



Winter/Spring 2021 Newsletter

NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Beaver Creek Hemlocks Targeted for Protection



View of the small bog lake and "poor fen" at Beaver Creek Hemlocks in Iron County.

The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) is pursuing the purchase of the 240-acre Beaver Creek Hemlocks property in the Town of Sherman, Iron County, to permanently protect a diverse forest, stream and wetland complex in the middle of a matrix of public lands.

The Beaver Creek Hemlocks property was identified as a priority for acquisition by NWLT as part of its 'Old-Growth Forest Initiative.' The Initiative aims to protect mature and old-growth forest habitat in the northwoods, educate landowners and the general public about the importance of these forests and conserve some of the last pockets of these rare resources.

Since NWLT's successful acquisition of the Sack Lake Hemlocks Old-Growth Forest from the Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Land (BCPL) in 2019, a prioritization process has been underway to identify opportunities to protect vulnerable BCPL-owned properties.

NWLT and BCPL reviewed 30 high-quality candidate properties that BCPL may sell in the future. The top-tier properties were selected based on the quality, rarity and connectivity of the habitats present including old-growth and mature forests that may be managed and restored to old-growth forest habitats.

Out of this process, NWLT identified the Beaver Creek Hemlocks property as having the
(Continued next page)

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- In Memory of Dr. Bodensteiner
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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.



PROTECTION TOTALS:

- 14,053 acres of land
- 92 conservation easements
- 25 conservation properties
- 75 miles of shoreline protected
 - 40 miles lakefront
 - 35 miles riverfront

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Beaver Creek Hemlocks Targeted for Protection *continued*

most ecological importance for permanent conservation at this time (additional BCPL properties remain high on the priority list for future conservation acquisitions).

The property includes mature hemlock-hardwood forest with some very large hemlock, yellow birch and white pine, nearly 70% of a small bog lake surrounded by poor fen, old-growth cedar and black spruce-tamarack swamps, vernal ponds, over a half-mile of Beaver Creek and a large wetland complex.

Several of the habitats on this property are uncommon or declining. Hemlock and yellow birch are greatly diminished from historic levels across northern Wisconsin. Yellow birch in the younger size classes are quite uncommon in northern Wisconsin, but common on this property. Cedar swamps have also declined significantly from historic levels.

This site is located in the heart of a concentration of important ecological sites and adjoins a vast, undisturbed peatland complex. The Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area is less than a half mile to the west. The Springstead Muskeg State Natural Area (SNA) lies just a quarter mile to the east, and the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest is a half mile to the south. Seven other State Natural Areas are located within six miles of the property. This concentration of State Natural Areas highlights the quality and importance of the local area and the elevated importance of protecting this site.

As a first step in this project, NWLT purchased an adjoining 27-acre private parcel in September of 2020. The purchase of this parcel along Highway 182 was necessary to provide NWLT with legal access for land management responsibilities, as well as for welcoming the public to the

property for low-impact recreational enjoyment.

**This purchase in
relation to property
size and project budget
is NWLT's largest.**

Early gifts and grants have been provided by several generous donors and private foundations, leaving a balance of \$130,000 to complete the purchase. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to help NWLT complete this project. Gifts can be sent by using the enclosed form on page 3, with 'Beaver Creek Hemlocks' in the check memo, and gifts received will be restricted to the project.

