



NORTHEAST WISCONSIN
LAND TRUST
Preserving Our Natural Heritage

LAND MATTERS

Fall 2012

Volume 15 — No. 2

PUBLIC WELCOME – WILDLIFE VIEWING PLATFORM

Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust is excited to announce the addition of a boardwalk and wildlife viewing platform to our Guckenberg-Sturm Preserve. Also known as the Stroebe Island Marsh, the 48 acre preserve is located in the Town of Menasha, uniquely situated between Little Lake Butte des Morts and Mud Creek. The marsh and surrounding floodplain forest represents one of the last remaining pristine, open cattail marshes found along the Lower Fox River drainage. It is a rare gem that can now be fully enjoyed by all.

Children can run along the 300 foot boardwalk which takes visitors from the floodplain forest through the thick cattails and finally out into the marsh to enjoy an amazing view of the water and dynamic wildlife habitat. As you emerge from the cattails you can feel the warm sunlight on your face and breathe the damp, heavy air. Here you can sit quietly on the floating platform and watch herons, cranes, ducks, eagles, and other birds taking flight while butterflies and dragonflies flutter happily around you. The sound of insects and birds chirping is loud enough to make you forget that just outside this Preserve lies a bustling industrial area. The stark contrast of nature and development is something to experience.

Visiting the boardwalk is fun and educational for families. Its great to watch the children's eyes light up as they poke sticks in the mud and point out the birds and bugs they see. Beyond the boardwalk, people can explore the woods along a deer path that leads back to Mud Creek. Just one visit to this serene landscape, nestled in an urban area, will keep you coming back again and again with wonder at what you might see each time.

Please see **WILDLIFE VIEWING PLATFORM**, page 4



Land Matters is published by Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, a non-profit, member supported, conservation organization dedicated to preserving lands that protect our waters, landscapes, and natural habitats for this and future generations.

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From the Director TO TRULY KNOW THE MARSH



I spend a good deal of my time telling people about the places we are working to protect. With words, maps and photos we attempt to give a sense of what these places are like. But when I look back at these attempts, I find I often leave meetings feeling like I've failed to give a true depiction of the land or the feeling of knowing a place is worth preserving. This newsletter falls short in much the same way. We describe each conservancy and list the reasons these places are important. We publish photos to help you visualize one or two features of a new preserve. But it's not enough. A person cannot truly know what a place is like

until they have experienced it with all their senses, and even then I suspect a lifetime of seasons would not suffice to fully come to know a place.

This summer Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust added our first-ever, man-made structure to one of our preserves. We installed a stairway, and floating boardwalk at the Guckenbergs-Sturm Preserve. Our goal was to give people better access to the Preserve so that they could enjoy the scenic qualities of the marsh and also have the opportunity to learn about this rare habitat that is also a hard-working urban wetland.

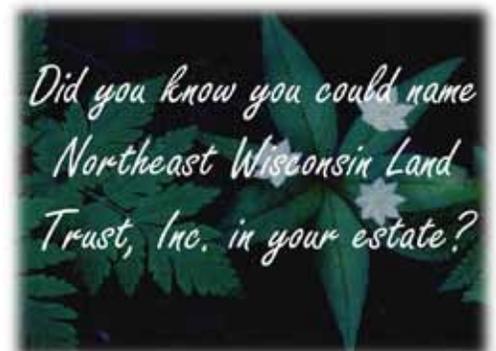
I don't mind admitting that at times this project was a bit like a kitchen remodel that got away from us. It was one of those projects that start small and keep getting bigger and bigger. But, you keep going, however daunting, deciding again and again to "do it right" because it's the right thing to do.

And now that the platform is in place and funding secured, I know we did the right thing because it does what all our maps, photos and descriptive narrative cannot. It gives people a sense of what this place is like and why it is so special.

At this time of year the marsh is teeming with migrating birds. The smell of the newly hewn cedar planking still lingers in the air and the first vestiges of fall color are beginning to show on the trees. Children bound out to the end of the platform and we hear reports of people taking it upon themselves to clear debris from the pathway that runs through the woods.

