



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Wallmann-Holtzer Nature Preserve: A Legacy Bequest on Big Portage Lake



Attorney Jack LaChance (center) holds a photo of conservation land donor Sybil Holtzer with Beryl (Sybil's sister) and Geoffrey Bennewith on a memorial pontoon boat cruise of Big Portage Lake in Vilas County.

In 2017, the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) was gifted an 8.7-acre conservation area on Big Portage Lake in Vilas County. The donation was a bequest from the estate of Sybil and Howard Holtzer of Philadelphia, PA.

"We greatly appreciate the foresight and generous contribution of the Holtzer family through their wills to make sure this favorite piece of the northwoods will be conserved in perpetuity for the enjoyment of all future generations," stated NWLT Executive Director Bryan Pierce.

According to Pierce, the Wallmann-Holtzer Nature Preserve was previously protected in 2007 with a perpetual land protection agreement, or conservation easement, granted by the Holtzer family. However, the property remained private land until the bequest.

Because NWLT continues to hold the conservation easement and annually monitors the property, the land trust transferred ownership of the parcel in December to the Big Portage Lake Riparian Owners Association.

The nature preserve is located on the north shore of Big Portage Lake and includes about 750 feet of natural shoreline. The Holtzer parcel is one of the few remaining large segments of undeveloped natural shoreline on Big Portage Lake. The land also features a beach ridge, uplands of northern hardwoods with large red pines and white pines, as well as swamp lowlands.

In 2002 this stretch of shoreline was identified in a study of Big Portage Lake by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as one of the lake's
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MISSION:

The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) 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.

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Wallmann-Holtzer Nature Preserve Bequest - *continued*

most “sensitive areas” due to its habitat for wildlife, terrestrial vegetation, water quality protection and natural scenic beauty.

Osprey, bald eagles, herons and loons are among the birds sighted there. An intermittent stream connecting Big Portage Lake with Pickerel Creek to the north runs through the property during high water levels.

The property is only accessible from the lake and will primarily serve to protect the valuable fish and wildlife habitat. The nature preserve will, however, be open to the public for wildlife watching, hiking, snowshoeing and fishing.

The Wallmann-Holtzer Nature Preserve was a special project for Sybil W. Holtzer. In an interview conducted by then-NWLT board member Willa Schmidt in 2007, Sybil indicated that she first came to the northwoods in the 1930s on a Wallman family trip around Lake Michigan from Chicago. When the family stopped to visit an uncle on Duck Lake in upper Michigan, he took them south into Wisconsin to Big Portage Lake in the town of Land O’ Lakes, a better swimming lake for a small child. While there, her father decided to purchase land on the lake. Thereafter, Sybil spent her summers at their lake cottage in Vilas County.

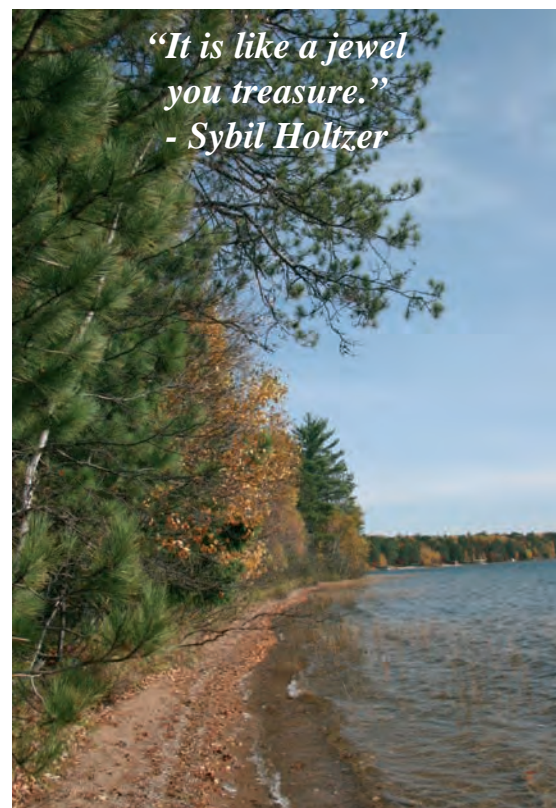
She was an only child until the age of six, when her sister Beryl was born. Sybil stated that the woods became their playmates and playground, something she credited as the inspiration for her later life’s work as a research biologist. She loved traipsing about studying the animals and insects and plants. “You can always find something new,” she pointed out. When asked about her favorites, she declared, “No favorites. I love it all!”

