



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Yawkey Forest Reserve Established, Leaving an Historic Family Legacy



View of the northeast bay of Lake Katherine in Hazelhurst, Oneida County.
About 4.4 miles of natural shoreline are now permanently protected on scenic Lake Katherine.

On October 31, 2018, the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) received a remarkable gift of 431 acres of land on scenic Lake Katherine in the town of Hazelhurst in Oneida County. The conservation land was donated by the historic Yawkey Lumber Company.

"The new Yawkey Forest Reserve includes woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat, and protects about 4.4 miles of natural shoreline on beautiful Lake Katherine. This is truly an exceptional gift for all future generations on a highly scenic, clear water lake in northern Wisconsin," said NWLT Executive Director Bryan Pierce.

According to Yawkey Lumber Company President Robert S. Hagge, Jr., the property has been under the same ownership for the last 125 years. These lands have been held through the decades and the current company shareholders are all great-grandchildren of Cyrus C. Yawkey.

"Recognizing the importance of these properties to the area and family history, the current shareholders wanted to preserve the remaining Yawkey lands with the help of the Northwoods Land Trust. We have been thinking about what to do with this property for some time," said Hagge. "We wanted to carry on the tradition our great-grandfather had in trying to keep the scenic beauty of Lake Katherine."

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-Rob Hagge

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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.

NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

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Yawkey Forest Reserve- *continued from page 1*

The NWLT staff and the Yawkey family members spent nearly four years working out the details of the land donation. The family decided to gift 23 separate parcels in one transaction, allowing for a relatively simple signing of the warranty deed in October. The total appraised value of the property was over \$12 million at the time of the donation, resulting in one of the most valuable and sizable outright gifts of conservation land to a land trust in Wisconsin.

A Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article written by NWLT conservation easement donor Don Behm and published on November 29th noted that “generations of northbound families have driven over the southern end of the lake on state Highway 51 on the way to Minocqua and other up north destinations.” The lake’s South Bay and Tigertail Point can be seen from the Highway 51 bridge south of Hazelhurst. The natural scenic beauty of the lake shore and forest will continue to be enjoyed by travelers on U.S. Highway 51 as they cross the bridge over Lake Katherine.

The conserved property includes three small, undeveloped islands ranging from approximately a half-acre to two acres in size. These islands provide outstanding scenic beauty as well as critical wildlife habitat, so will continue to be closed to public access to protect alternate loon nesting sites. A few other particularly sensitive areas of the property will also remain closed to public use and will be clearly marked with signs.

The remaining majority of the property will be open to non-motorized public outdoor recreation including hiking, birding, snowshoeing, hunting and fishing. The Bearskin State Recreational Trail, used for hiking, bicycling and snowmobiling, runs along the west boundary of the property. The trail, which features a scenic view of the southwest bay of Lake Katherine, is the former Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul rail line that once served the lumber company’s saw and planing mills. Other points of public access for boating include the Hazelhurst town beach and boat landing on the west shore of the lake off Oneida Street (site of the lumber company’s former saw mill) and a canoe and kayak access site located northwest of the Highway 51 bridge.

Prior to the transfer, the family shareholders enrolled the forestland into the state’s Managed Forest Law program. The forest will continue to provide high quality northern hardwood timber, especially oak, into the future.

