



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Family, Ecology and Place ~ Dugout Lake Conservation Easement



A fifth generation Fuller fishes from the family dock on Dugout Lake. Photo by Mark Bugnaski

The Fuller family members who comprise Dugout Lake, Inc. signed a conservation easement with the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) on December 14, 2021. Kent and Jerry Fuller of Glenview, Illinois led the effort to conserve the family's 123 acres with over a mile of frontage on Dugout Lake in Hazelhurst in Oneida County.

Kent and his six siblings (along with spouses) share ownership of the property and cabin that their grandmother bought in 1935 as a get-away to find relief from her hay fever allergies. Little did she know at the time, the land would help shape the character of every family member and build a shared environmental ethic that now spans five generations.

Growing up, Kent stayed at the cabin each summer and remembers the forest being mainly aspen and birch, a result of the fires that swept through the region in the early 1900s. His father Alan dreamed of restoring an overstory of large white pines and oaks. He began managing the land by thinning out the early successional species while leaving a patch of aspen to mature as he loved the sweet sound of the leaves blowing in the wind.

Today the woodlands are a diverse mix of pine, maple, aspen, ironwood, basswood, hemlock, balsam, spruce, tamarack, birch, ash and cherry. The other habitat on the property includes meadows, swamps and wetlands, providing habitat for many species of wildlife that depend on uplands, lowlands and access to undisturbed shoreland.

"The primary purpose of this property is to maintain a preserve for wildlife and for having quiet family vacations," said Kent. Each of the siblings' families cherish their own two weeks of time at the cabin every summer.

It was during these summers that their father taught them about the stars, trees and fish,
(Continued next page)

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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:

- 14,575 acres of land conserved
- 95 conservation easements with landowners
- 26 conservation properties owned by NWLT
- 79 miles of shoreline protected
 - 43 miles lakefront
 - 36 miles riverfront

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Dugout Lake Land Stewardship *continued*

and their mother led walks through the forest to look for wildlife and identify plants. It's vitally important to the Fuller family that this legacy of learning from the land continue into the future.

"The number of people who got into biology and the teaching field are numerous in our clan and having the property feeds the love of nature, and we just want to protect this inspirational place," said Kent's sister, Joan Woodard. "I think there are a lot of people in this world that would question our decision. I was talking to a financial planner about it, and we had to explain the backstory of the family to have them understand that it's not about the monetary value of the land."

Kent's son, Nate Fuller, was also instrumental in leading the family to a conservation outcome. Nate first learned about conservation easements when he began working at Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy nearly 20 years ago. At that time, he thought how amazing it would be if their Dugout Lake property could be protected in that way.

Nate and his brothers discussed the pros and cons of easements, if it is the right fit for the family, and the challenges they may face with the sheer number of people involved with diverse opinions and perspectives.

"One of the first things we decided was to explain what a conservation easement is, to have everyone on the same page. Right around that time, my grandmother was turning 100 years old, and we were having our first family reunion where everyone was present. It was a great opportunity to have a family meeting about conservation easements, and there was a good amount of debate and discussion about tax implications and having a 3rd party involved," said Nate.

When it came down to it, the things that resonated with everyone was family and tradition. "The dynamic of the meeting changed then, and it was clear that everyone had the same end goal in mind. They agreed that the idea of conserving the land would be a movement to honor my great-grandparents and grandparents and the land ethic that has been passed on through all these generations. And what better way is there to honor that tradition but through a memorialization with a conservation easement?" said Nate.

The Northwoods Land Trust is so thankful for the Fuller family's donation of a conservation easement to ensure that their legacy of land stewardship continues.



Exploring the family land at Dugout Lake. Photo by Mark Bugnaski



Photo by Mark Bugnaski

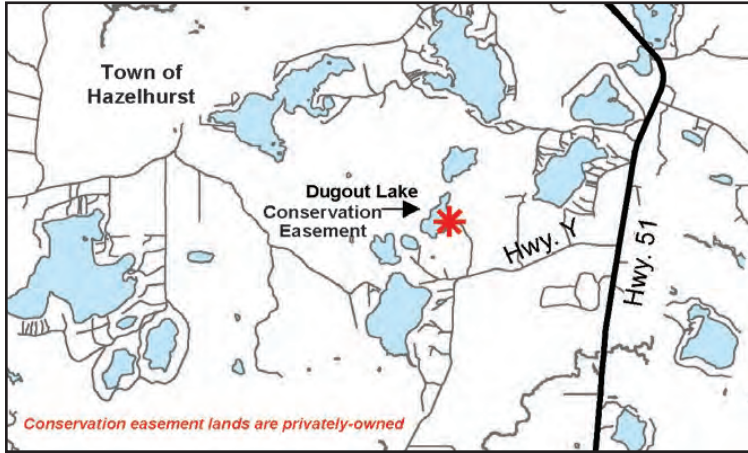
"Over time there are fewer and fewer places for our children and grandchildren to experience what we've been able to experience, so providing this place, secured by an easement is important," said Kent's sister, Alaine York.

