



# NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

*Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods*

## New Look & New Location!



*The Northwoods Land Trust's board officers celebrate the January 16th acquisition of the former Christmas House building in downtown Eagle River, including (from left): Treasurer Sue Coffman, Vice-President Bob Martini, Past-President John Huppert, President Mary Schwaiger, and Secretary Pete Davison.*

The 2015 New Year brought significant changes and opportunities for the Northwoods Land Trust. First - as you have probably noticed - our newsletter has been upgraded with a new look as a full color publication. The newsletter is intended to complement the redesigned website NWLT completed in 2014 with the assistance of Dan McKissack of Danomac Design. Find us at [www.northwoodslandtrust.org](http://www.northwoodslandtrust.org).

The design work for the color newsletter template was done by Hahn Printing in Eagle River. "We anticipate going to print three times a year instead of four," said Executive Director Bryan Pierce. The newsletter will also be available to download as a PDF file on NWLT's website.

Second, the Northwoods Land Trust has committed to basing our office operations in downtown Eagle River with the purchase of the former Christmas House building at 519 East Wall Street in January. "We are excited to be able to move into our own office space and remain in Eagle River on into the future," said Executive Director Bryan Pierce.

The Northwoods Land Trust has been housed in the Reach & Schwaiger CPA office building on Hwy. 70 in Eagle River for the past eleven years.

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### 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, Price and northern Langlade Counties.*



*The accreditation seal recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.*

## NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 321

Eagle River, WI 54521-0321

Phone: 715-479-2490

Email: [nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org](mailto:nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org)

Website: [www.northwoodslandtrust.org](http://www.northwoodslandtrust.org)

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## New Style & New Location - *continued*

“Mary Schwaiger is a founding member of the NWLT board of directors and has served as the board president for seven of those years,” said Pierce. “We really appreciate all of the support and assistance from Mary, Betsy Spencer and their staff as they have allowed us to grow our conservation organization in Wisconsin’s northwoods region. That growth is what has driven us to find additional space.”

Realizing the need for new space, the Northwoods Land Trust board formed an Ad Hoc Building Committee last September to research options for both rental and purchase. Committee members visited nine different structures available to purchase and considered six options for office space rentals.

The former Christmas House building best met the Committee’s list of priority needs and opportunities. The property was listed with a realtor as a bank foreclosure, so NWLT acquired it for about half of the assessed value.

“We hope to be able to use our new, more visible location in downtown Eagle River to have a greater community presence and help people learn what a land trust does,” he said.

He noted that the intent is to spend time reworking the front space in the building to allow room for some interpretive exhibits, so visitors to the NWLT office will hopefully gain a better understanding of the types of natural resources we protect and why

they are so important to the region.

“We could have located our offices anywhere in our service territory, but we have enjoyed being in Eagle River and feel strongly about keeping jobs in the community, and especially in the downtown area,” he added.

Pierce anticipates that it could take a year or more before the building will be open to public visitors, although he and Conservation Specialist Trisha Moore have already started to work out of part of the building thanks to some great volunteer assistance (see sidebar).

“It did sit empty and unheated for three years,” commented Pierce. “The heating system fired up right away, but we had to fix four plumbing leaks. Pipes had cracked where the water had been drained, but not blown out.”

“We also know that we will have to replace the entire ceiling in the main front room due to fire code compliance, so we anticipate a need for some demolition later this year,” he added.

Although there will be construction going on for some time, visitors are welcome to stop by. “If the door is locked, we are probably out in the field, so you may want to call in advance to make sure someone will be there,” he said.

The new address is 519 East Wall Street in downtown Eagle River. The telephone number has not changed - call (715) 479-2490. NWLT’s mailing address also remains P.O. Box 321, Eagle River, WI 54521.

Cindy Walters

Tim Obukowicz



### Thank you to our Volunteers!

On January 28th we had a big clean-up day at the new building. We took down old signs and Christmas decorations, cleaned the bathrooms, kitchen, basement and garage, wiped windows and walls, and removed a bucket full of hooks and screws and nails. We also taped and painted the dining room wall and an upstairs ceiling, bathroom and office.