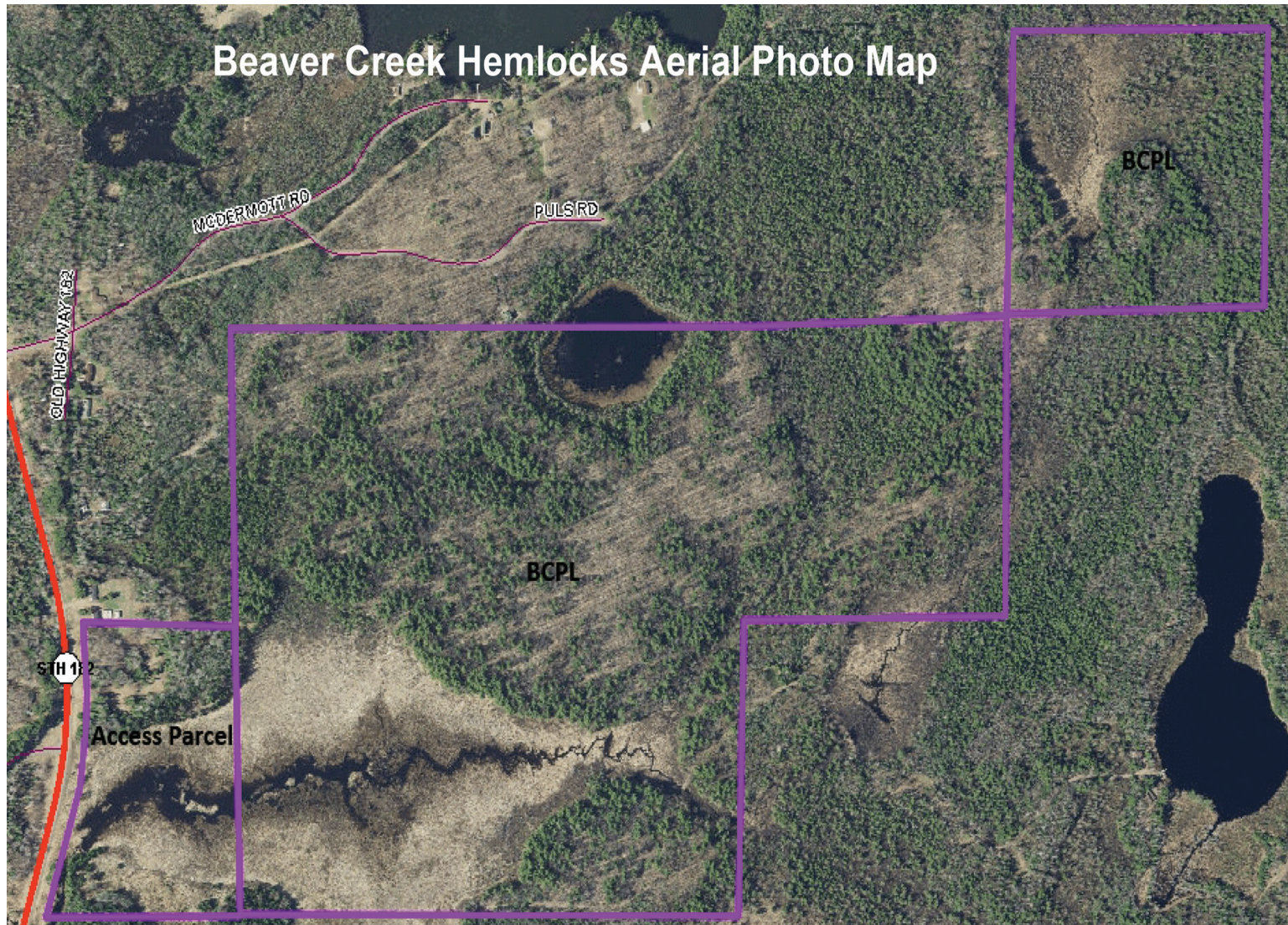
We will update you on the progress of the Beaver Creek Hemlocks Project in our next newsletter. In the meantime, please contact us with any questions or comments at nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org or 715-479-2490. 🌲



The forests of Beaver Creek will be managed to transition to old-growth habitats.

The Beaver Creek Hemlocks Project is NWLT's largest planned land purchase to-date in relation to the property size and project budget. The purchase is expected to be completed by the end of 2021 or early 2022, if all of the funds can be raised.

The total project budget is approximately \$310,000 and includes the land purchase, access parcel purchase, preparation costs and stewardship funds to endow future annual monitoring, management and legal defense.



Aerial view of Beaver Creek Hemlocks (in purple), with the newly acquired access parcel on Highway 182 (in red) in the Town of Sherman.



SUPPORT THE NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

Leave a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone (w): _____

Telephone (h): _____

Email: _____

Please make checks payable and mail to:

NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST, INC.