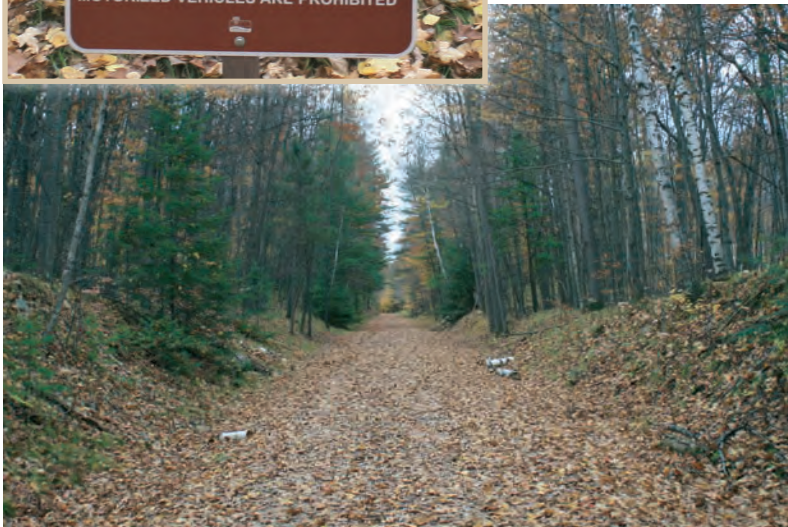
Under a sustainable forest stewardship management plan prepared for the land by consulting forester Tim Mulhern, productive timber will be harvested from various stands in roughly five-year increments. Under best forest management practices, a natural vegetated buffer will be protected around the lake shorelines.

There is a diversity of forest habitats on the property, including some younger stands of aspen, and excellent stands of northern red oak along with other northern hardwoods. Swamp forest habitats include black spruce, tamarack and white cedars.

Some large, remnant white pines, sugar maple, eastern hemlock and yellow birch remain as climax forest habitat, particularly along the steep slopes of Tigertail Point and in a stand close to the Bearskin Trail. These stands will be preserved to promote old growth forest habitat. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, less than 1% of the forest habitats in Wisconsin remain as old growth forest.