Today, the cabin remains a 600-square foot, three-season structure, which helps maintain that rustic family experience. The additional structures include a shower house, fish cleaning house and screen houses for rest and relaxation, reinforcing the idea that family

vacations are for connecting within nature. Only non-motorized boats are used on the 24-acre Dugout Lake, classified as a 'wild lake' by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The lake has only one other property owner along its shore, and the only development is the light footprint made by the Fuller family. The conservation easement limits the level of property improvements and does not allow for subdivision, lessening the future impacts to the lake, forest, wildlife and scenery.

"It's been powerful for me to bring my son to Dugout Lake; it brings me back to my time there as a kid with my dad. The



action like putting a conservation easement on the land that inspires you is the best homage or 'thank you' that you can give to a place of inspiration," said Nate.

The Fuller family found the common thread that is at the core of why this place so special. It is uncommon for conservation easements to be placed on private properties owned by more than several shareholders.

"The property itself isn't going to change that much, but everything else around it will change dramatically over time. Climate change will have a bearing on the vegetation types and water levels. We want it to remain a natural area with minimal management and intervention. We want it to be available for our family to continue to teach young ones about nature so that the same traditions continue. To find a land trust as a partner to help us achieve our goal of honoring our family's land ethic



Photo by Mark Bugnaski

and preserving our treasured memories is incredible," said Kent.

"Beyond offering this gift to our family, there's a benefit to the community, the wildlife, the ecology. We are here for a purpose, and one of them is to do something for the public good. Both family and community are enormously important," ended Kent. 🌲



Nate Fuller holds a picture of the now 90-year old family cabin.
Photo by Mark Bugnaski

sharing between generations and what it means to be up there...it's innate, to be there is to fall in love with it. An



Kent and Jerry Fuller (top) with their sons, Nate, Garth and David and their families share in the wonders of summer at Dugout Lake.

Photo by Mark Bugnaski

Bringing Focus to Our Land Protection Program

The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) is becoming more strategic in its conservation planning and proactive in pursuing new lands to protect through the identification of geographic ‘focus areas.’

Defining these focus areas started with revisiting NWLT’s already established conservation priorities. At the top of the list of priorities is protecting large stretches of undeveloped lake and river shoreline, followed by wild lakes, wetlands, large tracts of forest, old-growth forest habitat, and lands adjacent to already conserved areas.

Next, all of the available data that best represents NWLT’s priorities was gathered and reviewed. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’ data sets including Outstanding Ecological Resource Waters, Conservation Opportunity Areas, Important Bird Areas, and Land Legacy Places (and more) were incorporated into our planning model.

In addition, NWLT found it imperative to include the best climate related data into our planning. The Nature Conservancy’s Resilient & Connected Landscapes model was selected. This model indicates that our seven-county service area is generally highly connected and resilient. Using this model, NWLT can compare lands for their importance to plants and animals to adapt to changing climate conditions. For example, the model shows an area to be more resilient if it has a variety of slope, microhabitats, and moisture regimes. Areas that have fewer barriers like roads and development are considered to be more connected. Identifying lands that are connected and resilient is one way of ensuring that conservation efforts will be impactful toward addressing climate change.

NWLT compiled all of this information into its GIS computer mapping system to see how the data overlays and intersects one another. We then reviewed this data with local experts to identify areas where our investment is likely to have the most impact toward accomplishing conservation priorities. Using all of the information gathered, boundaries were drawn around ecologically-rich areas that in turn became ‘focus areas.’

NWLT now has a total of seven geographic focus areas, some large in scope that span portions of multiple counties, and some that are smaller and lie within one county. The Northern Highland Focus Area is featured on page 5.

Starting this spring, customized mailings will be sent to priority shoreland owners in the three focus areas in Vilas County. Landowners will be invited to learn more about our services to consider conserving their property. Landowner outreach will steadily continue over the next year and a half, including in two focus areas in Langlade County. While we are excited to become more targeted and proactive in our land protection program, we will continue to work with landowners across our service area who wish to conserve their land.

