

# YOUR DONOR REPORT

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## You helped address a critical need for legal services

### Your support is filling a gap through the Land Conservation Law Program.

For decades, land trusts have used a variety of legal tools to protect special places. Together, land trusts and their legal advisors have drafted over 1,200 unique agreements to protect over 200,000 acres in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's land trusts have an ongoing need for the services of skilled attorneys who understand the scope of legal issues related to land protection and nonprofit operations.

**However, many of the legal experts who have the most extensive experience working with land trusts are approaching retirement.**

The new Land Conservation Law Program at Gathering Waters will expand the number of attorneys with relevant experience.

Through the law program, land trusts will have direct access to legal services to assist with land protection transactions.

Another component of the program will include development of continuing legal education curriculum in coordination with the State Bar of Wisconsin and county bar associations. This



Ashley Gutschenritter

Chris Gutschenritter recently joined Gathering Waters as the first Director of the Land Conservation Law Program.

approach, paired with internship opportunities for law students at Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin, will cultivate the next generation of conservation attorneys.

The program will also convene a council of experienced land-conservation attorneys to help shape and guide the services offered.

The goal? Wisconsin land trusts will have a growing pool of specialized legal experts they can call on to complete conservation projects that will stand the test of time.

**Thank you for keeping land trusts strong with your support of the newly launched Land Conservation Law Program.**

*When you support nature...*

# You help reduce the harmful effects of climate change!



**The climate crisis requires all of us to take action. Because of your support, you are helping every day.**

When you think of climate change, what comes to mind? If you're like most, your thoughts turn to long periods of triple-digit temperatures, drought, epic flooding, and massive wildfires—and what to do about them. This dizzying array of challenges will require complex solutions and lifestyle changes from us all.

But there's good news. Land conservation IS a key part of climate action.

**When you invest in land protection, you help reduce the negative impacts of climate change.**

**You help trees grow.** Well-managed forests remove tons of carbon from the atmosphere.

**You ensure more wetlands are protected.**

These natural sponges soak up flood waters and filter impurities from surface water as it seeps into the ground to fill our wells.



Althea Dotzour Photography,  
Courtesy of Gathering Waters



**Thank you for your support. You help protect the land which allows wildlife to adapt, filters water, and removes carbon from the atmosphere.**

**You help restore grasslands.** Native prairie plants trap carbon in the soil and provide food for birds, butterflies, and other pollinators.

**You help increase wildlife habitat.** Protected areas provide options for wildlife to find suitable homes. Large, interconnected natural spaces give plants and animals room to adapt and thrive in a changing world.

**You help farms supply food for tomorrow.** Sustainable farming practices store carbon and build the soil's nutrients to produce high-quality food for future generations.

**Thank you for protecting nature.** When you help protect Wisconsin's special places, the land can naturally store carbon, filter air and water, and provide homes for plants and animals.

**Thank you for your dedication to protect Wisconsin's land and water. You are taking climate action. You are making a difference!**

**Thanks to you, land trust professionals learned how to share the "Land Conservation IS Climate Action" message at the Land Trust Conference in May 2022.**



Ben Jones, Courtesy of Groundswell Conservancy

## You helped introduce more communities to nature

**Wisconsin Land Trust Days kicked off this year with Groundswell Conservancy’s Food Cart Night on July 27 (above).**

Wisconsin Land Trust Days is an annual campaign to celebrate Wisconsin’s land trusts and the important work of land protection.

Each year, Wisconsin’s land trusts host events throughout the state, with most of them taking place on protected properties.

Land Trust Days events invite communities to explore nature nearby. This year’s events have featured Wisconsin’s native flora and fauna, like bats, fungi, and prairie plants.

For instance, North Central Conservancy Trust hosted an interpretive hike highlighting the native plants and their importance to pollinators, like the endangered Karner blue butterfly.

And other participants have had a chance to dig in—literally—by building trail, removing invasive species, and collecting seeds.

Thanks to your support, over 16,000 people received event calendars listing over 40 events across the state.

This year, Wisconsin Land Trust Days extend through October 16. The remaining fall events include tours of special places, a road rally, a fall bird-migration hike, and a run/walk event.

All event attendees are invited to share their experiences and take part in the Land Trust Days Adventure Challenge. **Learn more at [HaveFunOutside.org](http://HaveFunOutside.org)**

**You help Land Trust Days attendees identify native plants and animals during their outdoor adventures with the Wisconsin Nature Guide.**



Becky Wadeleigh, Courtesy of North Central Conservancy Trust

Thanks to you, families can have fun outside while learning about nature.

Trace Frost, Courtesy of North Central Conservancy Trust



# Is state funding for land protection really secure?

WILL YOU MAKE A GIFT OF \$35 OR MORE TO HELP ENSURE MAJOR LAND PROTECTION PROJECTS ARE FUNDED?



Leona Knobloch, Courtesy of Ozaukee Washington Land Trust

**The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is funded for four more years. Unfortunately, that's not the end of the story.**

**Many worthy conservation projects are hitting roadblocks.**

Every time funding for a Knowles-Nelson project is up for review by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance, there's uncertainty.

**Will you give a special gift of \$35, \$50, or \$100 to help protect land and speak out to reform this dysfunctional oversight process?**

You see, an **obscure legislative rule allows any member of the committee to reject** a Knowles-Nelson grant application—**anonymously**.

Recently, the committee rejected a grant and threatened a unique property on the shores of Lake Michigan.

**Why? We'll never know the real reason.** We do know the anonymous objection coincided with an offer from a nameless real estate developer.

Cedar Gorge Clay Bluffs Nature Preserve was almost lost due to an anonymous objection.

**There was no transparency. No paper trail, phone records, or emails. No recourse. And no way to appeal.**

It's a HUGE problem affecting vital conservation projects.

**The legislative oversight process is broken, and projects are often stuck in limbo, or lost.**

**Will you help protect land and speak out for state-funded land protection projects with a special gift of \$35, \$50, or \$100?**

**State funding can't protect land if it's mired in red tape. The rules need to change.**

Your support will make a difference. Your gift will help protect land and speak up for state-funded land protection projects.

**I will help protect land and speak up for state-funded land protection projects!**

**YES!** Please use my gift to help protect land in Wisconsin, speak out when funding is threatened, and support all of Gathering Waters' work.

Enclosed is my gift of:

\$35 to help protect land and speak up for state-funded land protection projects.

\$50 to help protect land and speak up for state-funded land protection projects.

\$100 to help protect land and speak up for state-funded land protection projects.

I'm sending \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help protect land and speak up for state-funded land protection projects.

I am giving:  by check  by credit card.