With this structure we have accomplished much more than our goals of increasing public access and providing an educational opportunity. We have done something far more lasting: we have given people the chance to truly know this marsh. And, in return they are coming forward to care for and be a part of this place.

I invite you to come be part of this place yourself. Visit the Guckenbergs-Sturm Preserve. 



DIP, DIP AND SWING

Only grey cloud cover, provided relief from the sun this sultry morning for 158 paddlers waiting to board kayaks, canoes and other craft for the 11th annual Park-to-Park Paddle event Sunday, July 21st 2012. Paddlers assembled at Shattuck Park in Neenah, sampled spring rolls and other fresh produce from the downtown farmer's market before embarking on the Fox River.

"Though long familiar with paddling on Lake Winnebago south of Neenah," commented paddler Eileen Costello, "the paddle event struck in me anew the magnificence of the Fox River waterways. Most of our contact with Little Lake Butte des Morts and the Fox River occurs 30-100 feet above as we traverse local bridges with barely a glance or thought for the beauty and history below. The Park-to-Park Paddle provided the opportunity to be as one with the lake and river as it flows north during the four hour voyage." Paddlers traded small talk and experiences as they entered the Menasha lock and waited for the water to rise before entering Little Lake Butte des Morts and the 8.5 mile journey to Appleton's Lutz Park end point.

Perspective of the waterway experience is enhanced when you are connected by canoe, versus staring at the Fox River from a bridge. Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust partnered with Northeast Wisconsin Paddler's to sponsor the event to heighten participant's awareness of the value of the waterway. Board member, Stephanie Vrabec, realized that the day was a key opportunity to link Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust's mission to protect habitat with Northeast Wisconsin Paddler's Park-to-Park Paddle event.

As the paddlers exited the Menasha lock and paddled north, Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust's pristine 48 acre Guckenber-Sturm Preserve, also known as Stroebe Island Marsh, was visible to the west, bordered by Mud Creek. From a canoe you can't help but notice the contrast between the natural beauty of the marsh and the highly developed shores surrounding the Preserve. With the recent addition of a floating platform and boardwalk, visitors can now access the stunning marsh by foot, even during flood season.

A post paddle event at Lutz Park allowed paddlers to socialize and unwind to music from a jazz quartet of Lawrence students. They were provided the opportunity to grab a healthy lunch from Grilled Tease, a mobile restaurant and relax in the shade. Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust invited Dr. Bart DeStasio, Professor of Biology, Lawrence University, to discuss the health of the river and the impact of invasive species. Dr. DeStasio shared casts of actual fish to familiarize the audience with those species. "We have round goby, a fish that was brought in from the Caspian Sea region. The round goby is established near the De Pere dam and also is found above the Little Kaukauna dam. That species has the potential for ruining the ecology of a system as it feeds on the eggs of other fish, including yellow perch and crustaceans that live on the bottom." The research that is being done by Dr. DeStasio and his students allows for greater understanding of the fragile balance of our waterways.

Grey clouds parted. Brilliant sun and blue sky bathed the flotilla at Lutz Park. Once again, our gem of a waterway cast a spell over all as it has for centuries past.

"My paddle's keen and bright
Flashing with silver
Follow the wild goose flight
Dip, dip and swing"

Margaret Embers McGee in 1918 



Land Trust members aboard the Voyager canoe

WORKING TO BRING \$1 MILLION FOR CONSERVATION TO NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

Earlier this year Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust was awarded our first grant through the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), Small Grants Program which was used to partially fund the purchase of our new West Shore Preserve. After that it didn't take long for talk to turn to other programs within the Wetland Conservation Act. Standard NAWCA grants are awarded nationwide in greater amounts for large projects; projects on a larger scale than any one group can manage alone. We were fortunate that other conservation groups were thinking along the same lines, so when we got the call from the DNR asking if NEWLT would like to participate in a Standard Grant Proposal, we jumped at the opportunity.