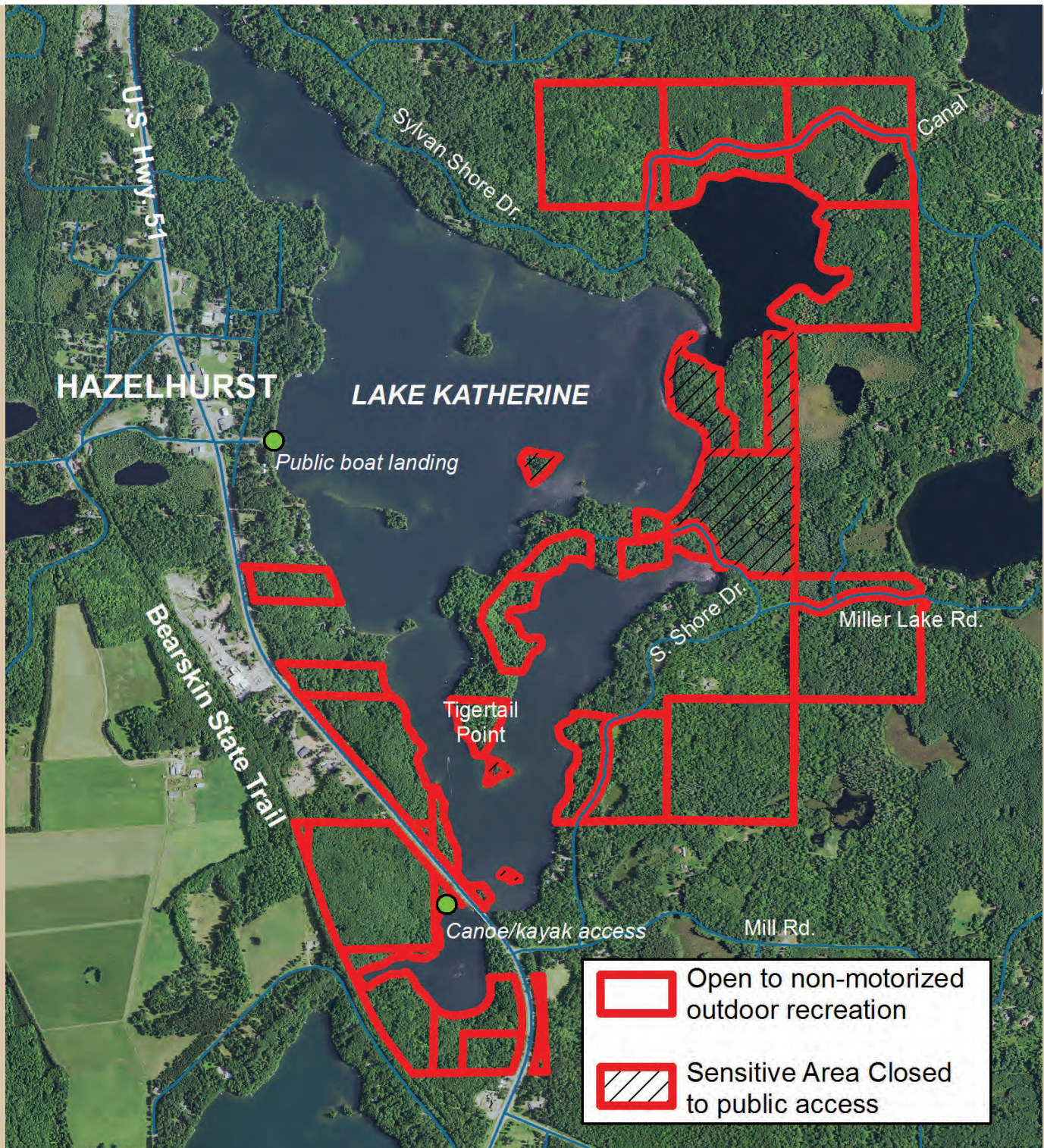


An excited group gathers following the Yawkey Forest Reserve closing on October 31, 2018 in Rhinelander. (Pictured center: Robert Hagge, Jr., Yawkey Lumber Company President and his niece Christy Myschysyn. NWLT staff and board members (left to right): Carrie Rasmussen, Ron Eckstein, Trisha Moore, John Huppert, Bryan Pierce, Mary Schwaiger, Sandy Lotto, Kari Kirschbaum and Bob Martini.



The Bearskin State Recreational Trail runs along the west boundary of the Yawkey Forest Reserve.

Map of the Yawkey Forest Reserve (donated parcels in red)



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.


**Yawkey Forest Reserve
Town of Hazelhurst
Oneida County, Wisconsin
Northwoods Land Trust, Inc.
2015 Digital Orthophoto Map**

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Yawkey Forest Reserve- *continued from page 2*

All of the board and staff of the Northwoods Land Trust wish to extend our sincerest thanks to Yawkey Lumber Company President Robert S. Hagge, Jr., Vice President Alice W. Smith, and shareholders Gale W. Fisher, Nancy-Leigh Fisher and Leigh H. Tuckey, as well as their extended Yawkey family members. Thanks also to Margaret McGarrey, who serves as Secretary/Treasurer for Yawkey Lumber Company, Dan Urho and other staff of Wilmington Trust Company, Delaware, for their management assistance.

Funding support for this exceptional project included grants from the Caerus Foundation, Arthur L. & Elaine V. Johnson Foundation, and Modestus Bauer Foundation, as well as contributions from NWLT's members and supporters.

"We look forward to carrying on the Yawkey Lumber Company family's tradition of conserving this unique resource in the northwoods," said Pierce. 



LAKE KATHERINE

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources lists Lake Katherine as a 590-acre seepage lake with a reported maximum depth of 30 feet and an average depth of 16 feet. It is also a very clear water lake, making it one of the more popular lakes in Oneida County. The lake has a boat ramp for public access, and is a popular recreational lake for visitors, seasonal and year-round residents alike.

The lake supports populations of muskellunge, walleyed pike, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and abundant panfish with public recreation value for anglers. The property's extensive natural shorelines provide important spawning habitat for all of these fish species.

