



NORTHEAST WISCONSIN
LAND TRUST
Preserving Our Natural Heritage

LAND MATTERS

Spring 2012

Volume 15 — No. 1

PROTECTED FOREVER – 600 ACRES - OUR LARGEST CONSERVANCY

Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust has guaranteed that an exceptional property in Marinette County will be preserved in perpetuity. Three Creeks Conservancy boasts 600 acres (nearly one square mile) of protected land. A property of this magnitude is a rare gem that consists of undeveloped shorelines, private forested lands and unique habitat. In addition to providing habitat for bear, bobcat and deer, this area is the home range for a local wolf pack. Numerous migratory and nesting, song and game birds have made this place their home, as well. This is one of the few remaining wilderness areas in northeast Wisconsin.

“Standing at the creek’s edge, I saw fish flickering in the water and could feel the warmth of the sun emanating from the huge rocks beneath me. The roaring of the rushing water drowned out the sound of the wind blowing through the pines above. It felt good to know that this place would always remain this way,” recalled Julie Hawkins Tyrriver, Land Stewardship Coordinator.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of keeping large tracts of land this size intact. Humans greatly benefit from the resources and processes supplied by natural ecosystems, particularly improved water quality as a result of natural filtration. The extensive habitat that is provided by this property is another of the many benefits we receive by preserving land. We sincerely thank the family for entrusting us with this spectacular property and for having the desire and foresight to protect it in perpetuity. 



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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WILDLIFE VIEWING PLATFORM AND BOARDWALK



In 2005, NEWLT purchased the 48 acre Guckenberg-Sturm Preserve, also known as the Stroebe Island Marsh, located along Little Lake Butte des Morts and bordered by Mud Creek. The marsh and surrounding floodplain forests represents one of the last remaining pristine, open cattail marshes found along the Lower Fox River drainage. Though this Preserve is open to the public few people visit this unique place. Typically, much of the preserve is flooded for much of the year, making it difficult to access or even view the edge of the cattail marsh.

Our intent in purchasing this property was to share it with others. We now propose that by installing a viewing platform more people would have the opportunity to cherish this natural treasure that we have right here in the Fox Valley. Our plans include installing an elevated path where people can walk to the water's edge and view the abundance of migrating visitors to the marsh. The location of the viewing platform and boardwalk would allow visitors a sense of solitude in a busy urban area. It is our wish is that people will not only feel connected to this wetland, but expand their knowledge to include the importance of all wetlands.

“This is NEWLT’s first-ever attempt to construct improved trails and amenities,” Deborah Nett, executive director of the Land Trust, said. “Our hope is that it will help people connect with this special place and foster a greater appreciation for the natural places in all of our backyards,” said Deb.

Visitors will be able to observe the animal and plant life in the classic cattail marsh from a platform measuring 16 by 8 feet and accessible by 165 feet of boardwalk and 200 feet of floating walkway. The walkway will be built on the north side of Stroebe Island Road, at the west edge of the marsh. Construction is expected to begin between July and September of 2012. NEWLT will install an interpretive sign on the viewing platform detailing what it is that visitors are seeing and why it is important to them and to the health of the natural environment. We feel that by educating the visitors of the preserve we will help ensure the long-term preservation of this marsh. NEWLT believes that in the end we only preserve what we know and love.

PROTECTING NORTHERN PIKE SPAWNING HABITAT

Earlier this spring, Land Trust staff spent an unusually warm day in March strolling through Northern pike spawning grounds. With the sun shining overhead, the bugle of cranes nearby and ducks launching their way skyward, we made our way along the ditches and creeks looking for pike. Over 30 pike were counted on a short stretch of stream on the property in just about an hour's time. "Traditionally, pike spawn as soon as the ice is out, and finding them in the ditches and streams can be hit or miss," said Ryan Bessette, West Shore Project Coordinator.