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

CONTRIBUTIONS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ |

- ☐ Enclosed is a donation directed to the Beaver Creek Hemlocks land purchase in the amount of \$ _____.

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.

Birds Are The Best!

By Troy Walters – NWLT Outreach & Monitoring Coordinator

In 2015, I briefly worked in the Birds Department at the Baton Rouge Zoo and our mantra was, “birds are the best!” It seems that this mantra can be applied far beyond the zoo world all the way back to northern Wisconsin. I was recently able to take part in a four-week webinar workshop entitled “Bird Conservation Best Practices for Wisconsin Land Trusts”.

The workshop started off by examining the current state of birds globally, highlighted by a three-minute video which can be viewed at 3billionbirds.org. The upshot is that habitat loss is the major component in species decline. Global informational resources presented include: the Wyss Foundation 30 by 30 Campaign, which aims to protect 30% of the planet by 2030; Half Earth Project that advocates protecting 50% of the earth to ensure species survival; and organizations such as BirdLife International, Conservation Corridor, and Center for Large Landscape Conservation.

Closer to home, state resources like the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership and American Bird Conservancy are strong supporters of bird conservation. The central question I kept coming back to is, what is the Northwoods Land Trust’s role in bird conservation?

Week two of the workshop explored tools that help support bird conservation, with a focus on eBird, a tool available through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Cornell Lab also has a host of excellent outreach and education tools such as: Bird Academy,



Cardinal photograph by Bev Engstrom.

Merlin ID app, All About Birds, and citizen science projects.

Week three focused on Important Bird Areas of Wisconsin (IBA). The IBA program began Europe in the 1980s and now includes over 11,000 IBA’s in 200 countries. Wisconsin has identified 93 IBA’s, sites that provide essential habitat for birds. While IBA’s don’t have any true legal status or regulations, identifying these areas can help guide management. Tom Prestby of GEI Consultants described the matrix involved in selecting Wisconsin’s IBA’s and determining what each IBA strengths and weaknesses are, essentially creating a decision support tool to help focus bird conservation efforts in each area.

The final week focused on large scale conservation efforts in Wisconsin. Brian Glenzinski from Ducks Unlimited discussed the importance of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and Shawn Graff from the American Bird Conservancy reviewed the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

What can eBird do for you?

Help find more birds, keep track of bird lists, photos and sounds, and contribute to science and conservation. Check out eBird.org.

How to get started?

- Take the free online eBird Essentials course.
- Create an eBird account.
- Optional: download eBird onto mobile device.
- Optional: download Bird Packs onto mobile device.

How can eBird help NWLT?

- Provide data for grants for land conservation funding assistance.
- Justification of lands selected for permanent conservation.
- Informational resources for public outreach and education.
- A hub for inventory and monitoring efforts. Data from eBird can be downloaded. NWLT will be developing a few hotspots (locations) where field data can be collected.

How does eBird help science?

- Shows migratory pathways and wintering locations which may be used in conservation efforts.
- Shows bird abundance and range maps with greater detail, likely showing how some birds are more impacted by climate change.
- Research and education – many papers have used data from eBird.

The take home message from this four-week workshop is that as an organization NWLT can find ways to connect land protection to bird protection. They work in symphony. The more lands NWLT owns or protects with conservation easements, the more opportunity we have to help not just birds, but the entire natural community. As is always the case, birds are the best! 🌲

In Memory of Dr. Joseph Bodensteiner

By Emily Bodensteiner

How do you honor the life of a friend or a family member who has died? How do you capture their life's work, their core values, their passions, their personality? When my husband Joseph Bodensteiner died, my three daughters and I chose three causes, dear to Joe's heart, to receive memorial contributions made in his name. One of those organizations was the Northwoods Land Trust - chosen to honor Joe's love of the Wisconsin Northwoods and his passion for almost all outdoor recreational pursuits.

Our family moved to Rhinelander in 1974, after Joe finished his surgery residency at the University of Iowa. We chose Rhinelander as a place to live for the growing medical community, the excellent school system, the friendly small-town atmosphere, the beauty of the Northwoods area, and the easy access to all forms of outdoor recreation for our family. We truly found ourselves at the lake, on the river, or in the woods within minutes of our Rhinelander home.