Funding for this effort comes from a lake protection grant through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Land Trust Alliance’s Land & Climate Grant Program. 🌲



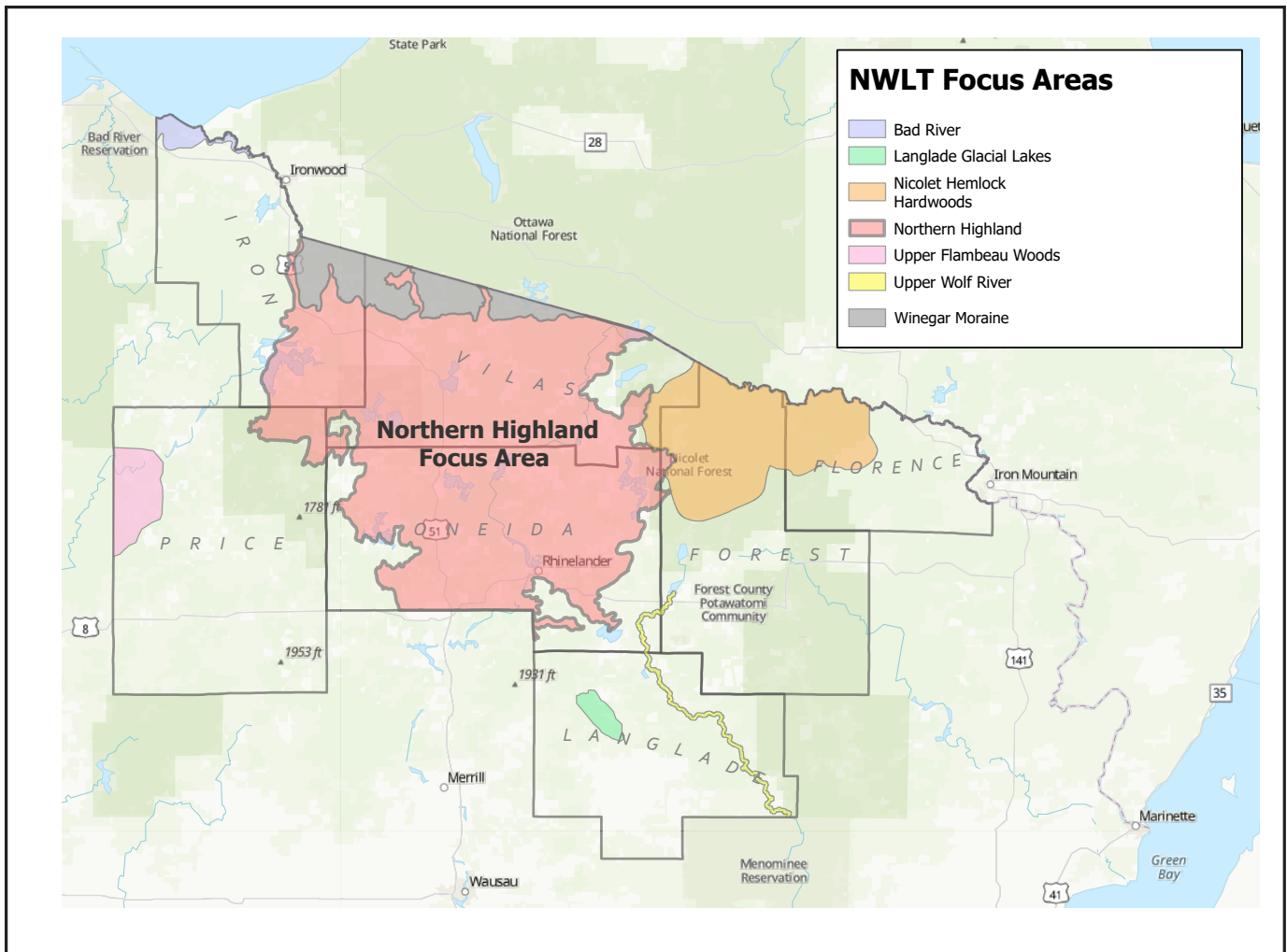


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	CONTRIBUTIONS	INTERESTS	
Name(s): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> I have property I may wish to conserve, please send me the free landowner’s guide.
Address: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	
City: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500	<input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in becoming a volunteer to assist the NWLT.
State: _____ Zip: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000	
Telephone (w): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100		<input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in contributing to NWLT in my will or other planned giving.
Telephone (h): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____	
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Please make checks payable and mail to: **NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST, INC.**
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The **Northern Highland Focus Area** is NWLT's largest of seven defined geographic focal regions intended to bring strategic direction to our land and water protection programs. The Northern Highland is located across most of Vilas and Oneida Counties, and over a portion of Iron County, and is a part of the 'Northern Highland Ecological Landscape' as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

It's notable for its large number of lakes, extensive forests and wetlands. Approximately 50% of this region is forested, 35% is wetlands, and 13% is open water. With the presence of the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, there's an opportunity for private landowners to protect land to provide linkages to public land so animals and plants can adapt to our changing climate.

