

YOUR DONOR REPORT

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You helped save 270 acres of working farmland and a dream!

Because you supported the Land Conservation Law Program, you helped Tall Pines Conservancy save a farm forever in southeast Wisconsin.

The protection of this Waukesha County farm was complex and required input from many land protection experts. It was possible thanks to your faithful support.

Over the past decade, Anita watched housing developments pop up like weeds in the neighboring fields. Farms were disappearing at an alarming rate.

Anita didn't want her beloved farm, where she'd lived, raised her family, and drawn sustenance, to suffer the same fate.

Anita's dream for the land was much larger.

She considered donating her farm as a county park, but realized that her vision for her property would require finding a partner with experience protecting farmland.

Anita reached out to Tall Pines Conservancy, a Gathering Waters member land trust.

Thanks to you, land trusts have access to services to help protect land forever.



Courtesy of Tall Pines Conservancy

"We're thrilled to have worked with many great partners, including the Land Conservation Law program, to make Anita's dream a reality," said Susan Buchanan, Executive Director, Tall Pines Conservancy.

As she talked with the land trust's staff, Anita's dream for her farm began moving closer to becoming a reality.

But the journey was rife with challenges.

Anita had specific wishes for the property that required careful legal guidance.

She wanted to permanently protect the farm and make sure it remained in agriculture. She also wanted to create an educational center and develop a trail system with a three-acre park overlooking the Fox River.

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Courtesy of Tall Pines Conservancy

Thanks to you, Anita's farm will give people a chance to experience and enjoy the land.

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Anita wanted to give members of the public the chance to enjoy the land.

It would take the expertise of conservation partners and legal professionals to finally make Anita's bold vision come to life.

Farm leases had to be reviewed, boundaries surveyed, and an environmental assessment completed. There also needed to be a plan for future land management.

The agreement had to be airtight, ensuring permanent protection of the farm in the face of future challenges.

You helped protect Anita's farm by supporting the Land Conservation Law Program.

By working with the Land Conservation Law Program, Tall Pines Conservancy had access to affordable legal services and was able to help Anita achieve her vision and protect her farm.

Today, Tall Pines Conservancy partners with the Savanna Institute, an agroforestry organization, to run the farm as a working model for research and education. Plans for a public trail along the river are being developed.

Thanks to you, Tall Pines Conservancy owns the farm. A conservation easement will be held by American Farmland Trust to ensure the farm will be protected, forever.

You helped Wisconsin's land trusts learn and grow together

The Winter Webinar Series invited Wisconsin land trusts to attend online sessions led by experts on a wide range of timely topics.

January's session, **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Resources for Wisconsin Land Trusts**, introduced ways that mapping tools and data can be utilized to better target land protection priorities.

February's webinar, **Communicating Land Trust Finances Effectively**, addressed the fact that land trust finances present unique challenges. This session covered minimum requirements for land trust financial reporting and approaches for presenting financial information to effectively focus board attention and discussion.

March allowed land trusts to **Explore What's Possible with Strategic Collaboration**. Attendees learned about nonprofit trends in strategic partnerships, mergers, and how collaboration can lead to more conservation.

Land trusts are stronger today—and better prepared for the future—because of your support.



Because of you, land trusts have tools to find and protect special places like the Yawkey Forest Reserve in Hazelhurst, Wis.

You helped provide a powerful tool for land protection

Because of your support, land trusts can better identify the properties that offer the most benefits for people and wildlife.

You help support the work of over forty Wisconsin land trusts that protect and steward special protected places across the state.

One of those organizations is Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL). They focus on protecting undeveloped shorelines along the region's 4,000 lakes and conserving climate-resilient lands.

But how does a land trust like NWLTL find the best properties to protect when their service area includes millions of acres across seven counties?

In the past, land conservation planning meant pouring through county plat books and comparing that data to maps and charts from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other conservation partners.

It could take more than 40 hours to research and assess just one county.

Now, NWLTL has a new conservation tool that can accomplish the same painstaking research and analysis in less than 40 seconds, with a few clicks of a mouse.

NWLT is using what's known as a decision-support tool to target conservation priorities. This technology harnesses scientific data from The Nature Conservancy, interactive online ArcGIS mapping capabilities, and statewide land protection data to create a powerful analytical program.

Thanks to you, Gathering Waters convened experts to develop this powerful decision-support tool, so Wisconsin's land trusts can be more proactive.

With the help of this smart tool, land trusts, like NWLTL can:

- Identify the most resilient land as the climate warms.
- Set unique search criteria and measure property boundaries.
- Assess the quality and proximity of nearby protected lands.
- Target lands identified by experts as critical.
- Create strategic land management plans based on nearby ground cover.

Thanks to your support, Gathering Waters partnered with organizations like The Nature Conservancy to deliver an innovative investigative tool to Wisconsin's land trusts.

Threats to land protection in Wisconsin are real

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

It's happened again! A major land protection project has been blocked!

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) has blocked state funding to protect the 70,000-acre Pelican River Forest.

As of this writing, the fate of the Pelican River Forest spanning Oneida, Forest, and Langlade counties, is uncertain.

Will you give a special gift of \$35, \$50, \$100, to help protect land and fix Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program?

Once again, one member of the JFC objected— anonymously at first.

The committee is supposed to hold a hearing to review the project. But, they're not following the law, so there's currently no timeline.

The Pelican River Forest is stuck in limbo.

"The fact that projects can be held up indefinitely has broken the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program," said Charlie Carlin, Gathering Waters' director of strategic initiatives.



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Pelican River Forest needs \$4 million from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. That's just over \$71 an acre to keep the land open to the public. It's a deal for everyone!

As you might imagine, this is shaping up to be a tough fight. Advocacy efforts like this one take a great deal of time and resources.

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

The rules need to change. Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program can't fund land protection projects if it can be held hostage by a single legislator, with no debate and no vote.

Your support will make a difference! Will you help speak up for land protection? Will you make a special gift today?

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

YES! Please use my gift to help protect land, defend land protection 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 defend land protection in Wisconsin.

\$50 to help protect land and defend land protection in Wisconsin.

\$100 to help protect land and defend land protection in Wisconsin.

I'm sending \$ _____ to help protect land and defend land protection in Wisconsin.

I am giving: by check. by credit card. by DAF or IRA distribution. I want to learn more about including GW in my estate plan.