



Fall 2022 Newsletter

NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Tower Nibiiwan – A Turnkey Conservation Area



Tower Nibiiwan Conservation Area. Photo by Kathy Noel

Dave and Kathy Noel donated 31 acres of land to the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) on June 22, 2022. The property is on Arbutus Drive off of Highway 17 in Sugar Camp in Oneida County. It features a small, three-acre scenic bog pond surrounded by wetlands, black spruce-tamarack forest and rolling upland forest.

The name, Tower Nibiiwan, was given by the Noels. ‘Tower’ refers to the iconic 1936 Indian Lake fire tower that was located nearby until it was taken down in 2017. ‘Nibiiwan’ is the Ojibwe word meaning wet or watery since nearly 30% of the property is bog and wetland and is in the homelands of the Anishinaabe people.

The land was a part of expansive paper company holdings located all around the north side of Indian Lake and beyond. In the 1950s, a small canal was dug from the bog pond to a pumphouse that watered an adjacent 20-acre tree nursery, the Ripco Forestry Farm of the Rhinelander Paper Company, where white and black spruce and other species were grown in seed and transplant beds. The company sold its land in 1975 and began purchasing paper pulp from outside sources. The property went through multiple paper and timber investment company ownerships for the next 38 years.

In 2013, the Plum Creek Land Company put the property up for sale, and the Noels saw it as an opportunity to purchase the land that they had been exploring as local residents for nearly 20 years. “We felt lucky to be able to buy the land and keep it from being in commercial ownership. The presence of a true bog pond makes the property special. The carnivorous plants are unique,” said Dave.

Soon after purchasing the land, the Noels began developing foot trails by expanding on

(Continued next page)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Tower Nibiiwan Conservation Area
- Iron County Conservation Easement
- Board Leadership Change
- Holmboe Conifer Forest Induction
- Langlade County Focus Areas
- Climate Focused Initiative

MISSION:



The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) permanently conserves natural shorelands, woodlands and other natural resources to benefit present and future generations in Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Iron, Price and Langlade Counties.



PROTECTION TOTALS:

- 14,905 acres of land conserved
- 96 conservation easements with landowners
- 27 conservation properties owned by NWLT
- 81 miles of shoreline protected
 - 45 miles lakefront
 - 36 miles riverfront

www.northwoodslandtrust.org

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Tower Nibiiwan Conservation Area *continued*

and improving the old logging trails. They enlisted Fred Williston to help out, a Sugar Camp resident who had trail building experience. Together, they struck a balance of creating a well-sculpted but woodsy mile-long trail network. The trails lead to a boardwalk with a seating area at the edge of the pond, providing a quiet spot to take in views of the tamarack and spruce lining the shore.



Carnivorous plants (sundew and pitcher plants) at Tower Nibiiwan Conservation Area. Photos by Kathy Noel

Dave and Kathy enjoyed time at the property walking their dogs, rowing in the pond and tromping around in waders picking cranberries and taking photographs. The trails were also used by neighbors who grew accustomed to having access to nature right in their own backyard. When the Noels announced in 2021 that they were going to move to Montana, their neighbors were concerned about the fate of the property.

Everyone was assured that the land and trails would stay open to the public. The Noels had been talking with the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) about donating the property to become a permanent conservation area.

“It was a hard decision for us to move after we spent so much time out there and working to improve the property. The history of our ownership isn’t long and storied, but once it was put together, we felt it needed to be maintained that way for the enjoyment of the community. Our first thought was to see if the land trust would accept it as a conservation donation,” said Dave.

NWLTL’s board of directors voted to accept ownership of the land – what they saw as a turnkey conservation and recreation area. “One thing that is exceptional about this project is how much the Noels invested in making it useable by the community. They made it available as a space to get out to enjoy the woods and sit for a spell next to the pond,” said Kari Kirschbaum, NWLTL’s Land Protection Director.

As new owners of the Tower Nibiiwan Conservation Area, NWLTL wrote and adopted a land management plan. The conservation area is passively managed, meaning active forest and wildlife habitat management activities

will not typically be conducted. Public uses include hiking, snowshoeing, dog walking, wildlife observation, fishing, bow hunting and (carry-in) nonmotorized boating, with parking alongside Arbutus Drive.

“There needs to be an opportunity for people to preserve small pieces of property before they all get subdivided and developed. There needs to be places where people can get away. There are great examples of regional trail systems around the northwoods, but this one is more intimate and easily accessible to get out for an hour and stretch your legs. We are so happy that it’s going to remain natural and available for the community to enjoy,” said Dave.

