

NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

HELP LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY FOR THE NORTHWOODS

You Are Invited to NWLT's Annual Meeting on June 6th in Lac du Flambeau (see page 7)

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

May 2014

The Lobermeier Family Creates a Wild Land Legacy

"When our families entered 250 acres of forest and wetland into a permanent conservation easement with the Northwoods Land Trust, it was the means to preserve the wildness of our special place," said Robert (Butch) Lobermeier. For Butch, that special place was Coolidge Lake, and he reflected that the first time he saw the lake and wetlands was as a 10-year old boy 52 years ago.

According to Butch, the land is now actively managed forest owned in partnership with his wife Mary, his son Jake and daughter-in-law Christi, and his brother Dave and wife Diane. Their desire to permanently protect the land in the Town of Fifield prompted the Lobermeier family to sign a perpetual conservation easement in December 2013.

The land protection agreement ensures their legacy will live on under the stewardship principles they began instituting after purchasing the first 40 acres in 1975. The conservation easement includes part of the 9-acre bog lake and protects some natural shoreline as well as extensive shoreland-wetlands adjacent to Coolidge Lake.

From 1882 to 1893, a town named Coolidge occupied part of the conserved property by the lake. According to Butch, the Atwell & Boyington Sawmill operated there and up to 500 people lived in the community. There was a post office, hotel, school, a couple of stores, and several large homes owned by the businessmen. After the railroad line connected to Ashland, the town was quickly abandoned. Only a few of the old foundations give notice that the town ever existed. Today it has reverted back to forest.

"My dad's family was woods-oriented," relates Butch. "My grandfather Jake was born in Fifield in 1888 and worked in various logging occupations most of his life. During the lean years of the early 1930's, he snowshoed a 60-mile trap line during the winter on a weekly circuit from the Gates Lake area to Swamsauger Lake southwest of Minocqua. My dad and uncles also worked in the woods during their early lives, and they all enjoyed hunting, fishing and the great outdoors."



Celebrating the protection of 250 acres of the Lobermeier family's territory in the town of Fifield, Price County, are (from left) Butch, Mary, Jake and Christi. Missing from the photo are Dave and Diane.

"As a kid, my grandfather taught me how to make trap sets," said Butch. "He also took me with him to the local taverns in the late afternoons where I loved listening to the old timers, many of whom were first generation settlers of the area, talk about their adventures in the wilds of northern Wisconsin. They were great story tellers. Whether fact, fiction or a comibination of both, their stories were always colorful and exciting to me. My relatives and those stories inspired my respect and passion for a wild landscape."

Raised in the north woods, Butch made a decision early in life that he would never live in a city. He recalled that his interest in the outdoors guided his search as he prepared for life after high school. "I remember the guidance counselor telling me there were no jobs in forestry and conservation when we discussed my career ideas. I must not have been as stubborn back then, because I took his advice and went into the pre-engineering program at UW-Eau Claire, switching to business management later. It was a bad fit and I knew it. In 1971 I volunteered my

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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 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



Wildlife Sanctuary - continued

draft and went into the Army to think it over for a couple years. I took a job with the Soo Line Railroad and was with the railroad for just shy of ten years. I completed my degree in Business Management during that time, which opened new doors to me.

Mary saw a job notice in the paper for a forestry technician for Price County and told Butch he needed to check it out. "While he liked the hard, physical work of the railroad, it was not the best cultural influence on his life," Mary noted. "The railroad work allowed me to stay pretty rough," admitted Butch. "I got the forestry job, and the change was remarkable. I was finally working with natural resources."

Butch started working for the Price County Forestry Department in 1984, a period when the county began aggressively managing their own forest lands. Employees were allowed



Coolidge Lake is a small, 9-acre bog lake. The Lobermeier property includes natural shoreline frontage and extensive shoreland-wetlands.

to be "jacks-of-all-trades," which made the work diverse. Staff managed and enhanced the timber, recreation and wildlife potential of the 90,000 acres of forest owned by Price County. "We were amazingly successful in our accomplishments, It was good work," said Butch.