Sunday, March 1st was Moving Day. More volunteers used their strong backs and vehicles to help us move all of our office furniture, many crates of conservation easement notebooks and other materials, and sixteen full file cabinet drawers into the new building. “Getting two exceptionally heavy desks up to the second floor was a big job, but it went quickly. Within two hours we had all of our ‘stuff’ moved into the new building,” commented Pierce.

The NWLT staff would especially like to thank the following volunteers for their outstanding help: Tim & Marcia Obukowicz, Marj DeJongh, Cindy Walters, Gary Meister, Laura Van Valkenberg, Gene & Sam Welhoefer, Gail Pierce, Mark Shepherdson, Pete (& Coleman) Davison, Kirk Mueller, Bob Martini and John Huppert.

For those who enjoy helping with building projects, we will be having a “painting/staining party” and also a demolition day early this summer! Drop us a note if you’d be willing to help.



## Historic Farmstead Protected in Armstrong Creek, Forest County



*Landowner Elizabeth Wywialowski is dwarfed by the large, historic dairy barn on her 150-acre conservation easement property in the town of Armstrong Creek in Forest County.*

Elizabeth Wywialowski recently granted a perpetual conservation easement to the Northwoods Land Trust to protect her 150-acre family farm and woodland property in the town of Armstrong Creek in Forest County. Liz grew up on the farm.

The farm was purchased by her parents, John and Anna Wywialowski, from a lumber company. An immigrant from Poland, John came to America through Ellis Island when he was eight years old. His last name was Wywial, but he changed it to Wywialowski (meaning “son of a blacksmith”) in America. Anna grew up in Chicago.

“The house I grew up in and lived in was always believed to be too small for us, but I never felt that way,” she said. “We knew how to use space.” Liz had nine sisters and seven brothers.

The two-story house has historic significance. Called a “cross-over” house because it was built by the lumber company to entice conversion of the cutover timber land to agriculture, the home was only 630 square feet on the ground floor plus an entrance vestibule. The loft served as two large bedrooms; one for girls and the other for boys.

“By the time I can remember, my older brothers were already in the military,” Liz said. “We were spaced about two years apart. Mom had one of us in diapers for 34 years.”

“I remember vaguely when they were still using horses and a dump rake for putting up hay. And I remember seeing my father blasting with dynamite and pine stumps flying in the air. He literally cleared over 100 acres. He worked hard. He often was in the fields

beyond our bedtimes, and he was back in the fields when we were waking up.”

“Over the years I remember raking hay, baling hay, and harvesting grain,” she said. “We cared for things well. The orchards were always mowed. My dad would be shocked now to see fences on the ground.”

“He often came out and walked the forest with us during farm down times. We’d sit down where we were cutting weeds and drink Koolaid together,” she related. “I am so grateful for that life experience. He and my mother were always very supportive of us.”

“My mom would raise 500-600 chickens per year,” said Liz. “She would can a goodly amount until there was a refrigerator and a couple of freezers to store the meat.”

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## Historic Farmstead - *continued*

“Seven or eight of us would come up the drive,” from the school bus recalled Liz. “I have this memory of clothing flying through the air as we changed into our farm gear to milk the cows after we had dinner. We had a large dining room table filled with food – and it would disappear!” Liz once asked her mother if she ever got tired of this? “She gave the biggest gasp and said, ‘this is my life. I am very happy with it.’ She wanted every one of us to have care and attention. Family life was a big thing.”

Liz’s father and brothers built a beautiful, large dairy barn in 1944 to support their 100-head dairy herd. “I remember when the milking machines were installed in the barn. The only problem was when the power would go out – and it went out many times.”

“School was never difficult for any of us,” she said. “My oldest siblings

though didn’t graduate from high school because they were either in the military or away in Chicago working.”

“People have this idea that if you are from a large family, you must be awfully poor,” commented Liz. “Believe me, we ate well, we worked hard and I loved every minute of it.”

“The historical society wants me to restore the ‘cross-over’ house,” said Liz. “I can understand why they don’t have very many of them. As a growing teenager, we had to repaint the woodwork every four years.”

