



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

HELP LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY FOR THE NORTHWOODS

Mark your calendar for the 2012 Annual Meeting and tour of the Winter Park Pines Nature Preserve on Saturday, June 2nd!

P.O. Box 321, Eagle River, WI 54521-0321

May 2012

FOCUS ON FLORENCE COUNTY

First NWLT Conservation Easement in Florence County protects a “wild lake”

In the fall of 2011, Michael (Mick) Mlinar became the Northwoods Land Trust’s first conservation easement donor to protect land in Florence County. Mick wanted to keep his 40-acre property on Reisner Lake protected forever in memory of his late wife, Karen, who died of cancer.

Active in the Florence County Lakes & Rivers Association, Mick has left a lasting legacy for his family and for the northwoods with the granting of the perpetual conservation easement on this DNR-identified “wild lake.” Such lakes were rated and warrant additional protection based on their high ecological significance, outstanding natural scenic beauty or special recreational values.



“I think it is a sweet piece of property. This is a pristine ‘wild lake.’ It has everything on it - eagles, osprey, swans, loons, mergansers.” - Mick Mlinar



Mick Mlinar (center), NWLT President Mary Schwaiger and Executive Director Bryan Pierce celebrate the signing of the first NWLT conservation easement protecting land in Florence County.

About 13 acres of this property is actually located under the water of Reisner Lake, a 96-acre flowage on a tributary of the Pine River. The Pine was also designated by the state as a Wild & Scenic River.

With over 1,400 feet of natural shoreline frontage, the property was already subdivided. “Originally it was three parcels, and we have now combined it back into one,” explained Mlinar. “However that property is going to be taken care of going forward, we decided that it will be maintained as one piece of property with one building site.”

“I think it is a sweet piece of property,” he noted. “This is not a white sand beach kind of lake for grandkids to go out swimming any time they want. This is a pristine ‘wild lake.’ It has everything on it – eagles, osprey, swans, loons, mergansers. I spook grouse, wild turkeys and deer every time I’m there. It backs up to the Nicolet National Forest, which is another nice feature. You know the parcel will never be encroached upon. It is like tripling the size

(Continued next page)

MISSION:

The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLT) promotes conservation by private landowners of natural shorelands, woodlands, wetlands and other natural resources, as public benefits for present and future generations in Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Iron and Price Counties and the surrounding region.

Phone: (715) 479-2490 Email: nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org Web site: www.northwoodslandtrust.org

Northwoods Land Trust

Purpose:

- To provide education and utilize voluntary conservation options with private landowners.
- To preserve natural shorelands on lakes, rivers and other waterways for protection of water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, erosion control, and natural scenic beauty.
- To conserve private woodlands and encourage landowners to manage their forest lands in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- To accept perpetual stewardship for secure conservation agreements with private landowners, such as easements, land donations and property acquisitions.
- To annually monitor NWLT land protection agreements.
- To seek support through donations, grants, endowments memberships and volunteers.
- To leverage our conservation efforts through partnering with other organizations and agencies.

Newsletter Editor: Bryan Pierce
Staff Writer: Trisha Moore



Florence County “wild lake” property - *continued*

of the parcel in my mind.”

“I used to come up to the area trout fishing and (the son from the family across the lake) would talk about this private lake that he had property on, ‘but you better not go out there because the old man will go after you with a shotgun!’ That made it even more intriguing. All of a sudden I saw this piece of property pop up for sale on Reisner Lake. The following morning I called the realtor. I was the first one to call and looked at it the next morning. I put \$5,000 down that afternoon.”

“Originally I bought the Reisner Lake property with a close friend of mine, and his hopes were to someday move up north and build on it,” he said. “With the economy the way it is, that wasn’t going to happen. I decided that I could help him out by buying his share of the property back, which also allowed me to put this conservation easement together.”

“I live on a small, 39-acre lake,” Mick said. “It is a gorgeous lake, but on the weekends when more people and their guests are up the lake gets a lot of use. I can get to Reisner in about five minutes. I go to Reisner Lake on the weekends to get away from the lake that I’m on.”

“My wife, Karen, and I originally bought our property on Porcupine Lake in 1992,” said Mick. “We tore the old place down in 2001 and spent the next several years of our lives putting it back together as we built a new place. We moved up here permanently in 2007. She passed away the next year from breast cancer.”