"While working for the Forestry Department, I met Eugene Schmit, who was the grandfather of my future daughter-in-law Christi," said Butch. "Eugene was a Lincoln County board supervisor and the Chair of their Forestry Committee. He was inducted into the State Forestry Hall of Fame in 2003 in honor of his leadership and dedication to the County Forest Program."

After 16 years with the Forestry Department, Butch became Director of the Price County Land and Water Conservation Department. The Department was charged with protecting and improving water quality through education and implementing land use conservation practices. "This was the dream job for me," said Butch. "I was able to mitigate environmental damage by making real, physical changes to the landscape that improved and protected water quality and enhanced wildlife habitat. It was very rewarding." Butch worked in land and water conservation for 10 years, retiring as Director of the Bayfield County LWCD.

Mary grew up in Park Falls where she met Butch during their senior year of high school. "We went to Junior Prom together and dated during the summer, but went our separate ways during college," recalled Mary. "I went to UW-Stout, completed my psychology degree, and then worked in Madison believing the big city was where the fun was." With her 1967 Chevrolet Bel Air V8, she planned to (Continued next page)

Left: "To me the view across the Coolidge bog is just as beautiful in its own right. A bog with tamarack trees in October is gorgeous. Nothing is more beautiful than that." - Jake Lobermeier

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.

Wildlife Sanctuary - continued

leave the hinterlands to get her Masters Degree at Arizona State University. Fate had its way though when her brother Charlie, Butch's hunting buddy, suggested a visit with him. Her first thought was "this guy lives in a trailer in the middle of nowhere."

"My father died when I was 4 and I was raised in town, so I had no connection with outdoor activities. It was an epiphany for me to see this other side of life - woods, wild plants, streams, bogs, fishing, duck hunting, rabbit hunting. It grabbed my soul, and I took a second look at Butch! Once I was exposed to that, I couldn't give it up. And here we are 38 years later living in our log home where that old trailer once sat," laughed Mary.

Mary began her career with the USDA Forest Service the same day she found out she was pregnant with Jake. "That was a very happy day," she exclaimed. "When Jake was born, we started developing not just our lifestyle, but our legacy." Starting as a receptionist, Mary advanced to work on a land management planning team, became a budget analyst, and finally a Labor Management Relations Specialist before her retirement in May 2014. "Both Butch and I are very fortunate to have found and advanced our careers while being able to live in the place we love," Mary commented.

Butch bought their home place of 20 acres in 1975, already occupied by the trailer and a log garage. "It was definitely the brook trout jumping in the spring pond that closed the deal for me," says Butch. His dad used to fish trout there as a boy.

"The home place is part of six forties my dad and uncles logged off around 1952. After the logging was done, the owner offered the six forties to them for \$50 each," recalls Butch. "They could not fathom anyone paying \$50 for a logged-off forty, and they passed on it."

"I bought my first 40 in 1984 and an adjacent 40 in 1986 located about a mile south of our home for \$100 an acre," said Butch. "The timber had been high-graded, but there was still considerable timber value. The timber quality improves with each new cutting. Now there is more timber volume than when I bought it, and we have had several timber sales over the years."

"My dad's friend Baldy sold me his landlocked forty that was adjacent to my property in 1996," Butch related. "Baldy deer hunted there and occasionally hunted with our group, so I offered him the rights to keep hunting as long as he was able. Baldy has passed on, and we named a hill on that forty where he used to sit for deer 'Baldy's Knob.' We memorialized it by placing his old left-handed plow on his knob." Butch explained that during the WWII steel shortage, many pivot plows were cut in half to increase farm production. "Baldy said the poor folks got the left-handed plows." That left-handed plow also created the first food plots on the property.