In a partnership that includes federal, state, county and tribal governments as well as several other nonprofits, a grant proposal has been submitted to NAWCA that would, if awarded, bring \$1 million dollars for conservation activities to northeast Wisconsin. The Land Trust was able to provide a substantial portion of the required \$2 million dollar match by using the values of lands we have already protected. Our match of \$400,000 will entitle the Land Trust to a portion of any forthcoming award, which will be used to purchase more land for public preserves. Other partners will use proceeds for wetland restoration work and a host of other conservation projects. 

VISIT REEVE RESERVE



Recently a group of volunteers and staff members participated in a workday at Reeve Reserve in Waupaca County. They spent the morning improving the trail and removing invasive species. A large stand of prickly ash was cut down along

the Little Wolf River which considerably enhances the view along the shoreline. A cluster of spotted knapweed was removed from the entrance of the Reserve to prevent it from spreading further onto the property. With a new sign hung at the entrance of Reeve Reserve, on Highway C, it is even easier to find your way to this peaceful and unique property. We encourage you to visit. Directions can be found on our website at www.newlt.org. 

WILDLIFE VIEWING P



Volunteers and staff have been working diligently to cover thousands of acres throughout the Fox River on the property that began three years ago...and include a series of plantings in an attempt to cro

Our first tree planting took place this fall. The L we recently received memorial gifts for. A total of Oak is a valuable and attractive addition to the d of the Preserve. The natural habitats for this tre standing water, but dry out over the summer, ma

If you have not visited the Guckenberg-Sturm P now is the time! **We invite you to come and co Thursday, October 11th at 4:00 pm. Join us the interpretive signs, and a few words about Island Marsh.** The Preserve is located at the cor in Menasha. Directions can be found on our we located at 2285 W Butte Des Morts Beach Rd. C

We greatly appreciate all of the help we have rec without the support of many caring individuals Dick Gosse, President, for his leadership. We hop

**You can now make a donation
on-line at www.newlt.org**

PLATFORM, continued from Front



We would like to thank everyone who made this vision a reality:

- The Boldt Company
- William & Helen Burger Memorial Fund
- The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region - Environmental Stewardship Fund
- Richard & Karen Gosse
- Great Northern Corporation
- R. D. & Linda Peters Foundation
- Ralston Family
- Secura Insurance
- NEWLT Members

ly to restore this rare habitat type that originally ver system. We have waged a war against buckthorn has yet to be won. Starting this year, our efforts will wd out the invasive species.

and Trust planted Swamp White Oaks for people ten trees were planted this year. The Swamp White iversity of urban forests and is found in other areas e are areas that are quite wet during spring, even aking this Preserve an ideal home for them.

reserve recently, or perhaps have never been there, **celebrate the official opening of the platform on for a ribbon cutting ceremony, a first look at the importance of this project and the Stroebe** rner of Stroebe and W Butte des Morts Beach Rd bsite at www.newlt.org. Please park at Wild Ones Call us with any questions at (920) 738-7265.

eived for this project, we could not have done this s, foundations and businesses. We especially thank pe you enjoy this special place as much as we do. 

on or renew your membership
www.newlt.org

WE MUST BE THE CHANGE WE WISH TO SEE – GANDHI

Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust would like to take the opportunity to thank our amazing volunteers. We could not accomplish what we do without these dedicated people around to support and strengthen us. The generous donation of their time and energy makes all the difference in our organization.

Our door is always open to new individuals who are passionate about land conservation and want to make a difference in our communities. Volunteering with NEWLT not only connects you with other like-minded people but also provides a great sense of satisfaction in knowing that you are making a difference for future generations.

Remember, nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something. We have much to do...ask us how to get involved. Email us at newlt@newlt.org or call us at (920) 738-7265.