“I have two children,” he added. “My daughter Mara just got her first teaching job in South Milwaukee. My son Anton is in Berkeley, CA, getting his doctorate in chemical engineering. Who knows where our kids are going to wind up – it could be Singapore for all I know? Down the road if they would like to have the property, I’m good with that and would pass it on to them. But if they



Over 1,400 feet of natural shorelines were protected in perpetuity with a land protection agreement (conservation easement) on Reisner Lake, a DNR-listed “wild lake.”

Left: Bloodroots were in full bloom during NWLT’s May 2011 site visit to take the baseline documentation photos for Mick Mlinar’s conservation easement.

You Can Help!

The Northwoods Land Trust is a non-profit, tax exempt conservation organization. Your gift of cash, stocks, bonds or other financial support is fully tax deductible as charitable contributions under federal law. Donations of property or conservation easements may also provide tax benefits while promoting the conservation of our northwoods.

Florence County “wild lake” property - *continued*

have no interest in it, then upon my demise my thoughts are to give it to the land trust. Those are my longterm goals – hopefully they are very long term.”

“I grew up in southern Wisconsin in the Milwaukee area,” related Mlinar. “I used to be a commercial photographer for a number of years. Then I got involved in a family business which was manufacturing photographic darkroom equipment. Then digital came along. I was in business with two younger brothers. My middle brother and I are ‘gainfully unemployed’ - I don’t like the word ‘retirement.’ We sold what is left of that business to my youngest brother and he is still continuing to make money at it. One hundred years ago there were 400 buggy whip manufacturers and today there are probably two, but at least there are still two. As far as photographic darkroom equipment is concerned, there are probably just a couple of businesses left, and my brother is one of them.”

“That is basically the reason why I moved up here,” Mick continued. “One, my wife had cancer and we didn’t know how much longer she had. Unfortunately in her case it came back a lot sooner than we thought. Two, I didn’t need two homes any more. Three, my kids were in



Above: White trilliums in full bloom on the Mlinar property.

Below left: Mick Mlinar surveys the “wild lake” shoreline on Reisner.



college. They can come home wherever you are living and I didn’t need to be in Milwaukee for that. This was our dream to finally come up here, but it only worked out for a year.”

Mlinar reflected on how he grew to care about Florence County. “My father came up with a friend and researched some property on Halsey Lake, which is the largest lake in Florence County. He and six other guys in a quasi-investment club purchased almost half of Halsey Lake in 1962 for \$36,000. They subdivided all the lots, threw their names in a hat, and each drew three times to find out who owned which lot. Then they sold them off. Halsey Lake is a prime example of what I am talking about. There were residences on the south end of the lake, but the group bought a sizeable chunk of it for dirt cheap. As an investment club, they all made some bucks on it.”

“As a kid, I watched all of this going on,” Mlinar said. “I remember my father and I getting into an argument on Thanksgiving Day. I was going over the old deed papers, and I asked him ‘how could you let this thing go? You could have had this for yourself for \$36,000.’ My father looked at it as an investment to resell. I don’t blame people for doing that, it goes on every day. But I learned my lesson – if you can afford to buy a precious piece of real estate that is large enough, and keep it intact, that is the right way to go. Lakefront property - there is only so much of it. It is a finite resource.”

Mlinar commented on the vast blocks of property which were purchased as corporate retreats, where they

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Florence County “wild lake” property - *continued*



owned four or five little private lakes. “At some point those people will lose interest and start selling them off. Once it gets sold, then it gets divided. Once it becomes divided, it is no longer a sweet piece of property. I understand that it is a business, but there are fewer and fewer large tracts with those private lakes. They’ll be gone - maybe not in my lifetime, but eventually they will be gone.”

“The lady from South Carolina I bought the property from wanted to keep it pristine,” Mick said. “That was one of the things that interested me in the property. She had three 40s, but she gave a 40 to her kids, and they already have it subdivided for sale. One daughter lives in Australia, so she’ll never come and see this. The son lives in North Carolina and I’ve only met him once. They have no attachment to the land. I can’t blame them for that, but they are asking an outrageous price. If the price were more reasonable, I would try to buy the second 40 too. They think they are going to strike it rich, but they don’t understand that there are other values to the property. They are looking for the money, and you are not going



The protected land includes bog and tamarak/spruce swamp as natural habitat buffers adjacent to the Nicolet National Forest.

to stop that. But I’m going to stop it on this little part of the lake anyway!”