"It is hard to explain, but you become connected to the land with your whole being." - Mary Lobermeier

Jake grew up in the Lobermeier "territory." Butch recalled that on the way back from vacations, Jake would wake up a few miles from home and say, "we are back in our territory." Mary remembered Jake repeating that refrain when he left for Michigan Technological University (MTU). "We were a few miles down Highway 70, and with his eyes misty, he said 'I'm leaving my territory.""

Jake's tie to the land was formed from the vantage of a baby backpack, then on his toddler legs, and finally as a boy exploring, camping, hunting, fishing, planting trees, picking rocks and berries, and helping with the timber harvesting. His pick of MTU echoed the same values. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan was wild enough for him to explore the outdoors while he pursued a degree in civil engineering through an Army ROTC scholarship."

Jake served two tours in Iraq, first as an Infantry Platoon Leader with a rank of Second Lieutenant and then as Company Executive Officer with a rank of Captain. Jake saved his combat pay to purchase 27 acres which are now part of the conservation easement. Christi related that, "Jake's friends still tease him mercilessly with a running joke that 'he couldn't go out to bars because he had to make a land payment."

The families jointly purchased 80 acres in 2002. They also bought 22 acres at a county land auction in 2006 to complete the 250-acre block of land in the easement.

"A lot of people, when they think of scenic vistas, look to mountains, sea shores, or lake front property," Jake noted. "They are chasing the ideal of wilderness beauty. I may be biased having grown up in northern Wisconsin, but to me the view across the Coolidge bog is just as beautiful in its own right. A bog with tamarack trees in October is absolutely gorgeous. Nothing is more beautiful than that."

When Jake was in Iraq, Mary took a photo of that golden-hued bog in the fall and sent it to him as a link to

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Wildlife Sanctuary - continued

home. "I got that picture and hung it on the wall by my bunk in Iraq," he remembered. "I didn't know what my career was going to be at that time, but looking at that picture I made the decision that my home was going to be there too. Even if there were other opportunities to go anywhere and do anything, I was choosing at that point to come back to northern Wisconsin."

When Jake left the Army, he was hired as a project engineer by Packaging Corporation of America in Tomahawk, where he still works. Christi's dad, also a project engineer at PCA, invited Jake over to sight in deer rifles for hunting season - a setup to meet Christi.

Christi also grew up hunting and fishing and enjoying the outdoors. "My grandfathers instilled the love of the outdoors in my parents, and they instilled that love in me and my siblings," she said. Christi has a degree in music therapy from Augsburg College in Minneapolis and has her own music therapy business based out of Rhinelander where she and Jake make their home.

Land ethic is something that runs deep in both the Lobermeier and Schmit families. Each family participates in actions that reduce environmental impacts like home gardening, small animal husbandry, naturalizing landscapes, forest stewardship, and habitat enhancement.

Jake remarked that, "I have no more lawn than I can cut with one tank of gas in my old push mower. The rest of the original lawn at my home has been seeded to native prairie species. Now that it is established, Christi and I walk in that meadow almost everyday during summer and fall to see what is new, what is blooming, what is living in there." Butch and Mary, and Dave and Diane, echo Jake's comments as they too have natural meadows at their homes.

"It is hard to explain," Mary related, "but you become connected to the land with your whole being. There is something about being wholly part of the land that is key to deciding to move forward with conservation and preservation." Reflecting on the land trust values, Mary stated that "what is important is the idea of how a seed takes root with a little beginning in one place and then grows outward. When we talk to people, we talk about conservation easements as a big part of protecting resources, the environment, and a way of life. There is so much development pressure now, even near us. We have to preserve those areas that are special to us."

Butch noted his family has been acquainted with the other conservation easement donors from the area for a long time through common interests, mainly through the Friends of the Jump River and the Flambeau River Watershed Association. "It seems folks that value the idea of wild places find each other. I find it very interesting also that nearly all of our friends, as we do, live on dead end roads," said Butch.



