



# NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

HELP LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY FOR THE NORTHWOODS

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

Fall 2006

## Going, going, saved... Bev Engstrom protects Wisconsin River land

By Gail Gilson-Pierce, River Alliance of Wisconsin

Bev Engstrom thinks a lot about the future, but she doesn't worry about it any more. That's because she recently signed a conservation easement to protect 50 acres of northern Wisconsin River shoreland that's been in her family for 111 years.

A conservation easement is a legal land protection agreement between a landowner and a land trust to protect the land in accordance with the landowner's wishes... forever.

Engstrom's land is part of the 100 acres that was homesteaded by her great grandparents, Charles and Clara Hagen back in 1895. Having traveled to Oneida County from Pennsylvania, the two pioneers scratched out a living as "dirt farmers," keeping a few cows, growing what little food the cold climate and glacial soils would allow them, and logging on the side.

Charles and Clara Hagen didn't acquire the property through the exchange of money. It required much more – a commitment to live on the land for five years. That's a long time when the living is hard.

"The soil is so poor, that it must have taken many acres, just for my great grandparents to feed their few cows," Bev mused.

But Charles and Clara proved their commitment and officially won title of the land on September 18, 1900. It was lovingly handed from generation to generation, and in 1983, Bev's parents gave 50 acres each to her and her brother.

The land is gentle and welcoming with its quarter mile of mostly undeveloped Wisconsin River shoreline, another quarter mile of Radtke Creek, a class 1 brook trout stream, rolling meadows, and deep, northern forests.

"This may sound corny, but I have a profound connection with this land," said Engstrom. "I was raised on this land. We picked berries here. It's where we always got our Christmas tree. As kids, we rode horses here. It's where I

learned to hunt when I was 12 years old, and where I've been hunting ever since. I know just about every tree on this place."

"Walking this land is spiritual for me. The stories of the land and the people that lived here are part of me." But since Engstrom has no heirs, she knows she's the end of line. "Nobody after me will ever feel the same connection to this land, and I'm concerned about that," she added.

That concern prompted Engstrom to begin thinking seriously about what would happen to the land after she no longer lived on it. In 2002 she read an article in the local newspaper about the Northwoods Land Trust offering options for protecting land in perpetuity. She requested more information, read through it when it arrived, and then did some serious thinking.

"I couldn't bear the idea of subdividing this property myself, or of selling it to someone else who would parcel it off," Engstrom said.

*(Continued on page 2)*



*Beverly Engstrom has protected over one-quarter mile of Wisconsin River shoreline south of Rhinelander in Oneida County.*

### mission:

*The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTT) promotes conservation by private landowners of natural shorelands, woodlands, wetlands and other natural resources, as public benefits for present and future generations. The Northwoods Land Trust covers areas of Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Iron and Price Counties.*

*Phone: (715) 479-2490 Email: [nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org](mailto:nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org) Web site: [www.northwoodslandtrust.org](http://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



Over 1/4 mile of Radtke Creek, a class 1 trout stream, was also protected through the Engstrom conservation easement.

## Engstrom Conservation Easement *(continued from page 1)*

So she did her homework, explored her options, and then signed a conservation easement with the Northwoods Land Trust.

According to Bryan Pierce, executive director for the land trust, “A conservation easement allows a landowner to specify what future development, if any, can occur on their property, even after they no longer own it. In the case of Bev’s property, she specified that no dock or pier ever be allowed on the shore, the land can never be subdivided, and any expansion of the house or new outbuildings would need to stay within a specified building zone, to a maximum of 3,000 square feet of total footprint.”

Easements allow the land to be transferred or sold. The land remains private property, but the easement – and its restrictions – go with the land.

In some cases there may be financial incentives for landowners to place a conservation easement on their property. In Engstrom’s case, limiting development on the property essentially lowers the fair market value. For income tax purposes, the IRS allows her to write off the difference in pre-easement and post-easement appraised values as a charitable contribution to the land trust. The charitable deduction can be taken up to 30 percent of her adjusted gross income in any one year, and may be utilized for up to a six-year period. (Note: Congress recently passed and the President signed a bill to allow easement donations in 2006 and 2007 to be deducted up to 50 percent of the landowner’s adjusted gross income, and utilized up to a total of a 16-year period.)

Pierce noted that some of the funding to complete this conservation easement project was provided by the John C. Bock Foundation of Milwaukee. A grant from the Foundation covered the costs for annually monitoring and legally defending the easement if necessary in the future.