“Everyone has different ideas of what kind of lake they want to be on,” said Mlinar. “A lot of people like full recreation lakes. I personally wouldn’t live on a full recreation lake. That is my choice, but there is only so much of whatever kind of lake you want.”

“I am involved in enough organizations up here where I know how precious clean water is,” continued Mlinar. “You can see what happened with most of the lakes in southern Wisconsin. Pewaukee Lake is an example, a huge lake west of Milwaukee in Waukesha County. In some spots the lake has homes every 50 feet, which was allowed years ago. The lake is pea green all year long. It is full of milfoil, which is so bad they just cut it, they don’t try to eradicate it.”

“Lakes that are clean water lakes people just take for granted,” he noted. “You might have a legal right to use a lake, but you don’t have a right to destroy a lake. That is where I draw the line. It is like going against God’s laws.”

Mick is Vice-President of the Florence County Lakes & Rivers Association. He is also on the Wild Rivers Advisory Committee for the Pine and Popple Rivers. In addition, he is involved with the northwoods chapter of Kids and Mentors Outdoors, which is an organization started four years ago to help get kids outside on outdoor adventures. “We are a small group of volunteers who pull off five or six events each year for kids. We’ve had a pheasant shoot with dogs, done fish crib building, ice fishing, a hooked on fishing event with smaller kids, trapping outings and archery lessons.”

Mick is looking ahead for all future generations: “One hundred years from now I’d like this property to look the same way it looks like today, only with another couple of 40s attached to it.”

Mick also shared a message to his great, great grandchildren: “I keep coming back to the fact that in my own short life I’ve watched a lot of pristine properties subdivided. Once that process starts, the property is no longer pristine. I’m not saying that people can’t take care of their properties, but when you start dividing lakeshore up into 100 foot lots, the integrity of that shoreline becomes less. And too, the more inhabitants there are on a lake, the quality of that lake goes down, whether it is through boat usage, septic leakage, or people just not respecting it. You can have one hundred people on the lake. All it takes is three not to respect it, and those three will destroy it for everyone. I’ve seen that happen too.”

As the first NWLT conservation easement donor in Florence County, Mlinar has made a leading commitment to the northwoods. For Mick, protecting this lake property is clearly something he cares deeply about: “I take that very personally.”



Florence County DNR Lake Protection Grant project now underway

Thanks to a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Protection Grant project, owners of large stretches of natural shorelines on lakes in Florence County will soon be encouraged to consider lasting, voluntary protection of their natural shorelines. Based on the highly-successful private lake shoreland protection projects conducted by NWLT in Vilas, Oneida and Forest Counties, the Florence County lakes project is a critical component of NWLT's recently-revised and adopted five-year strategic plan.

The grant project will utilize NWLT's geographic information system (GIS) computer technology to identify all remaining private lake parcels with a minimum of about 500 feet or more of natural shoreline frontage. Using tax parcel maps and data acquired from the Florence County Land Information Office, the digital parcel maps and aerial orthophotos will be overlaid where needed to determine the extent of natural versus developed frontage.

The selected lake parcels will be mapped on the GIS system for each town. The parcels will then be linked with the Florence County tax roll database to generate a mailing list of the landowners. After editing for landowners with multiple parcels, and those who have received a guide from NWLT previously, copies of "For the Love of the Land... A Landowner's Conservation Guide to Protecting Your Northwoods Property" will be mailed to each of these identified landowners. As with our previous projects, we will look to volunteers to assist us with assembling all of the landowner packets to prepare them for mailing.

The extensive project runs through the end of 2014. Following the initial mapping and mailings, NWLT will be providing on-site technical assistance to any of those lake property owners who wish to permanently protect their land along these natural shorelines.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Florence County Lakes & Rivers Association and Florence County Land & Water Conservation Department for their support and assistance.

Funding assistance to complete this project is being provided by the DNR Lake Protection Grant award. The required 25% local grant match includes significant volunteer and professional assistance. Other project expenses are covered by contributions from NWLT members and supporters.

Previous projects have resulted in many donations of perpetual conservation easements and also conservation land donations. These successful projects have, in total, leveraged millions of dollars of donated values through those conservation donations.