Sybil’s studies led her to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where she and her husband, Professor Howard Holtzer, spent many years working in the field of cell biology. Yet she always remained devoted to Wisconsin’s northwoods.

In a visit to the area during the 1960s she decided to purchase her own piece of land on Big Portage Lake for preservation. Her primary purpose was keeping the land as it is. “It’s like a jewel you treasure,” stated Sybil. “I just wanted it for the woods,” she said. She enjoyed sitting on the shore, knowing the only changes that happen will be natural ones.

When Sybil heard about the Northwoods Land Trust and its role in helping private landowners conserve their land, she realized she’d found a way to carry her wishes into the future.

Beryl and her husband, Geoffrey Bennewith, live on the island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Last summer they joined Pierce and Attorney John LaChance from Land O’ Lakes, who represented the family’s estate, on a memorial pontoon boat cruise around Big Portage Lake.



A new sign dedicating the property in memory of Sybil and Howard Holtzer and their daughter, Celia, was installed in 2018 on this Big Portage Lake property.

Beryl reflected on the times she, Sybil and their friends hiked and swam around the lake. She also commented on how much the lake has changed over the years as it has become developed and how important the preserved shoreline will be. Spotting a fawn hiding along the shoreline within the nature preserve was a special highlight for the memorial.

The Holtzer conservation easement, completed with NWLT in December 2007, calls for no subdivision, no buildings or roads, and no direct access except by boat. There may be footpaths, but of no more than six feet in width. The intent is to leave the property as an undisturbed nature preserve with minimal human disturbance.

“We are pleased to be able to continue to conserve the property in partnership with the Big Portage Lake Riparian Owners Association,” commented Pierce. “Having two nonprofit conservation organizations overseeing the nature preserve will provide double protection for this unique site.”🌲

135 Acres Acquired for Minocqua Winter Park

After one of the most complex transactions by the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) to date, we are now able to celebrate the acquisition of 135 acres of land critical to the sustainability of Minocqua Winter Park.

It was a year-long process, but NWLT was successful in completing the outright purchase of the 135-acre tract from Natalie Tyler and Ken Tyler, on behalf of the Tyler Family Trust, for addition to Minocqua Winter Park.

In early 2017, Dr. David Kozeluh contacted NWLT on behalf of the board of directors of the Minocqua Winter Park Trail Fund, a 501(c)(3) non profit organization supporting and managing Minocqua Winter Park. They were concerned that the Tyler family had expressed a need to divest of the property which for many years has been an important hub in the Minocqua Winter Park cross-country ski trail system.

The Minocqua Winter Park trail system is recognized as one of the



Ken Aldridge of MWP Preservation LLC celebrated the granting of a conservation easement protecting 3,195 acres in 2011.

premier cross-country ski trails in the Midwest, and is especially known for its exceptional grooming for classic and skate skiing. Winter Park maintains and grooms over 105 kilometers of cross-country ski and snowshoe trails within that system.

Approximately 14,000 cross-country skiers and others utilize the trail system each year. Winter Park also hosts several significant public ski races and school student ski races annually, and serves as the training grounds for the Lakeland High School and Junior High School cross-country ski teams.

A total of 3,195 acres along the north boundary of the new acquisition were already protected with a perpetual conservation easement donated to NWLT in 2011 by Kenneth and Carolyn Aldridge of MWP Preservation LLC. To date this is the largest conservation easement donation to a land trust in Wisconsin.