“NWLTL is grateful for Dave and Kathy’s gift of land and we are proud to carry their legacy forward through the protection of the Tower Nibiiwan Conservation Area,” said Kari. 🌲

Iron County Conservation Easement Signed

The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) signed a conservation easement to protect 260 acres of land and 7,000 feet of lake frontage in Iron County in early September. The family that donated the conservation easement wishes to remain anonymous, so details about the property's natural features and its location will be kept private.

The majority of the now protected land has been in the family since 1938 and has a rich history of supporting the surrounding community, as well as other parts of the United States during World War II. Nature has since filled in areas where horses and wagons once gathered. Nowadays, the property serves as a refuge for a wide variety of northwoods wildlife.

In the 1980s the realization that northern Wisconsin lakes were being taken over by development moved the family to seek options to protect their land. After speaking with the University of Wisconsin and a national conservation organization, they came to the conclusion that working with a regional land trust was the best option.

In 2007 the family began discussions with NWLTL. Since then, they purchased additional parcels of land to make an even greater conservation impact. In 2022, the terms of the conservation easement were agreed on and the celebratory signing took place. The easement is a testament to a late family member who wanted to see the land protected.

"We need to think into the future, with evidence of climate change happening worldwide. More climate related disasters are going to happen here in the northwoods. We are trying to keep the land as natural as possible to have a refuge for animals and birds so they can survive through this. This was my commitment to fulfilling a family legacy to the best of my ability. Also, my children have been kept aware of the progress of putting the easement in place, and they know what their commitment will be, whether or not they choose to pass the land onto their children or sell it," said the donating landowner.

"It took several years and a lot of thought and conversation for NWLTL and this family to find the right balance of terms when writing the conservation easement for this particular property. We're thrilled that that persistence has paid off, and will continue to do so over the long term. NWLTL is honored to have the opportunity to be a partner in permanently protecting this special place," said Kari Kirschbaum, NWLTL Land Protection Director.

"Properties like this are treasures that will only become rarer over time. Because of its size and the diversity of natural habitats, the land will serve as an important refuge for wildlife especially as the surrounding landscape evolves," ended Kari. 🌲



The lake protected through the new conservation easement in Iron County.

Board Leadership Changes

Mary Schwaiger retired from the Northwoods Land Trust's (NWLTL) Board of Directors in early October. She served as President from 2008 to 2022.

Mary and I were the last remaining original members of the NWLTL Board of Directors dating back to 2001. I never imagined that she and I would end up being partners in the formation, growth, and evolution of an outstanding conservation organization like NWLTL for over 20 years. We came from totally different professional backgrounds but share a love for the land which made NWLTL a perfect place for us to come together.

Mary brought her particular professional expertise to the table with enthusiasm and energy and most importantly, with her time. She seemed to always be there to help as we grew and went through staff and management changes. She was a steadying influence with a positive outlook. Her smiling and pleasant demeanor has made it easy to remain on the Board for as long as I have. Although Mary has indicated that she'll continue to volunteer her skills as she can, her physical presence will be missed by all of us who have come to know her. There's no question that she has made a difference.

~ John Huppert, NWLTL President 🌲



Holmboe Conifer Forest Inducted into the Old-Growth Forest Network

The Holmboe Conifer Forest State Natural Area was inducted into the Old-Growth Forest Network (OGFN) on October 6th. The mission of OGFN, based in Maryland, is to connect people with nature by creating a national network of protected, mature, publicly accessible, native forests. OGFN also educates about the extraordinary ecological and human wellness benefits of old-growth forests and speaks out regarding immediate threats to specific ancient forests.

The 32-acre Holmboe property, owned by the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL), lies along the Pelican River in Rhinelander. It features outstanding examples of mature and old-growth stands of



John Bates and Carly Lapin of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources check out an old-growth hemlock tree at the Holmboe Conifer Forest.

hemlocks, pines and white

cedar, which made it a great candidate for this special designation.

The property has a long history of conservation starting back in 1965 when the land was donated to The Nature Conservancy by Frithjof and Thoralf Holmboe. In 1969 it was designated as a State Natural Area. Ownership of the property was transferred from The Nature Conservancy to NWLT in 2007.

Nick Sanchez, OGFN's Network Manager, led a short ceremony and presented a plaque to NWLT making the Holmboe Conifer Forest the 177th in the nation and fourth in Wisconsin to join the Network (along with Cathedral Pines in Oconto County, Muskego County Park in Waukesha County and Plum Lake Hemlock Forest State Natural Area in Vilas County).



Nick Sanchez, Network Manager of the Old-Growth Forest Network, presents a sign to John Bates (far left), Ron Eckstein and Ted Anchor (far right) of NWLT.

“A certain amount of sacrifice may be necessary – all animals influence their surroundings – but there should also be places left to nature’s processes, if only so we may witness how nature works; if only so we may enjoy the beauty and the wonder of such places.”