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- Butch Lobermeier

"We can't fix everything and we can't save it all, but we will do what we can," said Jake. "I am an only child and someday I will likely be responsible for the stewardship of this land. Stewardship of our land and water are common threads in our lives now, so the question was 'how do we secure that protection into the future?' Without the conservation easement, sooner or later someone with a fistful of cash would have bought the land, and everything we hoped to avoid would have happened." Christi added, "Ever since I've known Jake, he has talked about that land as his legacy: 'This is my legacy-this is what I can do."

"The land trust will defend the easement. That is comforting to know," Butch continued. "I have known Bryan (Pierce) for probably 20 years now. I know that the integrity of the NWLT matches the integrity of the folks making the conservation easement donations. All the folks involved, NWLT and donors alike, are good people with a passion for protecting a little bit of a rapidly-vanishing resource - wild places."

"We have been talking about this concept for 20 years. It was just a matter of how we were going to do it. Now we have the answer," said Jake.

"We have been blessed to have been able to live here, to have had the opportunity to become stewards of this land, and to be able to make a small difference through its donation into conservancy," Butch added. "We have enjoyed our property year-round as long as we have owned it. Our family hunts, fishes, hikes, snowshoes, picks berries and works on that land. It is good to know that a hundred years from now, NWLT will ensure other families will have the same opportunity to enjoy this natural environment as we have."

"That is how you plant the seeds for future generations," Jake added. "I am absolutely grateful beyond all measure to have had that childhood experience growing up."

Crawling Stone Woods - A Conservation Land Donation (Part 1)

On December 31st of 2013, the Northwoods Land Trust received a gift for all future generations. Richard (Dick) Galaty and George and Carol Schneider donated 42.4 acres of woodlands and wetlands near Crawling Stone Lake in the Town of Lac du Flambeau in Vilas County. According to Dick, Crawling Stone Woods has been part of the backyard playground for five generations of the extended Rice, Galaty and Schneider families.

Dick commented that the property was originally deeded to a local member of the Lac du Flambeau tribe (E Kwa aba o I kwe #1) on June 30, 1899 by a land grant from U.S. President William McKinley. According to Dick, "it gives you an indication of the winters, but she only survived on the land for about one year and died that winter." The land went to another male tribal member, who survived for two winters before being passed on to that man's wife. She sold two Government Lots of about 80 acres plus Crawling Stone Lake shoreline to a builder/developer in 1919, who subdivided the smaller lake lots.

Charles L. Rice served as the plant manager of the Hawthorne Works facility for Western Electric in Cicero, Illinois, a major manufacturer of telephone equipment. He also helped start Western Electric's plant in London. Dick noted that the family just made it out of London on the last boat before the naval blockade started in World War I.

When Charles L. Rice's doctor suggested he find a place to get away from the stress of his job, he headed north. According to Diane Galaty, the family from La-Grange, Illinois, first went to Squaw Lake in the early 1900's. In 1921, Charles purchased 230 feet of frontage on the south shore of Big Crawling Stone Lake, where he had a small cabin built and furnished for \$5000. His wife, Adelaide Rice, and her five children spent summers at the lake. The children included four teenage daughters named Adelaide, Carolyn, Barbara and Winifred, and a son named Les.

Dick remembered visiting his grandparents at the lake cabin, and the dual outhouses named Mandy (for the girls) and Long John (for the boys). "We didn't have any indoor plumbing, except for a hand pump in the sink." Diane noted family highlights of watching Pow Wows at Bear Creek Sacred Grounds and catching "stringers" of walleye for breakfast.

Charles and Adelaide passed away in the 1950s, and the property eventually passed to Winifred (Rice) Galaty of Oak Park, Illinois, said Diane. Winifred had three sons, Walter and Bill (both now deceased), Dick and a daughter Carol. Those kids also spent their summers at the lake with numerous cousins, swimming, playing tennis and roughhousing. Summer highlights also included watermelon seed spitting contests and waking up to the whinnying of wild Indian horses grazing outside the cabin.



Dick, Debby and Diane Galaty hike a trail through the Crawling Stone Woods donated by the extended family.