The conservation easement protects the core of about 43 kilometers of Minocqua Winter Park's cross-country ski and snowshoe trails. The new Tyler tract however links the core trail system with other extensive, scenic trail loops that are not

permanently protected. Immediately north of the Tyler tract boundary is a shelter building and fire ring for use as a warming stop along the Winter Park trail system.

The Tyler property features almost the entire Steeple Chase loop—a 1.2 km moderate difficulty trail. The easier 1 km Mellow Meadow loop is also included entirely within the property. Also located within the property is that part of X-C Express (about 1 km) which connects the rest of the main trail system to the north with several additional trail loops on other private lands to the south. These include the striding only trails of Nekoosa (2 km), and two loops of Wolf Tracks (10 km).

The Mellow Meadow loop also provides a critical connection with the 1.5 km Island Hop trail. Island Hop runs across an adjacent Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) property, which in turn connects with the 3.7 km C&D Express and 9 km Lake Marie trails.



The Minocqua Winter Park trail system features over 105 kilometers of exceptionally well groomed trails.



A shelter building and fire ring for use as a warming stop for skiers is located just north of the Tyler tract acquisition.

(Continued on page 4)

Minocqua Winter Park - *continued*

Access to all of these trails was jeopardized by the potential sale of the property to another private party, as the cross-county ski trail agreements are maintained on an annual basis with the private landowners.

Most of the funding for the acquisition came from a grant from Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. The offer to purchase accepted by the Tyler family included a contingency for receipt of a DNR grant. Thanks to Ed Marshall, the value of his 2016 donation of the 96-acre Marshall Wildlife Conservation Area in Lac du Flambeau was able to be leveraged as a "grant match." Appraisals were commissioned for both the Marshall property and the Tyler property and reviewed by DNR staff.



14,000 cross-country skiers and snowshoers visit the Minocqua Winter Park trail system each year.

The grant application was prepared and submitted by NWLT. Letters of support for this important tourism property were provided by both the Town Board of Minocqua and also the Minocqua-Arbor Vitae-Woodruff Area Chamber of Commerce. Proposed management plans were also approved by the NWLT and Minocqua Winter Park boards, as well as by DNR.

The grant proposal was approved by DNR administration, but also had to be reviewed by Wisconsin's Joint Committee on Finance before the final grant contract could be awarded. Thankfully, the Tyler family continued to support the project throughout the grant approval process, including extending the original offer to purchase. NWLT closed on the property on March 20th, 2018.

At the closing, DNR grant and management contracts were also signed and recorded providing for permanent conservation of both the Marshall Wildlife Conservation Area and the Tyler tract. In a second deed that same day, the NWLT transferred ownership of the Tyler tract to the Minocqua Winter Park Trail Fund!

The new acquisition property of woodlands and wetlands is accessible from Manhardt Road. The site includes large red pines and white pines, and also young aspen habitats. These upland habitats are enrolled in the state's Managed Forest Law program. The property will continue to be managed sustainably for forest products and for wildlife habitat over the long term.

The remaining roughly eight acres of habitat is sphagnum bog, including part of the larger Yukon Swamp which feeds the headwaters of Yukon Creek. Yukon Creek is a tributary to the Squirrel River. The entire length of the Squirrel River was rated fifth highest of 79 river and stream segments identified in Oneida County by the DNR's Northern Rivers Initiative in 1997 as warranting enhanced protection. The Squirrel River is also listed by the DNR as an "Outstanding Resource Water" for the purpose of protection from point source water discharges.

Just one mile to the east and south of the Tyler acquisition is an extensive tract of over 4,000 acres of other private industrial forest lands previously protected with a conservation easement purchased by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. These conservation easement-protected lands adjoin the state-owned Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area, which includes over 27,000 total acres above and below the water.

In addition to skiing, outdoor recreational uses will include birdwatching and other wildlife observation, hiking, snowshoeing, skijoring (skiing with dogs), hunting and trapping. Mountain biking, winter fat tire biking and other silent sports may also be permitted on the trail system.