The previous week Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust was awarded the final grant needed to complete our purchase of these 34 acres of wetlands along Green Bay's west shore. The Land Trust has been awarded funding from three government grant programs to purchase and protect this valuable wetland habitat in Brown County. "We were all so grateful to be spending the morning walking around the future site of our new preserve and so thankful that we have the opportunity to protect such a significant breeding ground for these exceptional fish," said Kari Hopfensperger, Communications Coordinator.

"The life cycle of the Northern pike provides a snapshot of the relationship between coastal wetlands, a healthy watershed, and ecologically important species. Northern pike depend not only on the coastal wetlands, but on a network of small streams and ditches that connect the wetlands with the inland areas of the watershed. The pike use this network every spring as they swim inland from Green Bay to spawn," Kendra Axness, UW-Extension Basin Educator for Natural Resources.

After hatching, the pike "fry" spend time in these areas growing strong before they begin their journey back to the Bay sometime in May. Then the waterways and wetlands they occupied in spring dry up. Looking at these places in summer you would never suspect that they are extremely important spawning and rearing habitat for fish. Next spring mature pike will repeat the cycle and often return to the same location where their parents spawned.

"If we care about the waters of the Bay and the quality of our fisheries, land conservation on the west shore of Green Bay is crucial. The health of Green Bay and also Lake Michigan is very much determined by what we do on the land here, in northeastern Wisconsin," said Deborah Nett, Executive Director. With luck, the new preserve will open to the public late this summer. This will not only be our first preserve on the west shore, but also a place where people can experience first-hand a critical Northern pike spawning habitat. 



A large female prepares to spawn as two males stay by her side.



A female pike lays in a ditch along the side of the road.

PROTECTED FOREVER - PESHTIGO RIVERS CONFLUENCE CONSERVANCY

In late March of 2011 Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust was contacted to find out if we had any interest in helping preserve a property at the confluence of the Little Peshtigo River and the Peshtigo River. We responded with a resounding, "Yes!" Things progressed quickly after that. Land Trust staff toured the 24 acre property as soon as the winter's heavy blanket of snow had melted. "When we arrived both rivers were at flood stage, the entire floodplain that exists on the property was underwater. It was evident this wetland forest was very high quality," stated Jim Klinkert, Director of Land Acquisition. A follow up visit after water levels dropped revealed a rich diversity of plants in the understory.

The caretakers of this special property expressed their long held view and desire to preserve this land in its natural, undeveloped condition, "We can't pave the whole earth. Without wild land there can be no life. We don't own the land. We are only caretakers. This conservation easement with Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust will enable us to preserve and protect this special part of the earth now and into the future."

The Peshtigo River is a Wisconsin Land Legacy Place and one of America's great rivers. Both the Peshtigo and Little Peshtigo rivers provide habitat and recreational fishing opportunities for northern pike, walleye, and bass. The intact floodplain forest and wetlands provide exceptional habitat for the large array of wetland and river-dependent wildlife. Protecting this property contributes to the conservation of the intact and natural landscapes that currently characterize the Little Peshtigo and Peshtigo Rivers corridor in this area, and ultimately the health of Green Bay. 



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NEWLT WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust would like to announce the arrival of five new members to our board of directors within the last year. We are excited as they will be a wonderful addition for the land trust and we are happy to have them.

Kelly Helein is a dedicated conservationist who loves the out of doors and has served her community by volunteering for many local organizations. She is an experienced professional with a diverse background in sales and marketing employed by Thilmany Papers. “Our family is strongly committed to the Fox Valley Community,” said Kelly.

Charles Larscheid spent the last 21 ½ years as the Port and Solid Waste Director for Brown County, a position which put to good use his knowledge of biology and natural resources. Chuck is an avid bird watcher, hunter, and fisherman and says “I love the outdoors and being involved with preserving natural areas” He would like to help bring NEWLT’s mission to the Green Bay area.

