognizes this as an opportunity to do what we exist to do: help people protect places that make Wisconsin special. In this Partnership, we see a chance to connect land trusts working in the region to new people and potentially significant resources. As we continue to expand what it means to be a "land trust service center," this Partnership is one way we're exploring how we can use Gathering Waters' profile and capacity to channel attention, partners, community support and money toward land trusts and toward strategic, lasting land conservation.

Gathering Waters and the YLLP joined forces with the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies to organize a conference: **"A Clean Future for the Yahara Lakes: Solutions for Tomorrow, Starting Today."** More than 300 conference participants considered how their community can better tackle polluted runoff issues and beach closings, and how the Partnership might operate to coordinate watershed restoration. For more information, visit: <http://www.nelson.wisc.edu/outreach/yahara/>

## We're pleased to introduce ...

**Mindy** – our new Administration and Membership Coordinator. Mindy's arrival was met in the office with great smiles and sighs of relief and in a few short weeks she has already shouldered a good deal of our membership management and event planning. Mindy Scott came with a pre-existing condition: wedding plans! Please join us congratulating and welcoming the now **Mindy Petersen** to the Gathering Waters team.



*Above: New board members Chris Hughes and Kimberly Gleffe. We don't have a current photo of Mal Hepburn—come to the next Gathering Waters event and meet him in person!*

## A Changing of the Guard

This spring we had a significant shift on our Board of Directors as several long-time members rotated off and we welcomed three new Directors. We're honored to have the new energy of:

**Kimberly Gleffe** is currently Executive Director of the River Revitalization Foundation. She's currently focused on urban conservation initiatives along the Milwaukee River. Her interests include travel, film, birding and kayaking.

**Mal Hepburn**, Founder, President then Chairman of Ozaukee Bank has an impressive resume of non-profit leadership. He is a founder and past President of the Cedarburg Community Foundation, has chaired the annual fund drive at Riveredge Nature Center and has been a Board Member of the YMCA's in Milwaukee and Ozaukee County. He is a Trustee of Ozaukee Congregational Church and on the Board of Family Services of Milwaukee.

**Chris Hughes** is a partner at Stafford & Rosenbaum, LLP in Madison and for several years he served on the board of the Natural Heritage Land Trust. He also has been involved in education related to land use and has presented workshops on conservation easements for attorneys and other professionals. He enjoys canoeing and hiking with his wife and two sons.

We bid farewell to esteemed board members **Bryan Pierce, Lew Posekany, Howard Mead, Joan Ziegler** and **Rudy Rasin**.

Finally, we wish two former interns well: Kyle Barber and Joe Babler – both of whom left us for higher education pursuits.



## One Member's Contribution to Land Conservation

If you've ever spent time in Wisconsin's Northwoods, hiked a segment of the Ice Age Trail, or enjoyed a picnic in one of Milwaukee's urban parks, you know that Wisconsin is full of inspiring and beautiful landscapes. At Gathering Waters Conservancy our mission is to help people protect special places like these, which is why we are asking our supporters to consider pledging a planned gift to help us build perpetual and sustainable support for our mission.

James Bennett, a professor of botany at the University of Wisconsin-Madison pledged a planned gift to Gathering Waters in 2007 through his life insurance policy. Under the terms of his pledge, Jim's gift will be used to create an endowed fund through the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's Conservation Endowment program that will support Gathering Waters' operations and programs.

When asked what prompted him to make this commitment Jim said, "I see land trusts as a viable way to protect important landscapes – legally and financially!" He went on to say that by helping to create a solid future for Gathering Waters he will be strengthening the land trust community.

Jim, like many others who have taken the time to review their assets and make plans for their legacy, found that the life insurance policy that he purchased to provide financial security for his family is substantial enough that he can also support a few non-profit organizations. In his words, "I might as well spread it around and do something good."

Whether it's a gift through your will, life insurance distributions, or retirement plan remainders, you may find that you too can make a meaningful contribution while first providing for your own needs and those of your family. You can make a gift of a specific amount, a percentage of your assets, or all or a portion of what is left after providing for loved ones.

For more information on how to make a planned gift to Gathering Waters, please contact Sara DeKok, Member Relations Director, at 608.251.9131 x 10 or [sara@gatheringwaters.org](mailto:sara@gatheringwaters.org).

*Above: Jim Bennett has provided for his children and all of ours by making a planned gift to Gathering Waters. Fall photo courtesy of The Northwoods Land Trust and Bryan Pierce.*

**Our annual Awards Celebration** has become a Wisconsin conservation tradition. Each fall it offers inspiring honorees, dedicated MC's, tempting desserts and a classy silent auction. This year's highlights were numerous. We were pleased that Tia Nelson, Executive Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands joined Gathering Waters Board member Trish Stocking as the evening's Masters of Ceremonies. Together, they warmly bestowed awards and a little ribbing on our 2008 winners.

Thanks to leading sponsors we were able to award the Land Trust of the Year a check for \$3,000 toward their general operations. Some of the founding members of the Mississippi Valley Conservancy were on hand to accept the award. Senators Cowles and Miller, whom Ms. Nelson noted are honorable and hard working almost to a fault, praised the work of legislative staff whose late-night labor helped Wisconsin not just pass the Great Lakes Compact, but set the standard for other states to do the same. And it was a special honor to have Harold "Bud" Jordahl present as we bestowed the award named for him to Emily Earley.



# Thanks

Thanks to all attendees and supporters for making the evening a resounding tribute to notable conservation achievements.

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## More Thanks...

### Awards Celebration

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Tia Nelson, Trish Stocking

Celebration Volunteers:  
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Tim Felt  
Kristin Girvin Redman  
Althea Dotzour  
Karen Bassler  
Dann Petersen

Selection Committee Members:  
Trish Stocking  
Mary Panzer  
Bill Berry  
Nancy Aten  
Jim Evrard

**Dave Steiro** for co-presenting to regional tax assessors

**Riverland Conservancy and Deb Frosch** for hosting a tour for GWC board

**Pat and Penny Durkin** for hosting Vicki Elkin on her trip to Waupaca

**Stafford Rosenbaum LLP** for hosting our Sept board meeting

**Kate Redmond, Eric Sherman, Margaret Smith** and the crew at **MVC** for sharing their photography

**Ken Buelow** for hosting a working lands campaign meeting

**Delene Hanson and River Edge Nature Center** for hosting LMSA meetings

**MVC staff** for co-hosting the 2008 Land Trust Retreat

**DANeNet** for volunteer IT service

*From left to right: Gathering Waters staff Pam Felt, Mindy Petersen, Sara DeKok, Liz Walsh, Vicki Elkin and Mike Carlson; Ada Dear and friend catching up; long time supporters Gene and Jean Roark; Board members Chris Hughes and Shawn Graff; Host Tia Nelson applauds award winners.*



**crosscurrents**

a newsletter to serve the land conservation  
community of Wisconsin



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conservancy

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## **“A big conservation effort requires big partnerships.”**

Dan Burke, Executive Director of the Door County Land Trust

When Dan said this he was speaking of their recent purchase of the Three Springs Preserve – the largest conservation purchase in Door County in over four decades. Establishment of the 421-acre Harold C. Wilson Three Springs Nature Preserve combined the conservation hopes of the landowners with support from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, the Wisconsin Land Fund, and Door County Land Trust donors. We are thrilled for the land trust and for all visitors to Door County, for the unspoiled beauty of the Three Springs Preserve will be open to the public.

We at Gathering Waters are proponents of “big partnerships.” Discover inside how we’re working to connect Wisconsin landowners and land trusts to partners –both new and established – who can help them accomplish more big conservation successes.