There are no open water features on the property for fishing or other water access. Scientific studies and educational uses would also be permitted. Motorized vehicles (including ATVs and snowmobiles) will be prohibited within the property except when needed for trail system, forest and other property management purposes.

With a lot of effort and persistence, Ed Marshall's willingness to permit his donation property to serve as a grant match, and some additional fundraising by the Minocqua Winter Park Trail Fund, this acquisition project is now a reality.

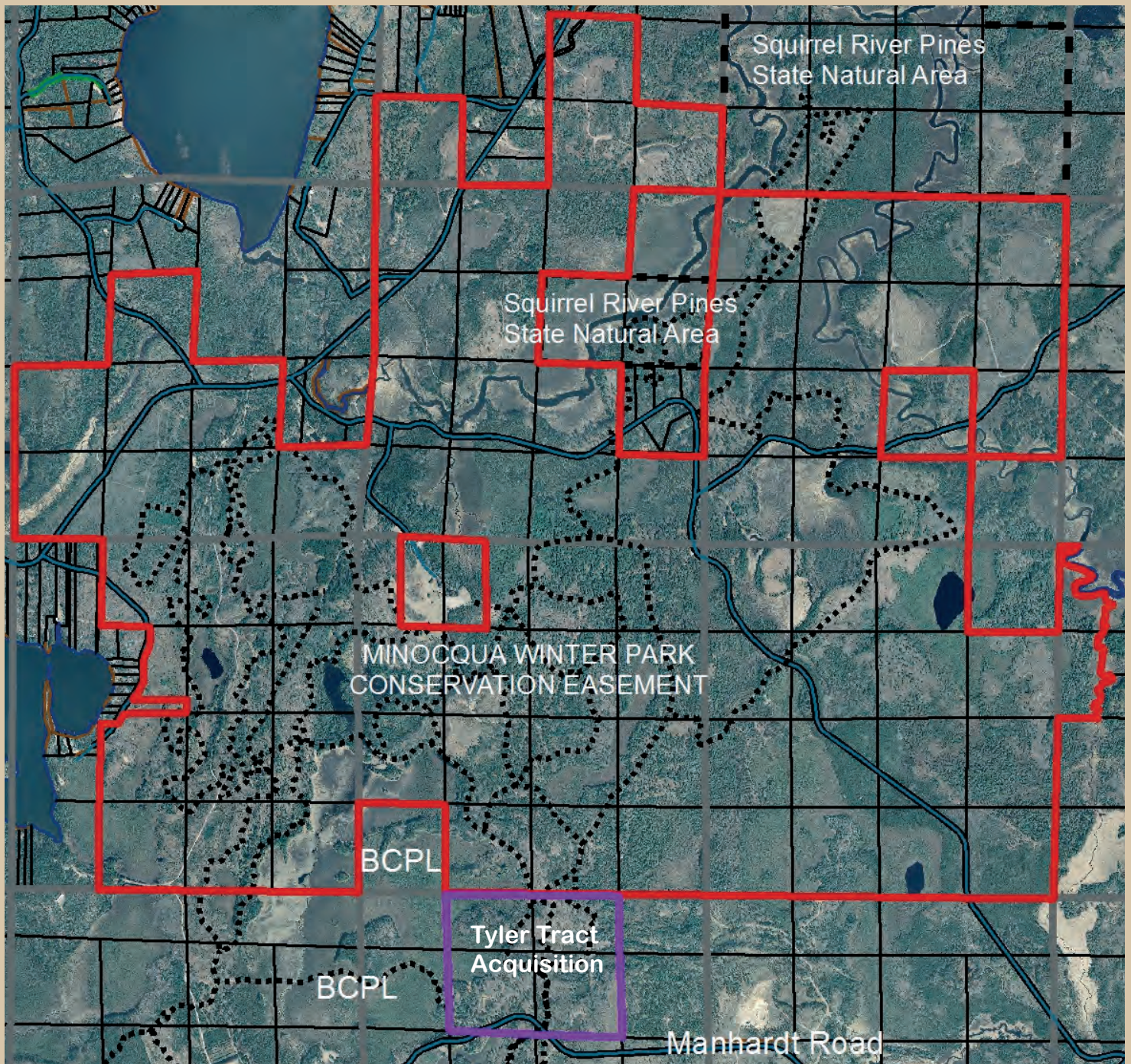
If you are skiing on the trails this winter, look for the Tyler tract and Stewardship Fund signs recognizing this extensive group effort to protect in perpetuity another critical piece of Minocqua Winter Park.