While Engstrom realizes that 50 acres and a quarter mile of Wisconsin River shoreland isn’t a lot of land to save, it’s a start, and it may encourage others to do the same. She’s sent information to her neighbors...just in case.

“I know this is a real commitment, and something people shouldn’t just dive into without thinking about it,” Engstrom admitted. Yet she encourages people to at least investigate conservation options for their land.

“You don’t have to make a decision right away, but check into it. It’s like so many things in life. You always think you’re going to do something someday, and you put it off until it’s too late,” she concluded.

Shielding her eyes from the reflection of the August sunlight on the rippled surface of the Wisconsin, Engstrom looked into a distance only she could see, then simply said, “Not a day goes by that I don’t think how lucky I am to live on this beautiful river. I get tremendous peace of mind just knowing it will be protected forever.”



*“I get tremendous peace of mind just knowing it will be protected forever.” - Bev Engstrom*

### You Can Help!

The Northwoods Land Trust is a non-profit, tax exempt conservation organization. Your gifts of cash, stocks, bonds or other financial support are 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.

# Kern Family protects Snipe Lake Shoreline

By Willa Schmidt

Theodosia and Melanie Kern's property at the east end of Snipe Lake in the Town of Cloverland, Vilas County, has seen little change since the early 1900s, when it first came into the family. They like it that way—like it so much, in fact, that they partnered with the Northwoods Land Trust by donating a conservation easement to protect their 56 acres and 1,000 feet of natural shoreline in perpetuity.

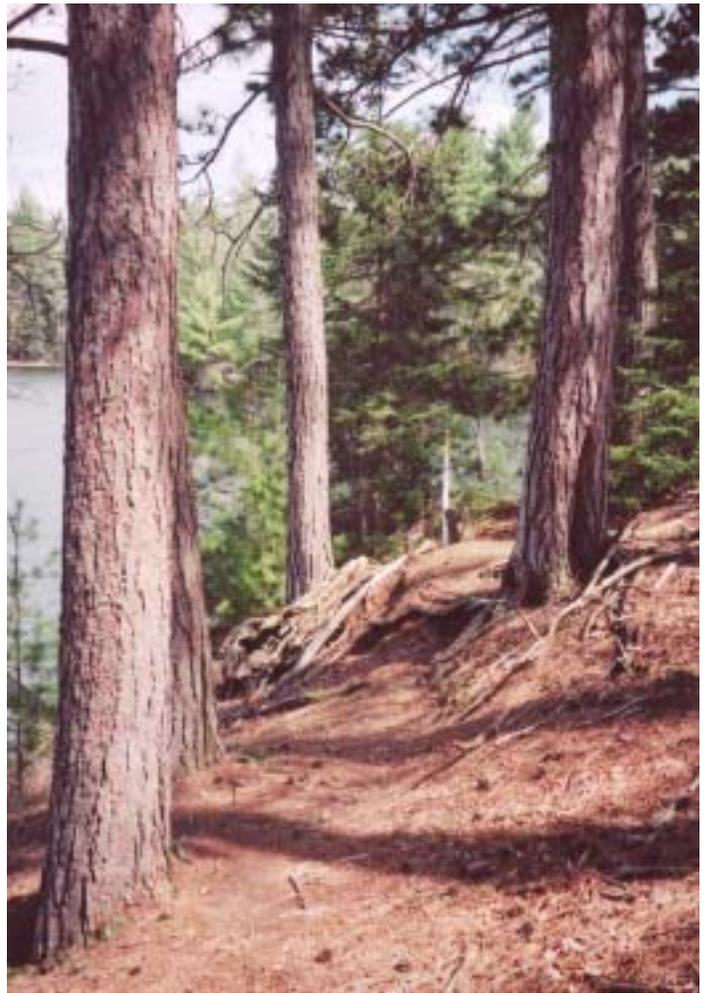
"It hasn't changed since I was a kid," Melanie says. "I always loved wandering through it, studying the plants—fern, wintergreen, princess pine, blue flag iris along the shore—watching deer, fishers, otters, all the creatures that lived there. I learned to swim in Snipe Lake."

Her mother, Theodosia, had the idea of granting the easement. Though now in a nursing home and no longer able to visit the property, Theodosia is happy to know it will remain as she remembers it.