"Dad was Vice-President of Chicago Title & Trust Co.," said Dick. He also co-authored Modern Real Estate Principles still used today to train real estate brokers. Dick recalled that the rest of the family, and the neighboring families on Crawling Stone Lake, all came up for the whole summer. "We never missed a summer," said Dick.

"We came up to the northwoods all summer, and so did everybody along the lakeshore," Dick commented. "We came up the day school was out and went back the day after Labor Day. At least in our case, that was primarily because of the polio epidemic. Everybody wanted to get out of the cities and get up to where it was safer because of polio. The mothers would come up with the kids. All the fathers would come up on the train on Friday nights from Chicago, and then get back on the sleeper on Sunday night and wake up the next morning in downtown Chicago and go to the office. That was done every weekend. My Mother actually took care of the four of us and also two of my cousins, because one of them had polio."

Over the years, the original cabin was enlarged and modernized. There were also two sleeper cabins which housed 4-5 people. The sleeper cabins were mostly



screens with drop canvas in the event of rain. Eventually the family purchased the cabin next door, thereby adding another 250 feet of frontage along the lake. They also purchased the 42.4-acre backland parcel in 1965.

Among Dick's earliest recollections were spending time among the six cabins on the lake with neighbor kids. "Every day we were up and down the lakefront along the original dirt road, which ran in front of the cabins. Every night we'd be at somebody else's cabin. We just played together all summer with a whole set of friends we had up at the cabin. We'd go home after Labor Day and see each other the next year."

"When the kids came over to our house, my Mother put together a scavenger hunt," said Dick. "We'd walk down to the two resorts to see if they had a wooden match, straight pin or red button, or whatever we were looking for in the scavenger hunt. There were all sorts of little activities like that. We also had a tennis court. We'd all play tennis and then go down and jump in the lake. An open space behind the cabins served as a ball diamond. That is all grown up with trees now."

"In the early 1950s we had an ice house," he continued. "It was always fun to go back and get the ice. The Indians would cut ice off the lake in the winter and put it in a shed dug down into the ground. We still have the tongs used to carry the ice every couple of days in to a wooden ice box."

"When I was a real young kid, we had the oil cloth table cloths," Dick related. "My Grandmother, who was very straight laced, was sitting at the end of the table. My Granddad was kind of a kick-back, have-fun guy. He poured his milk down on his end of the table, then everybody spilled it all the way down into my Grandmother's lap. We thought that was the funniest thing to do. My poor Grandmother had milk in her lap, but she laughed too."

Dick recalled that the most fun game in the water was playing volleyball over the dock. "You couldn't spike the ball unless you hit the dock and bounced it, but all ages would play. We would play dock volleyball for most of an afternoon. We had a ball because there was no swimmer's itch at the time."

"Granddad loved to go muskie fishing," remembered Dick. The family shared pictures of Charles with a big muskie, and Winifred with a stringer of walleyes. "My Mother always believed that you don't waste anything. She didn't care how many fish we caught, or if the fish was 4 inches or a foot long, if we caught fish and didn't throw them back, we had to clean them and eat them."



Shoreland-wetland habitats of leatherleaf and sphagnum bog extend into the new conservation area from Crawling Stone Lake and "Lost Lake."

"My brother Bill and I used to fish all the time," said Dick. "Up until he passed away, we'd go out at dusk to row and troll for walleyes, and that is when we'd just talk to each other. We got to really unload and talk about issues and keep in touch with each other. We'd do that almost every evening." Debby also noted that her favorite thing to do was rocking on the porch. "Everything rocked, including the porch!"

The families have also seen changes on the lake. "We didn't have any loons until the 1970s," said Dick. "I remember my brother Bill, Diane and I were in Little Crawling Stone and we saw this strange looking duck. We started motoring over to see what it was, and somebody came yelling at us to get away from that loon. We didn't have any idea what a loon was. Bill became a loon ranger. We also never saw any eagles growing up either."

Dick and Debby Galaty and Bill's wife Diane continue to live in the original two cabins. Sister Carol Schneider built a new home with her husband George on the lakeshore in 2002. The cabins were always overflowing with people.