“My father had a very keen sense of humor, but he had a sense of values too,” she noted. “He said ‘you never have to lie, cheat or steal, and you will be just fine.’ They asked him on his 50th wedding anniversary ‘what was his greatest accomplishment?’ He just smiled and said ‘none of them have been or are in jail.’”

Liz’s sister Alice (Al) had a distinguished career working for the Department of Agriculture in Maryland as a wildlife biologist. Al said “the farm was so well managed, he was close to perfect with Aldo Leopold’s land ethic. That is a property that needs to be kept whole.”

“Al taught me a lot,” Liz continued. “She knew that this property was diverse and well cared for.”

“I was already working when my father had a large farm equipment auction,” stated Liz. “He retired when he turned 65. Because of the care and attention he gave, much of the farm machinery was auctioned off for more than he paid for it. He could not get anyone to pay what he thought was a reasonable amount of money for the land, and that included his offspring.”

Liz’s career was in health care and she has a doctorate of education degree. She worked at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics in Madison.

“When I was in graduate school, I wrote Mom and Dad a letter that said ‘please don’t sell the farm. As soon as I am done studying, I will make provisions to buy it.’ But before that happened my dad’s health failed, and my mother did all she could to care for him. So they just decided to give it to all of us.” John passed away in 1980.

“I sat in on that session with the legal counsel,” said Liz. “Mom said ‘we just want to give it to them all.’ That left quite a picnic ahead. But if you have good intentions and good will, things work out.”

Liz related that all of the adult siblings that were out of school took a weekend on a rotating basis. They would go up and mow the lawn, get groceries, and do whatever their parents needed help with. “We did that from the late 70s until Mom finally moved away in 1988,” she said. “We maintained it

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*Conservation easement donor Liz Wywialowski (center with sign) celebrates the protection of her land in December with (from left): Bob Martini, Trisha Moore, Mitch Olson, B.J. McCafferty, John Huppert, Ron Eckstein, Dan Wisniewski, Bryan Pierce, Bill Dickens and Beth Tornes.*



*Scenic agricultural fields and woodlands under Liz Wywialowski's conservation agreement are visible from State Highway 101 and two town roads.*

pretty well, but then Mom passed away in 2001. We weren't sure quite what to do. I had already bought out one of my sisters. Mom had said, 'don't make a fuss over things. It is not important. What is important is your family.'"

The family had a Sheriff's sale to resolve the land ownership. "We had a room full of developers," said Liz. "Alice and I decided it should stay in the family; we paid \$192,000 for it."

Alice had health issues and passed away in 2010. Her ownership interest transferred to her daughter, Elizabeth. Liz eventually bought out Elizabeth's interest as well.

"I already knew what Alice and I wanted to do with it, it was just a matter of doing it. I talked with (attorney) John Priebe, and he said 'get ahold of the Northwoods Land Trust.' So I got in contact with Bryan. I know Al is saying, 'thank you,' because this could have been a bunch of houses."

Liz reflected, "I value the land not because of what I can do with it, but what it means to me. We changed the name from the Family Homestead to Northern Grace. This a chance to protect what I believe to be quite sacred ground."

Pierce noted that this scenic property is located along State Highway 101 and two town roads. About half of the property is in forest management,

while the other half remains as open space in agricultural fields, mostly cropped for hay.

According to Pierce, the flexibility of the conservation easement was important for the property. "Under the conservation agreement, the historic structures can be maintained and can also be re-purposed for an adaptive reuse," he said. "The barn in particular will be very expensive to keep up, so we wanted to leave options open for the landowner to help make that maintenance more cost effective."

Pierce commented that under donated conservation agreements, the lands remain privately-owned and managed, and they are still subject to property taxes. The conservation easement runs with the deed to the property in perpetuity. The land can still be sold or passed on to heirs, but whoever owns the land in the future must continue to abide by the conservation agreement. The land trust takes on the role of annually monitoring each property and legally defending the agreements if necessary.