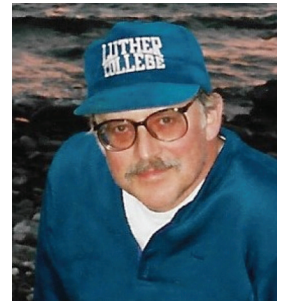
Settling in for life in the Northwoods proved to be the best choice for our family; and our daughters grew up camping, canoeing, cross-country and downhill skiing, fishing, biking, swimming, hiking, etc. – all activities that they, and their children, enjoy to this day. We found that outdoor family adventures (and a few misadventures) created strong family bonds and stories that are told and re-told, as part of the family lore, around the dinner table at family gatherings.

Joe's love of outdoor activities proved to be a generational value, passed on through our children to our grandchildren. In recent years, three generations of our family have gathered in the summer to spend a week together at a Northwoods lake. These gatherings have allowed our grandchildren to cement generational relationships, to appreciate the beauty of the Northwoods and to enjoy a wide variety of outdoor activities together - making memories that we hope will last a lifetime.

In addition to pursuing outdoor activities with his children and grandchildren, Joe joined different groups of like-minded friends for countless fishing, canoeing, biking, hiking and camping trips. For many years, Joe organized "father-daughter" canoe trips with friends who also had daughters. In later years, when the daughters were grown and away from home, Joe and his dog, Rio, hiked the northern forest trails and fished the northern lakes as a twosome.

So, when Joe died, it was an obvious choice to honor his memory, and to help protect the natural resources of the Northwoods, through contributions to The Northwoods Land Trust. Generations of our family, like so many residents of and visitors to the Northwoods, have benefited greatly from the incredible natural beauty and the varied outdoor recreational opportunities of northern Wisconsin. Thus, we chose to support the mission and work of The Northwoods Land Trust.

We all have much to lose if we do not protect and save these valuable Wisconsin lakes, rivers, wetlands and forests that Joe appreciated and enjoyed for so many years. 🌲

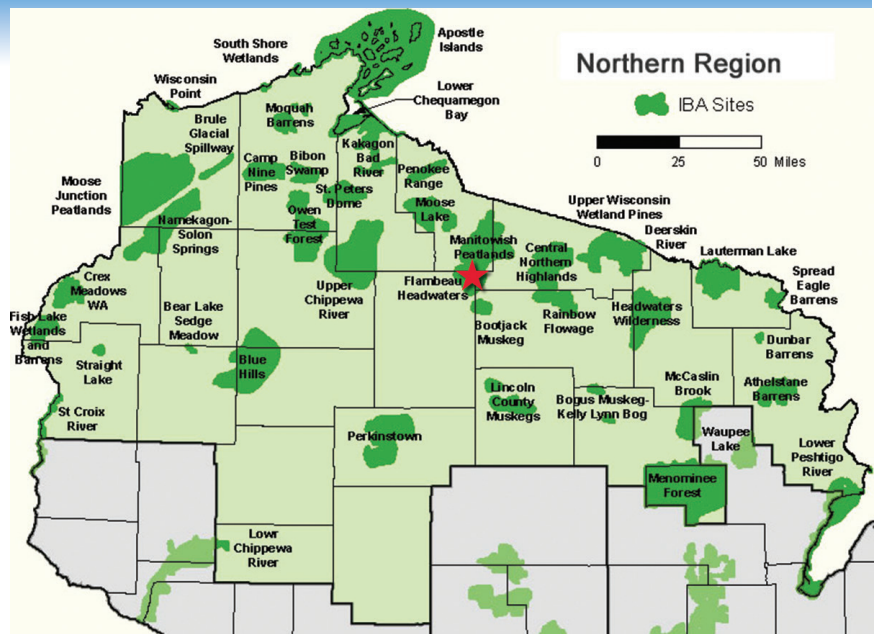


*"The outdoors is my spiritual place."
~ Joe Bodensteiner*

Important Bird Area Feature

The Beaver Creek Hemlocks Project (see pages 1-2) is within the Flambeau Headwaters Important Bird Area (IBA). An IBA is a site that provides essential habitat to birds. Sites may vary in size, but are usually discrete and distinguishable in character, habitat or ornithological importance from surrounding areas. They may include public or private land.