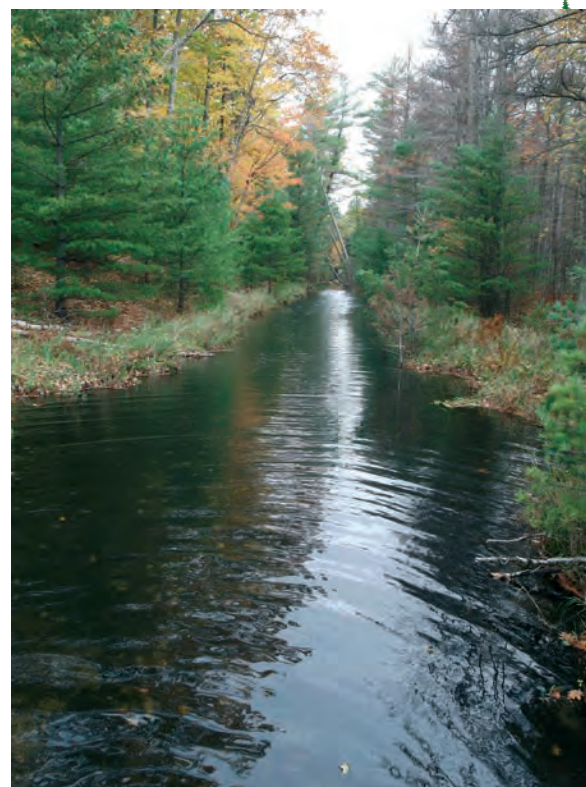
Lake Katherine was apparently formerly known as Lake George, named after one of the founding families of Rhinelander. Yawkey family legend has it that one of Cyrus C. Yawkey's nephews was courting a pretty young woman. He wanted to impress her and asked Cyrus if they could name the lake after her, so they called it Lake Katherine. In spite of this grand gesture, the nephew was unsuccessful in marrying the young woman; however, the name stuck.



Left: View of Tigertail Point from the U.S. Highway 51 bridge in Hazelhurst.

Above: View from Tigertail Point - an esker formed, steep-sloped peninsula that juts into the lake from its east shore - a scenic feature within the Yawkey Forest Reserve.

Below: The abandoned canal from Lake Katherine to Lake Tomahawk (see article on page 5).



A YAWKEY FAMILY HISTORY

Cyrus Carpenter (C.C.) Yawkey was a lumberman, businessman and paper manufacturer born in Chicago, Illinois in 1862. He graduated from Michigan Military Academy at Orchard Lake in 1881. He moved to Hazelhurst in 1889 after working for several years in Michigan. Spending ten years in Hazelhurst, he helped to organize the Yawkey and Lee Lumber Co., which became the Yawkey Lumber Company in 1893. C. C. Yawkey served as secretary-treasurer, general manager and eventually president of this company.

The lumber mill was located along the west shore of Lake Katherine, adjacent to and encompassing what is now the Lake Katherine public boat landing. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad line ran north-south close to the lakeshore. The Yawkey Lumber Company owned and operated saw and planing mills and a box factory. It is estimated that not less than 350 million board feet of lumber were manufactured there during that time.

According to local histories, the lumber company built a canal from Lake Katherine to Lake Tomahawk, with a plan to run logs through the canal. However, upon cutting the canal they found that Lake Tomahawk was two or three feet lower than Lake Katherine, which would affect the mill, so the water route was abandoned in favor of rail.

Through C.C. Yawkey's efforts and business foresight the company became the owner of large tracts of timber in Wisconsin. A new company, the Yawkey-Bissell Lumber company, was organized in 1906 and took over the mill in Hazelhurst and also acquired a plant at Arbor Vitae in Vilas County. This company ran until 1912.

Although the large lumber mill closed, the Yawkey family residential compound is still located near the former mill site along the shore of Lake Katherine. The family legend is that, when approached by people interested in buying lots for building on Lake Katherine, great-grandfather Yawkey would sit at his window overlooking the lake. He only sold parts of the lake he could not see. Thanks to his foresight and the family's continued stewardship of the land, extensive stretches of Lake Katherine's shoreline remain natural, undeveloped and highly scenic.