Melanie's grandparents were Tony and Ruby Wons. The Wons family had bought this land and another piece up the hill with the intention of making a living by farming. Tony was a younger son, who at some point acquired the "less useful" lake lot (ironic today, considering present frontage prices).

Tony Wons worked in Chicago where he achieved celebrity with his own radio variety show. When he retired and left the city, Tony had a house built on Snipe Lake. He and Ruby settled there, with Ruby staying on after Tony died. She eventually passed the property on to their daughter, Theodosia, when Ruby passed away at the impressive age of 102.

Melanie, who grew up in Colorado and is presently employed by Minnesota's Hennepin County, has fond memories of summer visits to her grandparents. She and



*About 1,000 feet of frontage on the east shore of Snipe Lake is now protected with a conservation easement.*



*Theodosia (right) and Melanie Kern protected their 56-acre Snipe Lake property with a conservation easement.*

her mother would stay for a month while her father was at home working. What she remembers best is the peaceful pace of life, something lost today, though perhaps still somewhat attainable in places like the Northwoods.

Melanie remembers leisurely discussions around the breakfast table with her grandparents. "They loved to argue," she reminisces, "about anything and everything: politics, religion... They were 'sport-arguers.'"

Tony had a workshop where, among other things, he made violins; the Wons family loved music. The women would work in the garden, then prepare the big noon meal. After dinner everyone would take a nap. When they woke up, they'd go for a swim, and Ruby would practice piano. Supper was light and evenings were for taking out the rowboat and fishing for panfish that, freshly caught, tasted better than anything bought in a store.

Her primary motivation for granting the conservation easement, Melanie explains, is the unspoiled state of the property. Her grandparents left a light footprint, and in the face of all the development going on today, she'd like to keep it that way. She's grateful she and her mother were able to hang on to the land and relieved that it is now protected.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## **Kern Conservation Easement** *(continued from p. 3)*

The conservation easement specifies that no subdividing is allowed on the 56 acres. Outside of a protected shoreland natural area, any logging requires an approved management plan. Windfall will mostly be left alone. The house and several small outbuildings can be rebuilt or remodeled, but only expanded up to a maximum total footprint. "The animals and birds and plants need places to live too," she says.

The public also benefits from the Kerns' generous gift. Not only do boaters and anglers on Snipe Lake enjoy a beautiful, natural shoreline, but because County Highway G with its new bicycle lane bisects the property, a scenic natural corridor is maintained along that stretch in perpetuity. Further, the Kern land is adjacent to the old, 16-acre homesteaded farm now owned by relatives Joann Kindt and Ellen McKenzie. The farmstead is also protected by an easement with the Northwoods Land Trust, thus extending the conservation benefits of both properties.

Melanie Kern is truly dedicated to saving open land. In 2004 she was a finalist for Minnesota Conservationist of the Year for also placing an easement on her 65-acre Anoka County, Minnesota farm. This property serves as a migration corridor for wildlife in a rapidly-developing area near the Twin Cities.

For other landowners considering putting a conservation easement on their property, Melanie has the following message: "Do it, and don't look back! It's an opportunity that will never come again. Once developed, the land can never be gotten back."

If she could visit Snipe Lake in 100 years, Melanie would like to see bigger trees and more hardwoods on her property, as well as more varieties of animal life, such as bobcat or lynx. The lake she'd like to find just as it is, with an eagle still perched up in that big old white pine along the shore.

Funding assistance for this conservation easement project was provided in part by grants from the John C. Bock Foundation, the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation's Audubon Land Fund for Wisconsin, and the Snipe Lake Association.

Additional contributions toward a Stewardship Endowment Fund for annual monitoring of the conservation easement were provided in memory of long-time Snipe Lake area residents Paul and Shirley Ramsey, Albert Schoofs and George Wons.

For more information on conservation easements, or to support private lands conservation, contact the Northwoods Land Trust at P.O. Box 321, Eagle River, WI 54521, or call (715) 479-2490.

*Willa Schmidt is the Secretary for the Northwoods Land Trust Board of Directors, and also granted a conservation easement on her Snipe Lake property.*



*The Snipe Lake Association, memorial gifts and foundation grants all provided funding assistance to support the Kern family's conservation easement with the Northwoods Land Trust.*

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## **Landowner Incentive Fund enhanced by gifts in memory of Shirley Trinka Bock and George Wons**

The extended Drager family has continued to think of the Northwoods Land Trust and include us as a beneficiary of gifts in memory of **Shirley Trinka Bock**. Memorial gifts can help protect the northwoods in perpetuity as a lasting tribute to family and friends.