Dick and Debby have never lived in the Midwest. Continuing the tradition however, Debby brought their kids up all summer for five or six summers when they lived in California. "Even when living on the East Coast, West Coast and California, we never missed a summer up there. It is my sense of place," reflected Dick. "And now for our kids, it has also become their sense of place."

NOTE: Part 2 of the Crawling Stone Woods conservation land donation story will continue in the next NWLT newsletter.

Credit: portions of this story were written by Diane Galaty for publication in the Crawling Stone Lakes Association newsletter.

NWLT Annual Meeting to dedicate the Crawling Stone Woods

The Northwoods Land Trust's 13th Annual Meeting will be held this year at the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Natural Resources Center in the town of Lac du Flambeau in Vilas County on Friday, June 6th. All NWLT members and any others interested in the land trust are invited to participate.

The event will start at noon with a free light lunch with the NWLT Board of Directors. At 1:00 p.m., the NWLT Annual Meeting will be conducted including a "virtual tour" of the land trust's recent projects and activities.

The new Crawling Stone Woods will be dedicated following the meeting. Participants will carpool from the Natural Resources Center to the newly-conserved property. Following a brief dedication ceremony, NWLT staff and board members will conduct a walking tour of the 42.4acre property. The land was donated by the Richard Galaty and George and Carol Schneider families.

The tour will include a trail walk with stops along the way to discuss long-term management plans for this forested and wetland property. The land includes shoreland-wetlands and possible lake bed of nearby Crawling Stone Lake. Birds and other wildlife should be in abundance, so participants may want to bring binoculars along on the hike. Spring wildflowers should also be blooming.

All hikers should dress for the weather and also come prepared for mosquitoes and ticks at this time of year.

To get to the meeting, take State Hwy. 47 about one mile northwest of the Lake of the Torches Casino and downtown Lac du Flambeau. The Natural Resources Center is on the south side of Hwy. 47.

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.



The Northwoods Land Trust's first outright conservation land donation in Vilas County will be the site of a public field tour and dedication as part of the 13th Annual Meeting on Friday, June 6th.

Please RSVP by Tuesday, June 3rd so we can plan for the lunch. Email nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org or call (715) 479-2490.



JOIN THE NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

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	☐ Conservator	\$250	landowner's guide.
City:	☐ Steward	\$500	•
•	Land Legacy	\$1000	I am interested
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Please remember NWLT in your annual and planned giving. Give a gift that will last forever!

LEAP Project updates Website

Thanks to a Land Trust Excellence & Advancement Program (LEAP) matching grant of \$1,000 from the national Land Trust Alliance and Gathering Waters Conservancy, the Northwoods Land Trust has been able to update and upgrade our website.

Our old website, created in 2003, was based on Microsoft's Frontpage software. That software is no longer supported by Microsoft, necessitating a major conversion. We took the opportunity to completely overhaul the website - including adding the ability for supporters to make contributions on-line.

Also included on the site is a new map and page specifically for our **Conservation Buyer/Seller Program**. That program lists properties for sale in the northwoods where the landowners would prefer to sell their lands to conservation-minded families who would be willing to consider voluntary protection options. We will no longer be listing properties in our newsletter, so keep checking for updated listings if you are interested in browsing for properties that are currently available.

Consultant Dan McKissack of DanOMac Design in Eagle River provided extensive design assistance giving a whole new look to the website. We appreciate Dan's clean new look for the site. Dan also provided training for NWLT staff on WordPress, the new software system.

Besides revamping the main website, Dan also created an adjunct site designed to be used by the NWLT Board to access meeting materials, policies, financial statements and other information for their quarterly meetings.

The website upgrade is now "live." We invite you to browse it and give us any suggestions or comments! Check it out at www.northwoodslandtrust.org.

We greatly appreciate the LEAP grant support from the Land Trust Alliance and Gathering Waters Conservancy!



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.