The Flambeau Headwaters IBA is dominated by old, large-diameter upland conifers. Wetlands are mostly forested, with areas of white cedar swamp and swamp conifers. The lakes and wetlands host concentrations of waterbirds and provide breeding habitat for osprey. The conifer dominated forests are rich in neotropical migrants such as olive-sided flycatcher, yellow-bellied flycatcher, wood thrush, golden-winged warbler, black-throated blue warbler and Canada warbler. This IBA contains significant populations of blue-headed vireo, Blackburnian warbler, Magnolia warbler and pine warbler. For more information about IBA's in Wisconsin, visit www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba/. 🌲



Map source to www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba/

Working Woodland Protection

An Oneida County landowner (who wishes to remain anonymous) worked with NWLT to evaluate a number of forested properties for sale with the goal of purchasing and conserving a working woodland that provides wildlife habitat and other ecological values. As a result, a 95-acre woodland was purchased and protected with a conservation easement that was donated to NWLT in December of 2020.

The conserved property, located in northwestern Oneida County, contains mainly northern dry forest habitat and plant communities that thrive on sandy soils, primarily jack pine, which has declined precipitously in the northern forests over the last few decades. The forest also has quaking aspen, red pine, and small populations of white birch and white pine.

The landowner, who in this case acted as a ‘conservation buyer’ (someone who purchases land with the intention of permanently conserving it) shared, “We felt like the land shouldn’t be built on and that it should remain forested. We bought it with that in mind.”

“The conservation buyer and the Northwoods Land Trust worked to protect an intact woodland, that instead of being subdivided, will now be conserved for forest management, wood products, recreation and wildlife habitat. Young jack pine is a special feature of the property, as there is limited jack pine forest in Wisconsin, and several bird (and other wildlife species) utilize this type of forest. We are grateful to the landowners for their generosity and foresight in seeking out land to buy for the purpose of conservation,” said Trisha Moore, NWLT Conservation Specialist, who assisted the landowner in realizing their goal of purchasing this forest to permanently conserve the economic and ecological values present there. 🌲

Amendment Adds Protection to Marion Lake

In the final days of 2020, NWLT worked closely with the Nagy Family to enhance their conservation easement that has been in place since 2007. The amendment to the easement added an additional 45 acres of forest and wetland onto the already conserved 75 acres of land in Oneida County. It also adds 570 feet of natural frontage on Marion Lake, a shallow kettle lake, joining the existing 1,225 feet of lakeshore previously protected by the Nagys.

Amendments to conservation easements are uncommon, but are available as a tool to respond to desired changes in conservation easements, as long as the changes increase the public benefits of an easement, or at minimum, have a neutral effect on the conservation values protected by the easement (such as clarifying vague legal language that makes monitoring or enforcement difficult for a land trust). In this case, adding additional land and shoreline clearly boosts the conservation values of the easement and offers additional public benefits in the way of protecting water quality, scenic beauty, intact forests and wetlands.

“The decision to conserve family lands in perpetuity is not an easy choice and the process can be daunting for some. The Nagy Family tackled amending their conservation easement with ease, especially during a time when that process was made more arduous by the events of 2020. Their gift to Marion Lake and the northwoods area is greatly appreciated,” said Trisha Moore, NWLT Conservation Specialist, who worked with the Nagy Family to complete the amendment. 🌲



WISH LIST

NWLT is in need of quality furniture for a seating area including a compact couch, chair, reading lamp and area rug. Please contact Ted at (715) 479-2490 or ted@northwoodslandtrust.org to discuss the details of the items that you may wish to donate. Thank you!