Previous gifts in memory of Shirley Trinka Bock and Ed Bock were received from Julie Dolinky (Shirley's sister), Ed Drager, Bette Jo Sullivan and Mary McCann. The Northwoods Land Trust has received recent additional memorial gifts from Ardyth Hall of Baltimore, Maryland, Wendy Hall Smith of New York City, and Jean and Roger Owen of Bellingham, Washington. As Jean Owen noted: "Only the northwoods - Monahan Forest - is home to our 'clan.' Ed Drager made it a beloved home for all of us. Keep up the good work in saving it for future generations."

A memorial contribution toward the Kern Snipe Lake conservation easement was also received in memory of **George Wons** from Ellen McKenzie of Los Altos, California, and Joann Kindt of Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

The Northwoods Land Trust established our **Landowner Incentive Fund** to help cover the expenses of granting perpetual conservation easements. These expenses include surveys, legal fees, title work, ecological assessments, and the stewardship endowment funding needed to annually monitor each easement.

We are currently seeking funding support to help cover landowner costs for conservation easements and for outright gifts of land on several sites in Vilas and Oneida Counties. Please contact us if you can help!

Our thanks to all who have made memorial gifts.

## Hatch Family protects second Iron County property

DiAnne and Terry Hatch of Mahomet, IL, have protected another 59 acres to add to nearly 75 acres under conservation easement in the Town of Sherman, Iron County. Located near historic Springstead, the Hatch family granted the conservation easement to the Northwoods Land Trust to ensure the lake, wooded and wetland property is protected in perpetuity.

“The land doesn’t belong to anyone, it doesn’t belong to us,” commented DiAnne, a Presbyterian Church Pastor. “The Creator owns all of the land. There ought to always be land that is free to just support the natural environment and the flora and fauna that would naturally occur here. We want to make sure the land doesn’t all get used up, either by us or anyone else. We feel that a conservation easement is a real contribution that we can make to the environment and the Creation long term. It makes us feel extraordinarily happy,” exclaimed DiAnne.

“The easement also preserves the quality of the lake,” she said. “A small seepage lake like Charnley is an at-risk lake. It can’t support unqualified development. With an easement, you have a vast ability to achieve your goals, while also protecting the forest and waters.”

Terry, a pediatrician, gastroenterologist and medical educator, noted that: “We’ve never thought of a conserva-



*Daughter-in-law Amanda, DiAnne and Terry Hatch celebrate the signing of their second land protection agreement conserving their Iron County properties.*

tion easement as restrictions. Instead, it is an opportunity to preserve the property as a benefit to you and to subsequent property owners.”

“You do lose the development value of the land, but there are many values that supersede monetary ones,” he explained. “Someone will always want this large, undividable piece of land, and will pay for it. It may be a different market, but selling land with a conservation easement is an opportunity for free enterprise to work in a positive way.”

“We wanted to raise our children with an appreciation for the outdoors,” said DiAnne. “I grew up on a small farm, and we were surrounded by woods. My parents thought that was extremely valuable. We recently read an article about preventing your children from having ‘nature deficit disorder.’ The concept was based on Howard Gardner’s research on multiple intelligences including ‘natural intelligence,’ which is an appreciation for the wonders of creation and how we can pass that along to subsequent generations. In the past, natural intelligence was not in danger, but now it is,” explained DiAnne.

For many years, the Hatch family had been vacationing on a lake north of Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Returning from Minnesota one year, they were driving through northern Wisconsin and their youngest son, Nick, who was 12 years old at the time, pointed to a sign advertising land for sale. Terry said: “If you call them, I’ll follow up.” Nick did call the real estate agent, and the family began looking for property of their own.

“Big woods were what we were interested in,” said DiAnne. When they first looked at this property, “the house was a pit, but the land was beautiful,” Terry noted. They purchased the 75-acre property with over 1,000 feet of frontage on Charnley Lake in 1996.

The property had three or more other lake lots that could have been subdivided, Terry explained, but the family had already explored conservation easements from other property interests they had in Illinois. They worked with Gathering Waters Conservancy in Madison to grant their first conservation easement in 1999. Gathering Waters transferred this easement to the Northwoods Land Trust in December 2005.

