

landscene

Summer 2009

Natural Heritage
LAND TRUST

**PERMANENTLY
PROTECTED**

ROB FARRELL

Hook Lake shoreline permanently protected

Thanks to the conservation-minded members of the Madison Retriever Club, the Natural Heritage Land Trust and the Town of Dunn permanently protected a 20-acre tract of land on Hook Lake in March. Hook Lake is one of the highest-quality wetlands in Dane County and has been designated as a state natural and wildlife area. The lake, which formed in a glacial pocket, is unusual for southern Wisconsin because it is converting to a bog, and has less than seventy acres of open water; the rest is covered by a floating sedge mat, tamarack swamp forest, bog, and sedge meadow.

According to John Stracka, club president, "Our membership found the land use goals for the club to be consistent with the long-term preservation goals of the Natural Heritage Land Trust, the Town of Dunn and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The

partnership with the Natural Heritage Land Trust will help preserve the extraordinarily rare characteristics of Hook Lake well into the future and allow our club to continue its enjoyment of the property at the same time."

The property was protected with a conservation easement, which keeps the property in private ownership but places strong restrictions on its development, enhancing the experience of the public on the lake and adjoining state land. The protected property is not open to the public, but the club gave the state the opportunity to purchase the property in the future. If you would like to explore Hook Lake, access to the public land is from the north side of the lake, off of Hawkinson Road.

Funding for the purchase of the conservation easement came from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and the Town of Dunn. ■

**"Hooray for Hook Lake.
We have explored the area
many times. What a jewel!"**
— Land Trust founder Nancy Heiden



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73 acres protected in the Westport Drumlin landscape



MARIO QUINTANA

East of Waunakee and west of Cherokee Marsh is a small but diverse prairie growing on a whale-shaped hill formed by glacial action thousands of years ago. Part of the Empire Prairies State Natural Area, Westport Drumlin is home to several rare plants and insects, including the state's largest population of a federally-threatened plant.

In March, the Natural Heritage Land Trust purchased 73 acres on the east side of the drumlin, to prevent incompatible development next to the state natural area. The acquisition will improve public access to the drumlin.

The Land Trust will donate the property to the DNR and it will be open to the public for nature-based recreation. Funding to protect the property came from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, the Dane County Conservation Fund, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Land Trust members. ■

Conservation Easements 101

What exactly is a conservation easement and how does it work? When land is purchased, the buyer takes control of all the rights that come with ownership. These include the right to build houses, hunt, farm, etc. But some of these individual rights each have value and can be bought and sold separately. When we purchase a conservation easement, we buy the rights to develop the land; the seller retains most of the other rights to the property. The rights that we buy allow us to fully protect the conservation values of the land in perpetuity because the conservation easement becomes part of the deed to the property. And, since the price we pay reflects the limited rights we buy, we get more land conservation for less money than if we had to buy full ownership. Sometimes, conservation easements are donated to us by generous, conservation-minded landowners.

In the case of farmland, a conservation easement is often the only practical tool for preservation because the Land Trust isn't in the farming business. Much of the value of these working lands is in their ability to produce agricultural products and provide ecosystem services, like water infiltration. That means we benefit when farmers retain ownership. Through Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs, we are able to partner with governments to buy conservation easements on these vital lands and ensure they will always be available to provide goods, services, and the landscape that defines the rural character of our region.

Conservation easements are powerful and flexible, but they require vigilance and can often be legally complicated. Much time goes into the establishment of the various restrictions imposed by the conservation easement. Additionally, because the owner of the property has given up certain rights, we must monitor the property at least once a year to make sure the terms of the easement are being upheld and the values that we intend to protect remain intact. ■

Thank yous

- Mary Binkley, Doris Rusch and Nicole Staskowski for leading spring hikes
- Zak Cocos for helping us set up our Flickr map and Facebook page
- Eileen Dresser, Shirley Droste, and Pat Sammataro for helping with membership mailings
- Niki Exterovich for helping with grant applications and baseline reports
- Rob Farrell for his photos of the Cherokee Marsh Frog Walk and Hook Lake
- Fontana Sports Specialties for sponsoring the Cherokee Marsh Frog Walk
- Kevin St. Angel for updating our web site
- Mario Quintana for his photos of Wildcat Bluff, Westport Drumlin, and elsewhere
- Jenny and Dave Sereno for hosting the Spring Dinner at their home
- Vermont Valley Community Farm for sponsoring the Sneak Peek Mazomanie hike



HARRY CARNES

First Unitarian Society honors Parish Minister Michael Schuler with Living Legacy Gift

In May, the congregation of the First Unitarian Society of Madison made a living legacy gift to the Natural Heritage Land Trust in honor of Parish Minister Michael A. Schuler. 2009 marks the 20th anniversary of Michael and Trina Schuler's service at FUS.

The Schulers requested that the congregation direct the gift to the Land Trust. "It is important that we preserve the natural environment in and around Madison," said Schuler. The Schulers have been members of the Natural Heritage Land Trust for 15 years.

In his new book *Making the Good Life Last—Four Keys to Sustainable Living*, Schuler writes about the importance of local land conservation. In particular, he describes the use of conservation easements to preserve cherished lands.