A complex transaction resulted in the permanent protection of 135 acres of an important hub for the Minocqua Winter Park cross-country ski trails.



Map of Minocqua Winter Park Conservation Easement & 135-acre Acquisition



This drawing is not a survey, and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only.

Parcel lines are approximate only.
GIS data source: Oneida County
Land Records Department.

Minocqua Winter Park - Tyler Tract Acquisition

Town of Minocqua, Oneida County
Northwoods Land Trust, Inc.

Digital Orthophoto Map
T38N - R5E - Section 5

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NWLT Launches Iron County Lake Protection Project


Thanks to a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Lake Protection program project, owners of large stretches of natural shorelines on lakes and flowages in Iron County are now being encouraged to consider lasting, voluntary protection of their lake properties.

The lake project is based on highly-successful private lake shoreland protection projects conducted by NWLT over the last ten years in Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence and Iron counties.

The grant project utilizes NWLT's geographic information system (GIS) computer technology to identify remaining privately-owned lake parcels with a minimum of 500 feet of natural shoreline frontage. Tax parcel maps and other data are acquired from the Iron County Land Information Office. Digital parcel maps and aerial photos are overlaid where needed to determine the extent of natural versus developed frontage.

The parcels are then linked with the Iron County tax roll database to generate a mailing list of these landowners. Copies of NWLT's Landowner's Conservation Guide are then mailed to each of these identified lake property owners, hopefully inspiring some landowners to contact NWLT and take the steps needed to protect their land.

The lake protection project runs through the end of 2019. NWLT provides on-site technical assistance to any of those lake property owners interested in permanently protecting their land along these natural shorelines.

The NWLT's most notable conservation effort in Iron County to date was the acquisition of the Interstate Falls property in the Town of Kimball just north of Hurley. This 38.7-acre property was then gifted by NWLT to the Town to serve as an important scenic attraction for the community. For more information on the Iron County lakes project, contact the NWLT office at (715) 479-2490. 



Top: Attendees of the NWLT event on Springstead Lake as a part of the 2018 Land Trust Days. Bottom: Joe and Jennifer Heitz on the Gile Flowage.

Land Trust Days: Fun in Iron County

This year, Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts, introduced "Land Trust Days" as a way for people to discover (or rediscover) protected places within their communities in a friendly, group setting.

Gathering Waters spearheaded the initiative by promoting over 30 events in nearly seven weeks in August and September, hosted by land trusts on or around protected lands and waters.

The Northwoods Land Trust held three events as a part of Land Trust Days, all in Iron County. The first event was a paddle and pontoon trip on Springstead Lake east of Park Falls. The tour was hosted by conservation easement donor Meta Reigel Brandt, naturalist/author John Bates and retired DNR wildlife biologist Ron Eckstein. All three are NWLT board members.

The second event was a canoe and kayak trip on the Gile Flowage just southwest of Hurley. This tour was hosted by Friends of Gile Flowage President Cathy Techtmann, also on the NWLT board of directors.

The third event was a hike to the Potato River in northwest Iron County. The hike was led by botanists and conservation easement donors Jim and Joy Perry on their conserved property.

The events provided opportunities to share historical, geological and ecological facts and stories as the participants explored natural shorelines and protected conservation areas.