“We started exploring the environment and gathered all the history of our land,” said Terry. “The people that we bought it from owned it for 30 years,” explained DiAnne. “They wanted to sell it to someone who would not want to immediately clearcut the woods. Their goals for the forest were somewhat similar to ours, which made it pleasing to both parties. The last time it was cut was 1917.”

An additional 59-acre tract became available that just touches one corner of their existing property, so they purchased that land too. The second property includes over 950 feet of frontage on Norma Lake and an additional

*(Continued on Page 6)*

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## Hatch Family easement *(continued from p. 5)*

lot on Charnley Lake. Norma is a small, 7-acre, bog-fringed lake. The Hatch family granted a second conservation easement to the Northwoods Land Trust which precludes all development except a small hunting shack on this property.

The Hatches have three sons - Peter, Augustus (Kathy) and Nick (Amanda). "All are equally appreciative of the environment, love the outdoors, and are keenly interested in preserving the land," said DiAnne. "Each of them like different kinds of things, but in some combination they all hunt, fish, and walk the woods to identify plants and animals," Terry said. "We also enjoy kayaking on the lake, occasionally swimming and snowshoeing in the winter," he noted.

"Our most magical experiences are walking through the woods," DiAnne commented. "We walk every part of



*About 950 feet of the shoreline of 7-acre Norma Lake has now been preserved by DiAnne & Terry Hatch.*

the woods every time we come. We spend a lot of time out there. We have a copy of a floristic survey done here, so we are gradually increasing our appreciation of the property. I am just learning to identify the bog plants. They are so fragrant and beautiful."

"Recently we have noticed all the things, especially wildflowers, that would have been in the forest but for the high deer population," noted DiAnne. "We have been talking with our forester about developing one or two deer enclosures to try to provide some protection for the vegetation from deer browsing," added Terry.

"We love the birch, and we do have several places on the property with eastern Hemlock," said DiAnne. "There are many beautiful kinds of ferns on the property, including Maidenhair ferns which are less common. I enjoy those tremendously."

The Hatches also enjoy seeing the black squirrels, and recently had a fox on the cottage stoop. "We saw a bobcat just down the road, otters on the lake, and found a bear den on the new property," added DiAnne. "Of course we love the loons. We also have bald eagles, but the loons dislike them intensely."

"Our primary goal is to preserve the aesthetic beauty and the health of the forest," she said. "In 100 years, we would expect there to be some natural succession, but we'd like to be able to maintain the amount of diversity here now."

"Until recently, human beings have always been connected to the land. We need to be connected to the land to be healthy," DiAnne explained. "We hope that our great, great grandchildren will want to come here and experience this land much the same as it is today." 

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## For Sale to Conservation Buyer

### \*\* 21-acres on Harmony Lake.

Located just north of Eagle River in Vilas County, this property has a perpetual NWLT conservation easement on it. The land features about 1,500 feet of natural shoreline frontage on this private lake. Harmony Lake is an 88-acre, clear-water, seepage lake. It has good fishing for largemouth bass and panfish. The frontage is sandy, with tall red pines lining the banks. Harmony Lake is also identified as a "wild lake" by the Wisconsin DNR Northern Initiatives: Wild Lakes Program.

There are no buildings of any kind on the property, however the conservation easement allows for a 30,000 square foot building zone to be established.

The easement allows for construction of one single-family residence with a maximum total footprint for all structures (including garage, decks, etc.) of 2,500 square feet. Forestry is allowed, and 18 acres of the property are currently enrolled in the Managed Forest Law program through 2027. The most recent harvest was in 2004, and

no additional harvesting is required through the end of the MFL contract.

This property is listed with Ray Weber Realty. Please contact Diane Cirks at (715) 891-5816 or [dcirks@nnext.net](mailto:dcirks@nnext.net) for more information or to arrange a property visit. 



# Sarah Perry grants a second easement to protect Seven Island Lake

Sarah Perry, of Mill Valley, CA, has granted a second conservation easement to the Northwoods Land Trust to forever protect natural shorelands, woodlands and wetlands in the Harrison Hills of Lincoln County.

The conservation easement, or land protection agreement, ensures that about 25 acres of northern hardwood and coniferous forest land and wildlife habitat in this ecologically rich region will be protected from subdivision. The easement also provides increased protection for nearly 2,000 feet of frontage on Seven Island Lake, the entire shoreline of "Perry Pond," a small, one-acre bog-fringed lake, as well as an intermittent stream connecting Seven Island Lake to Snake Lake.