For more information on the Florence County lakes project, contact the NWLT office at (715) 479-2490.



Owners of scenic natural shorelines on lakes, rivers and streams in Florence County are the focus of new DNR Lake Protection Grant and DNR River Planning Grant projects.

DNR River Planning Grant project to focus on Florence County

A grant award was also received in 2011 to conduct a similar DNR River Planning Grant project to encourage private owners with frontage on priority rivers and streams in Florence County to conserve their properties. Once it is developed for the lakes project, the river grant project will utilize NWLT's geographic information system to also identify all priority river and stream parcels with a minimum of about 500 feet or more of natural shoreline frontage.

Priority river and stream segments were identified by the DNR Northern Rivers Initiative as those stretches warranting additional protection based on their high ecological significance, outstanding natural scenic beauty, or special recreational values.

Information packets on voluntary conservation options for riverfront owners will be printed and mailed to the selected parcel owners. Individual on-site property assessments and conservation planning work will also be conducted for any of the river and stream property owners who respond to the direct mailing.

NWLT hopes this project will help to continue to protect Florence County's extensive network of wild and scenic rivers - outstanding natural resources for the entire northwoods.

Embarking on the Accreditation Journey...

In 2004, the Northwoods Land Trust Board of Directors adopted the Land Trust Alliance's national Standards and Practices. These 26 indicator practices guide land trusts to conduct their land conservation work in a legal and ethical manner and for public benefits. Since then, NWLT has continually strived to evolve with these Standards and Practices and take the most responsible and conscientious approach to land protection possible. Now the Northwoods Land Trust is taking the next step in excellence by working toward national Accreditation.

National Land Trust Accreditation is a process that conservation organizations can go through to strengthen their organization and gain public recognition as a sound land trust. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission was established in 2006, and the first pilot land trusts were accredited in 2008. A total of 158 land trusts (of about 1,723) in the United States are now accredited. Out of 50 land trusts in Wisconsin, the following five have achieved national accreditation to date: Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, Bayfield Regional Conservancy, Ozaukee-Washington Land Trust and Caledonia Conservancy.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awards "the accreditation seal to community institutions that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever." The Accreditation Commission is made up of 16 members from across the country representing a variety of skills, regions and land trust sizes. The Commission is a supporting program of the Land Trust Alliance, but works independently of LTA as its own non-profit corporation.

The process begins with a land trust electing to pursue national accreditation. Much thoughtful consideration over time was put into this decision by the Northwoods Land Trust. In 2010, NWLT first went through a guided organizational assessment which involved board and staff surveys, phone conferences, and a thorough review of



Annual monitoring of all conservation lands and easements is one of the accreditation requirements. Dr. David Dawson describes trout stream renovations on his conservation easement property at NWLT's recent volunteer monitor training workshop.

Notice for Public Comment

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Northwoods Land Trust is pleased to announce it is applying for accreditation. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the national Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs.

For over 10 years, the Northwoods Land Trust has worked with private landowners who want to voluntarily conserve their natural shorelands, woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat. NWLT works in areas of Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Iron, Price and Langlade Counties in northern Wisconsin. Since it formed in 2001, the land trust has helped these landowners protect over 8,500 acres of land and over 40 miles of lake and river shorelines, as public benefits for both the present and future generations.

The Northwoods Land Trust board and staff are committed to excellence. NWLT is working toward national land trust accreditation as one more step in an on-going process to ensure the organization is able to meet our conservation goals on into the future.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Northwoods Land Trust complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/indicator-practices.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 112 Spring Street, Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on Northwoods Land Trust's application will be most useful by July 30th.

our policies, goals and strategic plans. The assessment was conducted by MaryKay O'Donnell from the Midwest LTA office and Kate Zurlo-Cuva from Gathering Waters Conservancy.

The NWLT board and staff then debated the pros and cons of taking on this challenge, including weighing such factors as costs and time commitments. In September of 2011 the NWLT Board voted to register for accreditation.

(Continued next page)

Accreditation - *continued*

Registration is the first step of many in the process. After NWLT's registration was approved, we then spent several hours working as a team to prepare the pre-application which will be mailed soon. The reviewers of the Commission will then decide if NWLT can continue with the application process. The Commission will also select specific conservation land and easement projects to review in detail as part of the full application.