~ Dr. Joan Maloof, founder of the Old-Growth Forest Network

“We are thrilled to welcome Holmboe Conifer Forest State Natural Area into the national Network, and as the representative forest for Oneida County, we look forward to helping people connect to this special place,” said Sanchez.

Almost all of our original forests have been logged or otherwise disturbed. (Less than 1% left in the east, 5% in the west.)

Source: OGFN

“Holmboe Conifer Forest’s induction to the Network underlines the importance of the work of NWLT and other land trusts around the country to protect invaluable forest land and other rare habitats. Residents of Rhinelander have the unique opportunity to experience old-growth forest right in their backyard. Protecting this rare space ensures generations will be able to experience the unique landscape forever,” said Frank Schroyer, NWLT’s Land Conservation Associate.

Visit www.oldgrowthforest.net for more information about the Old-Growth Forest Network. 🌲



Volunteers replace boardwalks this fall at the Holmboe Conifer Forest, funded through a grant from the Arthur L. & Elaine V. Johnson Foundation.

Featured Focus Areas in Langlade County

The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) recently identified geographic focus areas in its seven-county service region intended to bring strategic direction to land and water protection programs. There are two focus areas in northern Langlade County, the 'Langlade Glacial Lakes' and 'Upper Wolf River.'

The Langlade Glacial Lakes has a high concentration of kettle lakes - depressions that were created when retreating glaciers left large blocks of ice. These lakes tend to be small and fragile, so too much development can lead to degradation. The region, located all around the Bogus Swamp State Natural Area, is identified as an important bird area and has strong climate resiliency and connectedness.



Fishing on a kettle lake in northern Langlade County.

The Upper Wolf River contains the part of the river's watershed that is heavily forested, has significant wild rice beds and generally has larger privately-owned parcels. The northern section of the Wolf River is an 'Outstanding Water Resource,' classified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The river offers world-class fishing and whitewater paddling opportunities.

Priority landowners in these focus areas received a mailing about conservation tools and NWLT's services. As a part of NWLT's outreach in the county, new partnerships have been built with the Langlade County Land & Water Conservation Department, Langlade Waterways Association and the Ice Age Trail Alliance. 🌲

Giving Through an IRA

Don and Mary Spencer of Waukesha give each year to the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) from an IRA account. The Spencers have a small lakeside cabin in Hazelhurst that they have owned for nearly 50 years. During that time, they have seen most of the lots on their lake be developed, dramatically changing the natural beauty of the area. They feel good knowing their donation to NWLT will go to protect natural lakeshore across the northwoods.

"Taking funds out of an IRA and getting a tax break while meeting our required minimum distribution – it's a winner. We are investing in something different – in protecting the countryside and future of the northwoods through our gift to the land trust," said Don.

The Spencers also designated a portion of their 2022 gift to serve as seed money to NWLT's new Land Protection Fund, established to act fast when natural areas deserve protection. The Spencers also support NWLT's conservation programs in Langlade County. Don's grandfather and great grandfather were in the logging industry in the town of Langlade going back to 1885.



IRAs are a great way to make charitable contributions (see details below). 🌲

FOR THOSE 70½ YEARS OLD +

You can give any amount (up to a maximum of \$100,000) per year from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as the Northwoods Land Trust without having to pay income taxes. This popular gift option is commonly called the IRA charitable rollover, also referred to as a qualified charitable distribution. The gift can satisfy required minimum distributions.

FOR THOSE 59½ YEARS OLD

If you are at least 59½ years old, you can take a distribution and then make a gift from your IRA without penalty. If you itemize your deductions, you can take a charitable deduction for the amount of your gift.

AT ANY AGE

No matter your age, you can designate NWLT as the beneficiary of all or a percentage of your IRA and it will be gifted tax-free after your lifetime. It's simple, just requiring that you contact your IRA administrator for a change-of-beneficiary.

LAND CONSERVATION IS CLIMATE ACTION

NATURE KNOWS BEST
when we work for nature, nature works for us.



LET THE TREES GROW

Trees are carbon-absorbing superheroes, and Wisconsin has billions of them. Healthy, well-managed forests can support the forest products industry and store carbon better than any technology.



CONNECT WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Too many vital wildlife habitats are isolated from one another, islands of conservation. Land trusts protect habitat corridors that support wildlife migrations and allow plant and animal populations to shift as the climate changes.



FARM FOR TOMORROW

Regenerative agriculture restores the land and provides food for the dinner table. Wisconsin has more than 15 million acres of farmland. Rotational grazing, cover crops, and less frequent tilling all help to make farming a climate solution.



CARE FOR WETLANDS

Wetlands protect our communities from floods. And they act as a filter and a sponge, cleaning water as it passes through and soaking up pollution. Land trusts work to protect intact wetlands and restore those that have been harmed.