Pierce noted that Wywialowski also made a cash contribution to the land stewardship fund to help cover the annual monitoring costs. NWLT's project work was also funded in part through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

**"We must keep the property whole for its conservation and ecological value."**

**- Alice**

Liz Wywialowski credited the completion of the conservation agreement on her family property to a number of people. Her sister Al "was key in saying that we must keep the property whole for its conservation and ecological value."

"Mom and Dad cleared all of that horrific forestry waste, including stumps more than four feet in diameter. They treasured the land very much, and I wanted to do the same thing and care for it – just be a good steward."

"For the next generation, I've chosen David Peter Wywialowski, the son of my eldest brother Peter," she continued. "David cares for a lot of homeless people in Chicago, and comes to the farm every spring and every fall. He is just a fine human being."

"I had a dear friend who was a birding mentor," Liz reflected. "She passed away in early 1990 from cancer, and left me an inheritance which enabled me to work toward owning the property."

"B.J. McCafferty has worked beside me at the farm for at least 15 years," commented Liz. "She loves the farm and the country, and is a wonderful nature photographer. She always says 'I am so glad I can be here.' She knows I love to walk, so she set up a labyrinth in the barn courtyard last year. I walked the labyrinth many times so I could just look at this beauty."

"I also can't thank (NWLT Executive Director) Bryan Pierce enough for his patience, expertise, support and perseverance," said Liz.

"God knows I have a lot of 'sibs' and friends, but these people have made this possible. Without any one of them, it wouldn't have happened."

## Stewardship Fund Facts in the northwoods

For the past 25 years, the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund has received strong bi-partisan support. Named after Warren Knowles, a Republican, and Gaylord Nelson, a Democrat, both of these Wisconsin Governors recognized the importance of acquiring public land for conservation and outdoor recreation.

In the northwoods, protection of such outstanding recreational resources as the Willow Flowage, Rainbow Flowage, and Turtle-Flambeau Flowage has been made possible through the Stewardship Fund.

More recently, large working forest conservation easements have been acquired through public-private partnerships, like the recent 68,000-acre Brule St. Croix Legacy Forest.

Those conservation easements protect forest industry jobs and also large sections of wild rivers, lakes and hunting lands. The Stewardship Fund grant leverages private funds along with federal Forest Legacy and Land and Water Conservation Fund support.

With over a million acres of former industrial forest lands being sold in Wisconsin in the last two decades, working forest easements are a way to ensure that we don't fragment those forests and lose the timber management benefits and public recreational access to those properties.

### YOU CAN HELP!

We strongly encourage our land trust members and supporters to contact their state legislators and Governor Walker to let them know that you support continued funding for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund.

For more information and key talking points, visit the Gathering Waters website at [www.gatheringwaters.org](http://www.gatheringwaters.org).

NWLT is an affiliate member of Gathering Waters - Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts.

## Interstate Falls protection threatened by Governors freeze of Stewardship Fund!

"On January 30th, the Northwoods Land Trust submitted our first grant application to the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program for a February 2nd grant deadline," stated Executive Director Bryan Pierce. "On February 3rd, Governor Walker proposed freezing the Stewardship Program's budget until 2028. His budget proposal threatens not only our project, but the protection of critical land, forest and water resources long into the future. Everyone who is interested in public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, birding or just enjoying natural scenic beauty should be deeply concerned about this proposal."

Interstate Falls is a popular 18-foot waterfall on the Montreal River which forms the border between Wisconsin and Michigan. "The parcel to be purchased includes about 38 acres of scenic mixed forest with eastern hemlock, white cedar, and a nice patch of Canada yew," said Pierce. "It also includes about 2,500 feet of natural shoreline frontage on the Montreal

River, a Class II trout stream." If the Stewardship Fund grant were awarded, the property would be permanently open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hunting, fishing and trapping.

According to Pierce, the Northwoods Land Trust's project seeks to leverage nearly \$100,000 of private donations with matching state funds to permanently protect the popular scenic attraction right off of the intersection of U.S. Highways 2 and 51 at Hurley. "The project has taken us over six years to get to the stage of having a signed offer to purchase from the private landowner. We hope to close on this acquisition in August," he said.