Donation on Flambeau Honors Hilgart's Life/Legacy *Cont. from pg. 8*

before reaching the County Highway F launch and takeout 12 miles downstream. Further downstream is the Flambeau River State Forest, where the South Fork joins the North Fork to form the Flambeau River, which continues southwesterly to the mouth at the Chippewa River near Bruce, Wisconsin.

The South Fork of the Flambeau was approved by the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board in January 1993 for classification as an Outstanding Resource Water. It is free-flowing below a small dam at the outlet of Round Lake east of Fifield, and has little development along its shoreline. The South Fork is far less-traveled than the more popular North

Fork, and its water levels are more dependent on rainfall, making paddling more remote and ideal in late spring to early summer. Pitches of whitewater paddling class I to V rapids and riffles occur throughout the South Fork, with interspersed long stretches of flatwater.

"The Hilgart family has left a fitting legacy for a man that honorably served his country and community. By protecting the land that Len loved, they've created a resource for many generations to come," said Ted Anchor, NWLT Executive Director, who assisted the family with the land donation to NWLT. 🌲

Walter "Len" Hilgart was born on October 5, 1922, and was the oldest of seven children. He grew up in Fifield, Wisconsin, and was raised on a dairy farm built by his father from the surrounding timber, along with Len's help.



Len graduated from Fifield High School in 1941. He enlisted in the United States Army Air Force in December of 1942. He graduated from Flying school and went overseas to the Pacific

as a P-38 Fighter Pilot during World War II. Len flew 22 combat missions before the war ended. He flew the "last mission" of WWII, where he flew fighter escort top cover in his P-38 for the Japanese Surrender Delegation.

Len returned to civilian life in 1946, and re-entered the Air Force in 1949. He served overseas during the Korean War and Vietnam War, before retiring as Chief Master Sergeant, and from the Reserves as Lt. Colonel. He became a teacher, earning a Master's Degree before retiring in 1987. He decided to continue as a Substitute Teacher up until 2013, on his 90th birthday.

Len would be happy to know that his land is now conserved for the benefit of the public and the wildlife that calls the South Fork of the Flambeau River home. 🌲



The Walter "Len" Hilgart Flambeau River Preserve is located along the South Fork of the Flambeau River and is only accessible by water.

SAVE THE DATE – JUNE 11TH!

NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST'S 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

The event location will likely be outside (to be determined) at 1 p.m.
NWLT respectfully requests that masks be worn and social distancing followed.
More details will be available soon on our website and Facebook page.



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

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Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Donation on Flambeau Honors Hilgart's Life and Legacy

Cecelia Rogers, Trustee of the Walter L. and Martha G. Hilgart Trust, along with her three siblings, donated a riverfront parcel to the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLT) as a memorial to their late brother Walter "Len" Hilgart who passed away in October of 2016.

The conservation property gifted on December 10, 2020 includes 27 acres of forest and wetland and approximately 2,020 feet of natural shoreline on the South Fork of the Flambeau River in the Town of Fifield in Price County.

In 1947, Len purchased these 27 acres on the South Fork near the Fifield farm where he grew up. He spent many summers enjoying his "little piece of heaven." Len had plans to build a cabin one day, but age and health issues kept him from realizing his plans. Len passed away at the age of 94, leaving an inspiring history of military and scholastic accomplishments (see page 7), and now a conservation legacy.

The Walter "Len" Hilgart Flambeau River Preserve sits on a bend in the river at the intersection with Patterson Creek. The riparian communities include black ash, silver maple and red maple, with an open, shrubby wetland with abundant blue joint grass and alder. The inland forest is young mixed conifer-hardwood that rises over 70 feet above the river.

The property is only accessible by water, and not by land. NWLT will monitor it annually and passively manage it, with a focus on wildlife habitat, protection of the South Fork

watershed, and scenic views along the river.

The South Fork of the Flambeau River supports wildlife habitat and other natural, recreational and scenic resources in Price County. The property is located 1.8 miles south (downstream) of the Fifield Memorial Park and Wayside on Highway 13. The Highway 13 parking lot and canoe launch is well-used by paddlers who pass through class I and II rapids

Continued inside on page 7



A preserve sign will be installed along the South Branch of the Flambeau River's shore to honor Len.