"With the completion of the second easement, I can rest assured that the entire property will be protected forever," Sarah said. "It can never be exploited or subdivided. I can feel my parents smiling down at me."



*Sarah Perry has protected nearly 2,000 feet of frontage on Seven Island Lake in Lincoln County.*

The Seven Island Lake easement is contiguous with a conservation easement granted as part of the settlement of her mother's estate through the Jessie B. Perry Revocable Trust. Freeman and Jessie Perry lived in Merrill where Sarah grew up. Freeman worked for many years as the manager for Ward Paper Mill and bought the lake property to use for a family summer cabin.

This easement protects the adjacent 33 acres of woodland and wetlands, and

some of the last remaining undeveloped private shoreline on Bog Lake, a DNR-recognized "wild lake."

An ecological assessment for the two contiguous properties was prepared by Dr. Robert Freckmann and Dr. Dave Hillier from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. According to the assessment, the conservation easement will "assure that the Perry property will be maintained forever in a forested condition that maintains the exceptional scenic and ecological values of this land and prevents development that would compromise those characteristics."

The two easements together allow for three separate reserved residential zones on the 50+ acres and several thousand feet of frontage, rather than the multiple shoreland lots that otherwise would have been allowed.

In addition to granting the conservation easements, Sarah has also become a contributing member of the NWLT Council of Trustees. Since her retirement last year, she has established the Sarah E. Perry Charitable Fund of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund. As a continuation of her conservation values, contributions from Sarah's Charitable Fund provide support for NWLT's work with other landowners who may be considering granting a conservation easement on their properties.

"There are no words to describe the tremendous satisfaction I feel," Sarah commented. "I'm inspired. With my family's land protected, I am now actively involved in a variety of environmental programs in the US, Canada and abroad."

"My biggest motivation is to implement and help promote practical environmental solutions for protecting and restoring the Earth and its natural communities," Sarah explained. "I hope this small action on my part encourages others to join in."



## JOIN THE NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

HELP KEEP THE NORTHWOODS THE NORTHWOODS!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (w): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (h): \_\_\_\_\_

E mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Contributions

- Individual \$25
- Family \$35
- Supporter \$50
- Founder \$100
- Conservator \$250
- Steward \$500
- Land Legacy \$1000
- My additional contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is also enclosed.

### 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.

### Please make checks payable to:

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

- I am interested in the NWLT Council of Trustees.

## **New NWLT publication available on leaving your legacy through a bequest**

Including the Northwoods Land Trust in your will, and helping to protect the northwoods, is a legacy that will last forever. Planned giving by bequest is one of the simplest ways of making a gift to the Northwoods Land Trust, and can also offer significant estate tax benefits.

There are several ways of naming the Northwoods Land Trust as a beneficiary and indicating how you would like your gift to be used. Please call for a new fact sheet titled "Leave a Lasting Legacy through the Northwoods Land Trust." The fact sheet provides specific examples of bequest language that can be inserted into your will.

Such gifts can include a portion of your estate, the residual estate after other bequests are named, a specific amount, conservation property, and other designated assets such as stocks, bonds, proceeds from life insurance or retirement plans, art, non-conservation lands and buildings, vehicles, boats and other equipment, or any other valuable tangible personal assets. We do recommend that you consult your own attorney or professional tax advisor to learn how your planned giving options relate to your specific circumstances.

Several individuals have already named the land trust in their wills. Their generosity will have a positive impact on the northwoods that will last long beyond their lifetimes.



## **HELP WANTED: website volunteer**

The Northwoods Land Trust is now seeking a skilled volunteer to update and upgrade our current NWLT website. We are looking for someone with a working knowledge of Microsoft FrontPage software to help us on a semi-regular basis.

We could use assistance in providing links to current newsletters, information and photos of recent conservation easements and other land conservation projects, and updates on other news items. Please contact Executive Director Bryan Pierce at the NWLT office about this and other volunteer opportunities - (715) 479-2490.



*Bog-fringed "Perry Pond" was protected in perpetuity through the Sarah Perry conservation easement.*



**NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST**

P.O. BOX 321, EAGLE RIVER, WI 54521-0321

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*Please remember NWLT  
in your annual and  
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