In addition to our hard working board members, Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust would like to thank the following dedicated volunteers for all of their hard work:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Karen Bachhuber | Jean Orbison |
| Alan Cable | Jeff Ralston |
| Charlie Fox | Lenore Ryan |
| Jim Hlaban | Neil Schroeder |
| Bob & Mary Huber | Laura Stingley |
| Sue & Bob Kinde | Tom Underwood |
| Kip Knudson | Ron Vander Velden |
| Jeff Laviolette | Abbey Vizelka |
| Richard Mann | Betty & Dan Winter  |



Laura Stingley at the Big Green Music Festival

OUR NATURAL HERITAGE, IT'S ALL A MATTER OF PLACE



Stephenson Lake in Marinette County

Whether you are talking about Leopold in New Mexico with his wolf, Muir in the treetops during a thunderstorm, Olsen ice skating at night across the lake beneath the Northern Lights, or Thoreau by his New England pond, the descriptions of these experiences and places have changed the world. They are formative for the individuals who lived these experiences and vivid in our own imaginations. But above all, they have lastingly enriched the lives of people for generations because these experiences in these places have helped us appreciate the natural world in new ways. We suspect that most land trust folks have come to their own personal connection with nature in much the same way as the renowned naturalists of the world: through their own experiences of place.

Here in northeast Wisconsin we are blessed with an abundance of diverse natural places. We don't have to go far to explore a prairie, take a hike in the woods, or visit a lake. For most of us, the ability to readily experience a natural place is something we take for granted. But change is coming. If you look at maps and photos from just 40 short years ago, you cannot help but notice the changes that have been wrought upon our landscape as ownership of land has been passed from one generation to the next in smaller and smaller pieces. And there is little chance that the trend will abate.

Northeast Wisconsin is going to look very different in the future. We will develop more of the land that was once habitat for wildlife and lose wild shorelines to cottages and lawns. It is inevitable. But, as we say at the Land Trust, "while change is inevitable, the loss of our natural heritage is not." Our natural heritage is precisely what we are working together to protect, our sense of place that comes from the rocks, soil, water, plants and animals of northeast Wisconsin. Our natural heritage includes not only natural places, but the experiences and events that shape us to care for the land. Our children and grandchildren deserve to inherit both a richness of place and experiences of the natural world so that they too can learn a love of natural things and perhaps, through experiences of their own special places, become the next generation of naturalists that shape and influence the world.

Thank you to everyone who helps ensure our natural heritage and sense of place are preserved forever. 📧

Take a look for yourself with these online resources:

1938 Wisconsin Aerial Maps

<http://www.sco.wisc.edu/whaifinder/whaifinder.html>

Housing Density Maps 1940-2000

<http://www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/IntegratedPrograms/lc/pop/hd/hd1940.htm>

Early Vegetation of Wisconsin - 1965

<http://wisconsinogeologicalsurvey.org/earlyv.htm>



THANKS TO OUR LAND GUARDIANS

LAND GUARDIANS ARE AMONG NORTHEAST WISCONSIN LAND TRUST'S MOST COMMITTED SUPPORTING MEMBERS. WITHOUT THEIR DEDICATION AND LEADERSHIP OUR SUCCESS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE. WE EXTEND OUR DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO OUR LAND GUARDIANS. THANK YOU!

THE TRUE MEANING OF LIFE IS TO PLANT TREES, UNDER WHOSE SHADE YOU DO NOT EXPECT TO SIT. ~ NELSON HENDERSON

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NORTHEAST WISCONSIN LAND TRUST'S LAND GUARDIANS PLEASE CONTACT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEBORAH NETT, OR ANY MEMBER OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS.



NORTHEAST WISCONSIN
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Yes, I/we want to help preserve northeast Wisconsin's most precious natural resources:

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LET'S CELEBRATE

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR
THE GUCKENBERG-STURM PRESERVE
GRAND OPENING

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11TH
AT 4:00 PM
CORNER OF STROEBE AND
W BUTTE DES MORTS BEACH RD
MENASHA, WI

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY,
FIRST LOOK AT INTERPRETIVE SIGNS,
AND A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE
IMPORTANCE OF THIS PROJECT AND
THE STROEBE ISLAND MARSH.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.NEWLT.ORG

Thanks for your support!