The Natural Heritage Land Trust is grateful for the First Unitarian Society's very generous gift. ■

Remember the Land Trust in Your Will

"It's really wonderful what the Natural Heritage Land Trust does for our forever grandchildren," said Land Trust member Pat Hitchcock.

Did you know that you can leave a lasting legacy gift to benefit the Natural Heritage Land Trust? By naming the Natural Heritage Land Trust, Inc. as a beneficiary of your will, life insurance policy, or 401(k), you can help preserve the mosaic of landscapes you love in south central Wisconsin.

Legacy gifts make a difference. In 1986 Dr. Alice Watts left 115 acres to the Land Trust in her will. The proceeds from the sale of the property, which was permanently protected by a conservation easement, fund local land conservation to this day.

If you have already prepared a legacy gift for the Land Trust, we would like to recognize you as a member of the Legacy Giving Circle. Please inform us of your gift by contacting Jim Welsh at (608) 258-9797 or Johanna Alex at (608) 273-8609. ■

Legacy Giving Circle

Membership in the Legacy Giving Circle is open to anyone who makes a life-income or estate gift to the Land Trust. We hold a social event once a year for members. Members are recognized in the annual report. All wishes for anonymity are honored.

MIKE FOY



PROFILE: Kate Wipperman, Conservation Specialist

Came to the Natural Heritage Land Trust: 2002

Previous work experience: Dane County Parks and International Crane Foundation

Education: B.S. in Natural Resources from the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Favorite parts of the job: Working with landowners and communities who are motivated to protect their

lands, and getting to explore some beautiful areas of Dane County.

What her co-workers say: Kate is a great representative of the Land Trust and relates very well with landowners.

Current favorite natural history book: *A Naturalist's Journey* by Kenneth Lange

Hobbies: Hiking, vegetable gardening, and traveling.



MARIO QUINTANA

Mark your calendar now for fall Patrick Marsh and Black Earth Creek work parties

Join Patrick Marsh neighbors as we continue restoration of native vegetation in the oak savanna at the Land Trust property at the Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Area in Sun Prairie.

Please mark your calendar for two Saturday morning work parties: October 3rd and October 17th, 9:00 am to Noon.

The meeting point is the Patrick Marsh sign on Schuster Road.

Please join the Land Trust, the local chapter of Trout Unlimited, and the DNR for work parties along Black Earth Creek, as we cut vegetation on DNR lands to improve habitat and public access to the stream: October 3rd, October 24th, and November 14th, 8:00 am to Noon; stay for lunch provided by Trout Unlimited. The meeting point is the Salmo Pond parking lot.

Please check the news and events tab at www.nhlt.org for full details this fall. ■

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Natural Heritage
LAND TRUST

Conservation where you live

303 S Paterson St, Suite 6
Madison, WI 53703

www.nhlt.org

Inside:

- 20 acres at Hook Lake in the Town of Dunn preserved
- 73 acres at Westport Drumlin State Natural Area conserved

YOU HAVE HELPED PERMANENTLY PROTECT 6,338 ACRES OF LAND & WATER IN AND AROUND DANE COUNTY SINCE 1983

The Natural Heritage Land Trust protects natural areas, wildlife habitat, working farms, healthy lakes and streams, and recreational land to provide a high quality of life in the Dane County region.

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Conservation Associate

Caleb Pourchot

Local Conservation. Local Leaders.

Thank you to our President's Circle members for providing the strong and steady financial support the Natural Heritage Land Trust needs to permanently protect the mosaic of landscapes we love in and around Dane County.

- Johanna & Mike Alex
- Clemens F. & June M. Baime
- Tom Bergamini & Herika Kummel
- Anne Bolz
- Bradshaw-Knight Foundation
- BT Squared
- Doug & Sherry Caves
- Sherron Clark
- Dentistry of Wisconsin
- Michael & Shelley Dubis
- Lloyd & Patrick Eagan
- Dan Erdman
- John Feith
- First Unitarian Society of Madison
- John J. Frautschi Family Foundation, Inc.
- Martha Frey
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- Rob Gottschalk & Joy Stieglitz Gottschalk
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- Angela James & Forbes McIntosh
- Lake Waubesa Conservation Association
- Phoebe R. & John D. Lewis Foundation
- Martha Lound
- Bill Lunney & Judie Pfeifer

- MGE Foundation
- Tom McGregor & Anita Gallucci
- Richard Merrill
- Natural Resources Consulting
- Jim & Rumi O'Brien
- Bill O'Connor & Krista Roys
- Pan-O-Gold Baking Co./Village Hearth Breads
- Scott & Cary Reich
- Glenn Reinl & Sara Krebsbach
- David Rice
- Sun Prairie Rotary Foundation
- David & Katie Simon
- Michael & Linda Slavney
- Jeffrey Strobel
- William & Gail Van Haren
- Vandewalle & Associates, Inc.
- Wheeler, Van Sickle & Anderson, S.C.
- Bill & Lorette Wambach
- Frank & Mariana Weinhold
- Bill & Win Welsh
- Jim Welsh
- Rolf & Susan Wulfsberg

"Thank you for your work to make our community a better place to live." Kristine A. Euclide, Vice President, MGE Foundation

We make every attempt to recognize and thank all President's Circle members. If your name was left off the President's Circle list, please call Martha Frey at 258-9797.