Mike Carlson, Executive Director of Gathering Waters, attended the Springstead Lake paddle. As Mike noted, "It was great to see many of you at the NWLT paddle on Springstead Lake, and I appreciated having the opportunity to say a few words there about our public policy priorities...while standing up in a canoe!"

To keep up with current events offered by NWLT, be sure to follow us on Facebook!



Remembering Sue Hausermann-Dugan

With great sadness, the Northwoods Land Trust learned of the passing of Sue Hausermann-Dugan, MD. Just 72 years old, Sue passed away on July 15th after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease.

Sue and her husband, Patrick Dugan, generously donated the Dugan Squash Lake Nature Preserve to the Northwoods Land Trust in December of 2009. Located in Oneida County, west of Rhinelander, the Nature Preserve includes just 5.88 surveyed acres - but it includes 4,088 feet of shoreline due to a long, steep-sided esker peninsula that creates its own small bay on Squash Lake. A gift from the last glacier, this esker features outstanding fish and amphibian habitat, including walleye spawning areas on the north side and bass/panfish spawning beds on the south side.

Sue grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, and received her undergraduate degree in biology and pre-medicine, then continued on when she was accepted early to medical school at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. She went into the military and did her internship at a hospital in Tacoma, Washington, and also worked in general medical practice in Germany for two years.

"Life is finite. The best thing we can do for our children and our grandchildren is to leave the world a little bit less encumbered than when we got here, and to leave them wild space so they can appreciate the beauty of nature..."
- Sue Hausermann-Dugan

Sue took a residency in radiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for four years. She then accepted a position in the Fox River Valley as a radiologist where she worked for 20 years. "I thought I retired after 20 years... but I was then recruited to be a full-time radiologist [at St. Mary's Hospital], so we moved our home from Neenah to Rhinelander in 1999."

As Sue indicated during an interview shortly after the land donation, the property was her gift to Pat and future generations: "Life is finite. The best thing we can do for our children and our grandchildren is to leave the world a little bit less encumbered than when we got here, and to leave them wild space so they can appreciate the beauty of nature - some place that isn't developed and overgrown with people and houses and shopping malls. It preserves part of that special connection we have for the land. I wouldn't want our children and grandchildren to have to live in a world without this ability to connect with nature."



Sue and Pat Dugan left a truly lasting legacy through their donation of the Dugan Squash Lake Nature Preserve.



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

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 or other planned giving.

Name(s): _____
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Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Van Vliet Lake Conservation Area Dedicated

The Van Vliet Lake Conservation Area was dedicated on June 22nd. At the dedication, Paulette Cary unveiled the new sign at the Van Vliet Lake parcel she donated to NWLT last December in memory of her husband, Jerry.

Paulette led us to their old cabin and garage sites (now removed), and pointed out the pine trees they planted on the property years ago. The group then took a hike led by John Bates, noted naturalist/author (and NWLT Board member), through the Van Vliet Hemlocks State Natural Area located directly across the road from the property.

The property includes several hundred feet of natural shoreline, including a scenic peninsula extending into Van Vliet Lake, and is now open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, fishing and wildlife watching under NWLT's ownership.

A grant from the Caerus Foundation and a gift through an IRA distribution from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous provided funding for long-term land stewardship expenses.

The dedication followed the NWLT 2018 Annual meeting, where we had a wonderful turnout of 50 people at the Presque Isle Community Center in Vilas County.

The event was held jointly with the Last Wilderness Conservation Association. A light lunch offered the opportunity to meet the board members and staff of both land trust organizations, and speak with many land trust members and others who attended to learn more about our conservation work.

DIRECTIONS: To get to the Van Vliet Lake Conservation Area, from Presque Isle, go 1/4 mile east on County B, turn south and follow Crab Lake Road south and west about 4.5 miles. Turn north on West Van Vliet Road and follow it about 1.5 miles to Fire # 7266.



NWLT Board and staff helped Paulette Cary (next to the sign right) celebrate the dedication of the Van Vliet Lake Conservation Area.