Timothy McCoy is an attorney with Godfrey & Kahn law offices in Green Bay, WI. Tim is an avid bicyclist and a triathlete. He loves to be outdoors and see places that are in their natural state. Tim is passionate about land conservation and feels that nature doesn’t need to be maintained as it maintains itself.

Stephanie Vrabec is a science teacher, moderator of Xavier High School Environmental Club, biker, hiker, tennis player, and watercolor painter. “I have a passion for the protection of environmentally significant ecosystems,” says Stephanie. She truly wants to protect land for future generations, and improve outreach to educate, as well as, connect local educators and scientists in land preservation efforts.

Teresa Weglarz is an Environmental Science educator, with a background in environmental Toxicology. She spends much of her time hiking, biking, gardening, scrapbooking, and composting. Teresa wants to help raise awareness of the benefits of land conservation. She looks forward to the opportunity to be more active in local land stewardship issues. 

“SOME PEOPLE GO TO BEAUTIFUL PLACES;
OTHERS MAKE PLACES BEAUTIFUL,” SAYS JIM
RESICK, VICE-PRESIDENT OF NEWLT BOARD.

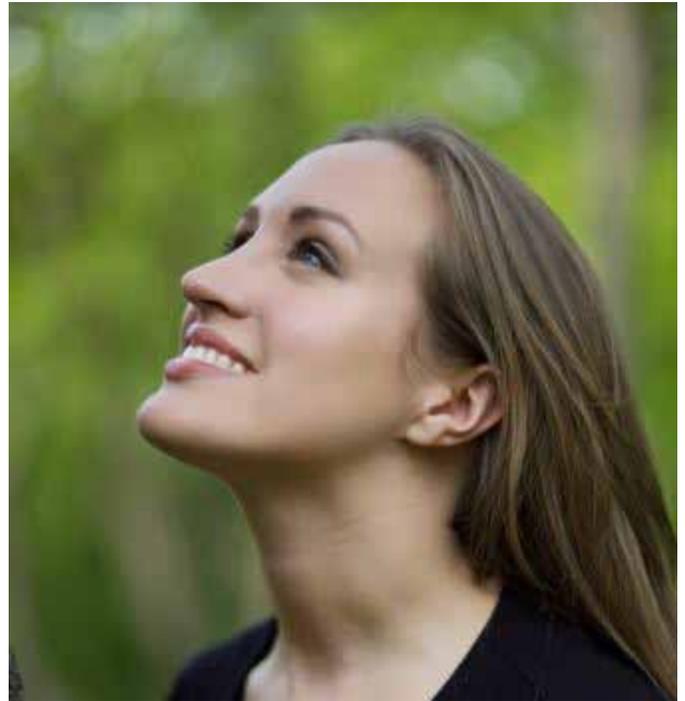
VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR – JEFF RALSTON

We have amazing volunteers that work with us. We wouldn't be able to be as successful as we have been without our volunteers. One volunteer in particular has been an amazing asset to NEWLT. Jeffrey Ralson heard about volunteer opportunities with us thru contacting Winnebago County and then getting into contact with Debbie. Jeff is an orthopedic surgeon at Neenah Orthopedics and is married to Deborah with two teenage children. He loves being a surgeon but also has a love for being outside and becoming more knowledgeable about the environment. He earned a masters degree in 2008 from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in natural resources because of his love for the outdoors. His family owns property in Iowa and enjoys doing things on his property but wanted to affect the place that he lives so he now volunteers for us working mainly on the Guckenberg-Sturm preserve. Jeff has helped provide input on the location for the Guckenberg-Sturm wildlife viewing platform and has begun work to remove reed canary grass from the preserve. He has also spent countless hours cutting and treating buckthorn as well as doing monitoring with his son, Nick. Nick, a junior in high school, has spent a lot of time working with his father on these projects, with whom Jeff says he has gotten twice as much done. As a family they like to spend time being outdoors camping and being in the wilderness. Jeff is looking forward to working on more preserves in the future. Thank you Jeff and Nick for all you have done and are doing for Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust. 🌿



Nick and Jeff Ralston

FOR LOVE OF SONG & NATURE



Long time Land Trust employee, Jim Klinkert, director of Land Acquisition had the joy of sharing an amazing gift with his friends and family. In February his incredibly talented daughter, Brenda Rae put on a concert crowd at the Lawrence University Memorial Chapel which benefitted the Land Trust and Lawrence Academy's Girls' Choir. Brenda Rae, accompanied by Anna Reiser on the piano performed her favorite opera arias.