In the coming months NWLT will be compiling information and narratives on all of its policies and procedures - from record-keeping to finances. The enormous task of completing the application requirements will be completed by our staff and an Adhoc Accreditation Committee comprised of current board members. The full application is due on September 13th.

After the application has been reviewed, members of the Commission will conduct a site visit or telephone call conference with the land trust. The reviewers may also decide at that time that it needs more information or documentation. When all required documents are obtained, the Commission will perform a final review of the land trust applicant. The full Commission then meets to make a final decision on the applicant and votes to accredit, table or deny the land trust.

The Northwoods Land Trust is confident all of this hard work and diligence will pay off in many ways beyond just proudly displaying the seal of accreditation. We feel being an accredited land trust will make us a more sound organization and increase public awareness and trust in the important work we do. The greatest reward and reason for accomplishing this goal is not simply being an accredited land trust. We believe we have and will continue to become a stronger organization for having taken on this challenge, learning and growing along the journey.



NWLT Receives Stock Donation

We are very pleased to acknowledge and thank our anonymous donor from Rhinelander for the outstanding contribution of stocks again in 2011. NWLT is delighted to receive this stock gift to support our conservation work.

Donations of stocks, especially those which have appreciated significantly in value over the years, can be a great way to make charitable gifts. Stock donations can have important donor tax benefits from a capital gains perspective, so we do recommend that donors consult with their financial advisors. Also, if you are over the age of 70, recent federal tax legislation allows you to make tax-free charitable gifts directly from an IRA.

These contributions can help to create a lasting legacy of beautiful wild places in the northwoods. Our sincerest thanks to our special donor for the wonderful support!

Please contact the NWLT office at (715) 479-2490 for details if you are interested in making a gift of stocks or other assets.



Proceeds from the sale of this donated 100-foot lot on Pickerel Lake west of Eagle River will support NWLT's conservation efforts. See the NWLT website for details: www.northwoodslandtrust.org.



JOIN THE NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

HELP KEEP THE NORTHWOODS THE NORTHWOODS!

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Membership Contributions

- | | |
|--|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter | \$50 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservator | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steward | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Legacy | \$1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My additional contribution of _____ is also enclosed. | |

Please make checks payable to:

Northwoods Land Trust, Inc.
PO Box 321
Eagle River, WI 54521-0321

Interests

- I have property I may wish to conserve, please send me the free landowner's guide.
- I am interested in becoming a volunteer to assist the NWLT.

- I am interested in the NWLT Council of Trustees.



YOU ARE INVITED!

2012 Annual Meeting to feature a tour of the Winter Park Pines Nature Preserve

You are cordially invited to participate in the 2012 Northwoods Land Trust Annual Meeting on **Saturday, June 2nd** at the Minocqua Winter Park Nordic Center. To get to Minocqua Winter Park, take Hwy. 70 west of Minocqua about 6.5 miles. Turn south on Squirrel Lake Road about 3 miles, then east on Scotchman Lake Road about 3/4 mile to the entrance drive to the chalet.

Please come and meet the NWLT Board and join us for a free light lunch and social time at noon. The Annual Meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. with a summary report and “virtual tour” of the year’s outstanding conservation projects and other achievements.

Following the Annual Meeting, we will hike and carpool into the heart of the new Winter Park Pines Nature Preserve, a 3,195-acre conservation easement property protected by Ken and Carolyn Aldridge. As the largest conservation easement donation to a Wisconsin land trust, this extensive property protects 13 miles of river, stream, lake and pond shorelines, including over 5 miles on the Squirrel River, a DNR Northern Rivers Initiative priority river. The land also helps to buffer the Squirrel River Pines State Natural Area and provides lasting protection for about 43 kilometers of the core of the Minocqua Winter



Join us for a tour of the Winter Park Pines Nature Preserve as part of our Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 2nd.

Park cross-country ski and snowshoe trail system. Come and help celebrate this exceptional conservation project.

We recommend wearing long pants, long sleeves and bug/tick protection. A guided walk will include some trail hiking. Please RSVP to help us plan for the lunch by contacting the NWLT office at (715) 479-2490 or email us at nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org. Please join us!



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

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Please remember NWLT in your annual and planned giving. Give a gift that will last forever!