KEEP IT WILD

Our wild places can be a powerful defense against the effects of climate change. Undisturbed land absorbs more carbon from the atmosphere, supports a wider array of plants and wildlife, and offers natural protection from threats like flooding, erosion, and pollution.



RESTORE GRASSLANDS

98% of our native prairies have been lost. Land trusts work to protect what's left and to restore grasslands where we can. The deep roots of prairie grasses store tremendous amounts of carbon and support impressive populations of wildlife.



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New Climate Focused Initiative Underway *Continued from back page*

Land that is permanently conserved in a natural state offers real hope in the face of climate change. New educational resources are available on our website. Learn about how:

- intact forests and wetlands lessen the impacts of more frequent weather extremes by holding water where it falls, reducing runoff and protecting water quality, decreasing risk of downstream flooding, and keeping our communities safe.
- trapping and storing carbon in soil and vegetation of forests and wetlands significantly reduces the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- preserving shorelands, forests and wetlands (and the natural corridors between them) provides animals and plants with the space needed to adapt to increasing variability in seasonal temperature and precipitation.

Visit northwoodslandtrust.org/climate-conservation-initiative/ for more information. 🌲

Nature-based solutions can mitigate more than 1/3 of carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and help keep global average temperature increases under 2°C, a goal set by the Paris Climate Agreement to prevent the most severe and destructive climate changes.

Permanently conserving healthy land is climate action that has immediate results. Restoration of unhealthy forests and wetlands will take many decades to achieve comparable results.

(Taken from research led by The Nature Conservancy and published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.)

Warmer Winters and Extreme Rain are Stressing our Northern Forests

Forests cover nearly half of Wisconsin and provide a unique opportunity to address climate change.

Warming temperatures and changing precipitation patterns are impacting Wisconsin's urban and rural forests. Wisconsin's average daily temperature has become 3°F warmer and precipitation has increased 17%, about five inches, since 1950. The last two decades have been the warmest on record and last decade was the wettest.



Road damage in Northern Wisconsin from a 2016 extreme storm event. Photo by Jeff Peters / AP

Climate Impacts to Forests

- **Warmer winters.** Winter has warmed about twice as fast as other seasons in Wisconsin over the past few decades. In Northern Wisconsin, where most of Wisconsin's forests are located, warmer winters are reducing the snowpack that insulates trees and other organisms, impacting forest operations such as harvesting and transportation that rely on frozen ground, and creating less lethal conditions for pests and diseases.
- **Deer herds.** With less severe winters, especially in Northern Wisconsin, larger numbers of deer are surviving and having a big impact on forest regeneration as they browse on understory plants, including sensitive species.
- **Extreme weather events.** Extreme storms are happening more frequently and creating a great deal of damage in forests through flooding, erosion, and deposition of nutrients and invasive species seeds. These extreme storms also cause considerable damage to infrastructure on forest land.
- **Summer droughts and longer growing seasons.** Warmer temperatures, longer growing seasons, and decreasing summer precipitation in Northern Wisconsin are increasing the risk for wildfires, pests, and disease. Reduced snowpack and earlier springs are also drying out vegetation at a faster rate in the spring and summer. While prescribed fires could help, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a safe window to use them as the climate changes.



Deer browse on young tree growth, impacting forest regeneration. Photo by Ron Eckstein

This content was provided by the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI), based on their assessment focused on climate impacts to Wisconsin's forests. WICCI is a nationally recognized collaboration of scientists and stakeholders working together to help foster solutions to climate change in Wisconsin. Read their "2021 Assessment Report: Wisconsin's Changing Climate" at wicci.wisc.edu/. 🌲



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

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

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Frank Schroyer

715-479-2490

nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org
www.northwoodslandtrust.org

Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

New Climate Focused Initiative Underway

The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) recently adopted its new Climate Conservation Solutions Initiative. NWLT's goal is to raise awareness and support for natural climate solutions and accelerate the pace of permanent land protection in the northwoods. Natural climate solutions include conservation and restoration of forests, wetlands, grasslands and shorelands. Protecting land is one of the best climate solutions that we have available today.

Fortunately, much of northern Wisconsin's forests and wetlands are still intact. However, our region is now considered a climate haven and is facing a new development



push. As more people migrate north, the population is expected to grow rapidly, putting stress on infrastructure and natural resources. Forests may become subdivided and fragmented, and northern waters may be degraded by unrestrained and poorly planned development.

Action is needed. Please join us in learning more about this initiative. Become advocates and spread the message that

local, permanent land conservation is an effective nature-based solution to climate change. NWLT is doing its part, with the support of its contributors and partners, to protect more of the region's natural landscape and ensure a sustainable future for communities in the northwoods.

Continued on page 7 inside