Brenda Rae (Klinkert), born and raised in Appleton, developed her appreciation and respect for nature here. Her musical sensibilities and talents were richly nurtured in this community, including her experience in the Girls' Choir. Ms. Rae received her training at Juilliard after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Now a soloist at Oper Frankfurt in Germany, she is described as "a young American soprano on the threshold of stardom" (Hugh Canning, Opera Magazine, August 2011).

"The thread that brought us together today, "For Love of Song and Nature" is to realize that natural habitats and gifted artists need to be nurtured and shared," said Kelly Helein, NEWLT Board of Directors said as she addressed the crowd of approx.. 500 people. Brenda and Anna put on a lovely concert and we thank them for sharing their spectacular talent with us. We are also grateful to all those who attended as we enjoyed spending an afternoon listening to beautiful music with everyone. 🌿

CALLING ALL PADDLERS AND RIVER ENTHUSIASTS - NEWLT JOINS NEWP TO PROMOTE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION- JULY 21, 2012

Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust (NEWLT) is proud to sponsor the Northeast Wisconsin Paddlers (NEWP) 11th annual Park-to-Park Paddle on July 21, 2012. NEWLT invites you to join us at noon at Lutz Park in Appleton for a lively and entertaining post paddle celebration including food, music and an informal presentation about the Fox River by Professor Bart De Stasio of Lawrence University.

The popular paddle event launches at Shattuck Park in Neenah at 9:30 AM and ends at Lutz Park in Appleton around noon. Grilled Tease mobile restaurant will have scrumptious takeaway food for sale (20% of the sales will benefit NEWLT and our conservation efforts). Tables and chairs will be provided, or you may bring your own for Dr. De Stasio's presentation that is expected to begin at 1:30 PM. Whether or not you paddle, it will be exciting to witness the arrival of over 200 human-powered craft at Lutz Park and to celebrate the Fox River together. To register or obtain information about the Paddle event, please visit the NEWP website: <http://www.wisconsinpaddlers.org>. Additional information about the post paddle celebration and program can be found on the events page at www.newlt.org.



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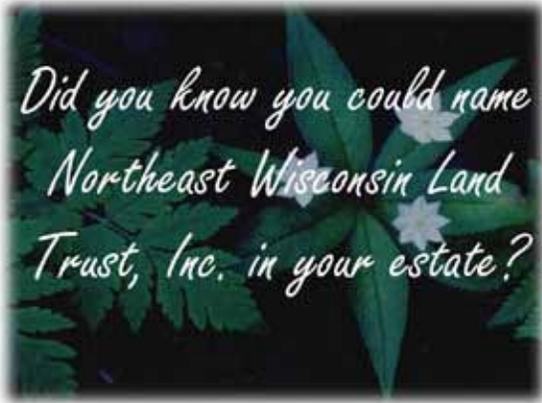
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Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust recognizes gifts made in memory of the following people:

William Froelich Jr.
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John Bachhuber
Roger Drayna

Thank you to the families and friends who honored your loved ones with gifts to the Land Trust. The gift of preserving land is a gift that lasts forever.

Thanks for your support!

THE MISSION OF THE NORTHEAST WISCONSIN LAND TRUST IS TO PRESERVE LANDS THAT PROTECT OUR WATERS, LANDSCAPES, AND NATURAL HABITATS FOR THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.



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