Alice R. Yawkey, Cyrus' wife, named the town after its thickets of hazel. Alice especially enjoyed traveling around Lake Katherine on a carriage road. Visitors can still walk the end of the old carriage road from the turnaround at the end of South Shore Drive down to Tigertail Point.

Cyrus and Alice had one daughter, Leigh Yawkey Woodson. The Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, host to the world famous annual Birds In Art exhibition, was established by her children in her honor. The museum is committed to always-free admission.

The Yawkey House Museum, the downtown Wausau home of Cyrus and Alice, was built in 1900-1901. Cyrus died in 1943. The house was presented to the Marathon County Historical Society in 1954 after Alice's death in 1953.

The home of Leigh Yawkey and her husband, Aytchmonde P. Woodson, was also acquired by the Marathon County Historical Society in 1995 and is now known as the Woodson History Center.



This postcard photo by Jim Colby, Northern Postcard Company, shows the Yawkey-Bissell Lumber Co, CA 1909. A large boarding house/hotel is on the left, the lumber mill is in the middle, and the office and company store is to the right. Provided courtesy of Yawkey Lumber Company.



Cyrus Carpenter Yawkey, the noted lumberman who led the organization of the Yawkey Lumber Co. in 1893.

You are Invited! Volunteer Training to Become a Property Monitor

The NWLT 2019 Conserved Property Monitor Training session will take place on Thursday, May 2nd at 2:00 pm at the Yawkey Forest Reserve on Lake Katherine in Hazelhurst (Oneida Co.).

The Yawkey property is one of 110 different properties that NWLT either owns or holds a conservation easement on that must be monitored every year.


Annual on-site visits of conservation easements ensure that regular contact is kept with landowners and that the original conservation agreements are being upheld. Monitoring also helps NWLT meet national land trust accreditation standards.

This opportunity allows volunteers to explore lands conserved by NWLT, meet with conservation easement landowners to monitor areas of interest or concern, and learn (or improve) skills such as using a GPS device.

Volunteer monitors play an important role in meeting annual monitoring requirements and have the unique opportunity to have an intimate look at private conservation easement lands that generally are not open to the public.

We invite and welcome anyone who is interested in becoming a monitoring volunteer to attend this training. After the training (~ 5:00 pm) participants will be treated to appetizers and beverages at a local establishment (TBD).

An alternate training date in case of inclement weather is scheduled for Thursday, May 9th at the same time and place.

If you are interested in participating in the volunteer monitor training, please contact Outreach & Monitoring Coordinator Sandy Lotto at (715) 479-2490 or sandy@northwoodslandtrust.org. 

We try to assign properties nearest to you. You can monitor one or several properties, and team up with a friend or family member!



Sandy Lotto trains monitoring volunteers to use the Garmin GPS units as part of the 2018 conserved property monitoring training workshop.

Volunteer Opportunities with NWLT!

As the NWLT continues to grow in leaps and bounds, more volunteer help is needed. How can I help, you ask?

Conserved Property Monitoring:

Training session is Thursday, May 2nd in Hazelhurst (*see article on left for details*). If you are interested in becoming a Monitoring Volunteer, please try to attend the training. Alternatively, training can be provided during a field visit. You can monitor one or several properties. Each NWLT conserved property is typically monitored once a year.


NWLT Property Management: This could be as simple as tossing sticks off the trails as you're hiking, letting us know about a tree across the trail (and other safety hazards), or unauthorized use of the property.

Volunteer Work Days

April 25, 1:00-3:00 pm at Dugan Squash Lake Preserve in Woodboro (8 miles west of Rhinelander). A windstorm took about 30 large oak trees down. Activities include trail clearing, marking boundary lines and putting up signs.

May 23, 1:00-3:00 pm at Holmboe Conifer Forest in Rhinelander to remove invasive species and repair boardwalks. We may also sand and stain the sign closest to the parking area.

Office Support: Help stuff, seal and process newsletters and other bulk mailings. Assist with the creation of informational displays. Care for the office grounds by landscaping or help spring clean the interior.