"For over 50 years, the landowner has avoided developing this parcel and has allowed local residents and tourists to walk a 0.3-mile hiking trail to view the falls," said Pierce. However the owner decided he needed to sell the property and listed it with a real estate agent.

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*The Northwoods Land Trust's protection of Interstate Falls near Hurley is now jeopardized by Governor Walker's proposed freeze on the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund program.*

## Stewardship Fund - *continued*

“We were able to negotiate a purchase price significantly lower than the asking price because the landowner realized that this property would remain a beautiful, scenic legacy for all future generations,” said Pierce.

“If we are successful in the acquisition, the Northwoods Land Trust has already offered to gift the property to the Town of Kimball, so there would be more local control of the site’s management.”

He also noted that the Interstate Falls property is a key piece for a larger Montreal Riverside Trail project jointly sponsored by the Town of Kimball, the City of Hurley and the City of Ironwood, Michigan.

“Most people understand that buying land isn’t like buying groceries,” said Pierce. “The majority of us use a mortgage to pay for our home over 30 years or more. The same goes for the Stewardship Fund bonds. The land is purchased at today’s prices, and the debt is paid over multiple years.”

Governor Walker cited decreasing the debt service on the Stewardship Fund as the major reason for freezing the program. Pierce pointed out that the total debt service on all of the

Stewardship Fund acquisitions amounts to about \$15 per Wisconsin resident per year.

Pierce added that the roughly \$89 million annual debt service supports a \$20 billion forest products industry, a \$10.8 billion tourism industry, and a \$12 billion outdoor recreation industry including a \$4 billion economic impact from hunting and fishing alone.

“The Stewardship Fund is our state’s primary investment in the long term sustainability of those industries,” he said.

Pierce noted that the Assembly Republican agenda for this session supports Stewardship funding, stating that, “Not only is protecting our environment the right thing to do, it is also vital to our economy. Tourism sustains roughly 185,000 jobs in Wisconsin, or 7.8% of total employment in our state. People flock to our state to enjoy our pristine waterways and hike our beautiful forests.”

“We certainly agree with that statement and hope that the bi-partisan spirit that has been a hallmark of this exceptional Wisconsin conservation program will be renewed and its budget restored,” said Pierce. 



*A snowshoe trail along the Montreal River leads to Interstate Falls, a popular scenic attraction in all seasons. Located just off of U.S. Hwy 2 and the intersection with U.S. Hwy. 51, the property is an important tourism and recreation resource for Iron County.*



## JOIN NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

*Leave a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods*

### 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.
- I am interested in contributing to NWLT in my will.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone (w): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone (h): \_\_\_\_\_  
 E mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable and mail to:*  
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# NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

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*Please remember the Northwoods Land Trust  
in your annual and planned giving.  
Give a gift that will last forever!*

*Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods*

## 2015 Volunteer Monitor Training set for Crawling Stone Woods

Crawling Stone Woods, NWLT's recent conservation land donation property, will be the site of the NWLT 2015 Conservation Easement Monitor Training session on **Saturday, May 9th**. The session will begin at **10:00 a.m.** as NWLT kicks off its monitoring season. Over 75 properties that NWLT either owns or holds a conservation easement on must be monitored on an annual basis.

The annual visits ensure that regular contact is kept with landowners and that the conservation agreements are being upheld. Monitoring also helps the organization meet national land trust accreditation standards.

We invite and welcome any new volunteers to the training who are interested in helping with these site visits.

The day will include a free picnic lunch at noon provided by NWLT. Following lunch, volunteers can receive enhanced individual instruction on the use of the GPS units to mark property corners and other key site features.

An alternate training date in case of inclement weather is scheduled for Saturday, May 23rd.

If you are interested in participating in the volunteer monitor training, please contact Trisha or Bryan at (715) 479-2490.



*The 2015 volunteer monitor training session will be held at NWLT's Crawling Stone Woods on Saturday, May 9th starting at 10:00 a.m.*

### Directions:

To get to the Crawling Stone Woods, turn north on Silver Beach Drive about one mile east of County Hwy. D on state Hwy. 70 south of Lac du Flambeau. Go 1/2 mile north to the T-intersection and turn east to the property. Parking is along the road.