All of this is a BIG help to us now that we oversee 110 different conservation properties across six counties! 

Wisconsin Knowles - Nelson Stewardship Fund Needs Voices

Named after former Republican Governor Warren Knowles and Democratic Governor Gaylord Nelson, the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program has been providing land and water protection projects with vital funding since 1989. However, reauthorization of this stewardship program is needed in order to provide continued funding in the 2019-2020 State budget.

This budget cycle is critically important because this program is funded in 10-year increments. If the legislature does not reauthorize the program and approve funding, the program would come to a halt, affecting the fate of many important conservation projects over the next decade.

The program works by allowing the State to issue matching grants to local governments, private conservation organizations, the Department of Natural Resources, and citizen-led groups to support the formation of parks and park infrastructure, natural areas, working forests, trail development, access to waterfront areas and much more.

Past NWLT projects that have benefited from State matching grants include the acquisition of scenic Interstate Falls by the intersection of U.S. Highways 2 and 51 at Hurley, and the addition of a 135-acre tract of woodlands critical for Minocqua Winter Park's extensive public cross-country ski trail system.

Please consider offering your voice and time to address the threat facing the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. Contact your elected officials to urge them to fund this program that invests in the future protection of Wisconsin's land and natural resources. Our parks, forests, wetlands, trails, and waterfronts need our care, attention, and investment!



Join the Team Knowles-Nelson

Let your elected officials know that funding land and water protection in Wisconsin is important to you!

Join the Team Knowles-Nelson to receive updates and action alerts about the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Gathering Waters, Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts, will guide you in determining how to contact your elected officials, key times to contact them during budget debates, what action to take, and key points to touch on.

Go to www.gatheringwaters.org to learn more and to sign up for Team Knowles-Nelson.

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



JOIN AS A MEMBER OF THE NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

Leave a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

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- ☐ 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): _____
Address: _____
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Telephone (h): _____
E mail Address: _____

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Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

2018 a Record Year for Northwoods Land Trust

In 2018, as the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) celebrated its 18th anniversary, it completed 22 land protection projects leading to a record year for the land trust's conservation efforts.

The first project of the year, funded with a grant from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, enabled NWLT to purchase 135 acres critical for the sustainability of the Minocqua Winter Park cross-country ski trail system. NWLT immediately transferred the property to the Minocqua Winter Park Trail Fund. This property adjoins the 3,195 acres of land protected by a conservation easement to the north that includes about 43 kilometers of ski and snowshoe trails owned and managed by MWP Preservation LLC.

In the fall, NWLT received an exceptional donation of 431 acres of conservation land with 4.4 miles of natural shorelines on Lake Katherine in the Town of Hazelhurst, Oneida County. The Yawkey Lumber Company owned this land since 1894, and the current extended Yawkey family members wanted to ensure this property was protected in perpetuity. The project is one of the largest donations of conservation land to a land trust in Wisconsin, and holds the record for the amount of lake shorelands (*see the full article on pages 1-5*).

In addition, NWLT partnered with the Last Wilderness Conservation Association to accept 11 transfers of

conservation properties in the Presque Isle and Winchester "Last Wilderness" area of Vilas County, along with four conservation easement properties and one deed restriction site. One of those sites, Genevieve Lake, is an entire "wild lake" property (*pictured*).

The land trust was also granted new perpetual conservation easements protecting a 38-acre parcel with shoreline on Nine Mile Creek in the town of Three Lakes in Oneida County and a 120-acre farmstead and woodland property in the town of Harshaw also in Oneida County.

Since 2001, a total of 110 permanent land protection projects in the six-county service territory of Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Iron and Price counties have been completed. Those properties include over 13,000 acres of woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat, and over 70 miles of lake and river shorelines. Most of those projects are conservation easements granted by landowners who want to ensure lasting protection of their own private family lands, while also protecting the natural resources and character of the northwoods of Wisconsin.