Features of the Northern Highland Focus Area:

- Globally significant concentration of glacial lakes. It has one of the highest freshwater lake densities in the world, rivaled only by parts of northern Minnesota, Ontario, and Finland.
- Large concentrations of bald eagle, osprey, and common loon nesting sites.
- Abundant forests that keep our surface and ground water clean and provide refuge for wildlife.
- An economy that depends on amazing recreational opportunities and natural resources (e.g. fisheries, forestry). 🌲

The northwoods experienced a surge in year-round residents over the course of the pandemic. In the future, more people will migrate north in response to climate change. As a result, our shoreland and woodland areas will become more urbanized.

Springstead Conservation *Cont. from pg. 8*

On the shore of Stone Lake sits remnants of a small homestead that was purchased by their grandparents in 1927. Helen and Jeanne grew up visiting in the summer - swimming, fishing and picking berries for jam. Later, their mother inherited the property; then their father passed away. The family stopped coming north and in 2004 the buildings were removed.

Helen and Jeanne contacted NWLT in 2019 seeking a way to ensure the property was cared for in an effort to fulfill a promise to their mother that the land would stay intact. "We realized we needed to act during our lifetimes, and felt that working with a land trust to permanently protect it was the right decision. We thought, if we can't keep the land in the family, it should be considered for conservation. We would like to see this place be saved for future generations to be able to experience," said Helen.

"Mom would want to see it preserved. Developing this land would take away from the amazing landscape and beauty. Allowing the land to be built on would change everything," said Jeanne.

"The forest is returning from the past. Our family only harvested firewood from the land, so the forest is pretty mature. We need trees as our climate changes. Our hope is that in 100 years the forest will be old-growth," said Helen.

Now that NWLT is the owner, it intends to manage Tillicum Preserve similar to the past by allowing for passive public recreation like hunting and fishing. With the public Boot Lake Road running through the property, people who enjoy paddling on

under-developed lakes will find a quiet haven. Resource management plans will center on transitioning the hemlock-hardwood forest toward old-growth.

The second Springstead property protected late last year was with the Killebrew Family through the Bertha Helena Paulus Trust. Siblings Emmet (Kip) Killebrew III, Michael Killebrew, Deborah Killebrew and the late Cassie Killebrew Gleckler gifted a conservation easement protecting 26 acres with 1,580 feet of shoreline on the peninsula ('Flambeau Point') on Upper and Lower Springstead Lakes.

The property has been in their family for over 100 years and was the site of the historic Flambeau Lodge that once served as a wilderness retreat destination in the early 1900s. The old camp, dining room and cottages could hold about 35 adventurous guests drawn to the natural beauty of the northwoods.

The camp owners touted their facility as offering the "utmost comfort and satisfaction" for rest and recreation, with "tramping" being a favorite diversion for those who care not fish constantly." A private bridge extended from the scenic point, over the channel, to the opposite side of the lakes where a granary, stable and gardens were located.

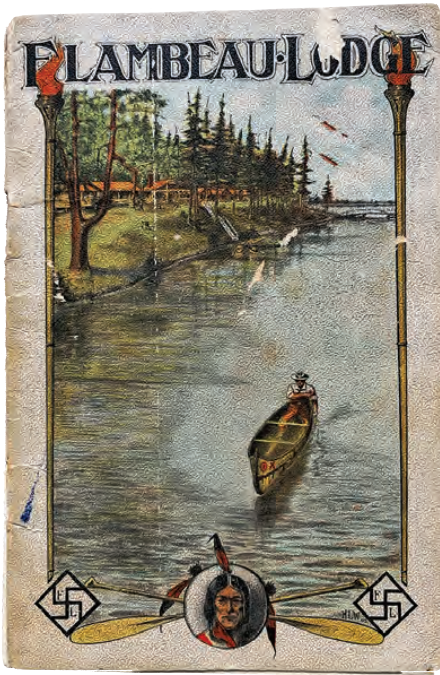
Twenty-six acres including the site of the former lodge are now protected. The large trees of the northern hardwood woodlands with mature hemlock groves sheltered guests who frequented



Stone Lake, Tillicum Preserve.



Helen Towner at Tillicum Preserve. Tillicum is believed to mean 'friend' and is derived from 'Tilixam' meaning 'person, people or tribe' in the Chinook Indian Nation.



The cover of the Flambeau Lodge brochure from 1910 shows the former buildings on the point and the bridge that spanned the channel between Upper and Lower Springstead Lakes.



Siblings Kip and Deborah Killebrew on Springstead Lakes.

the trail system around the property. The Killebrew family still maintains some of the trails today.

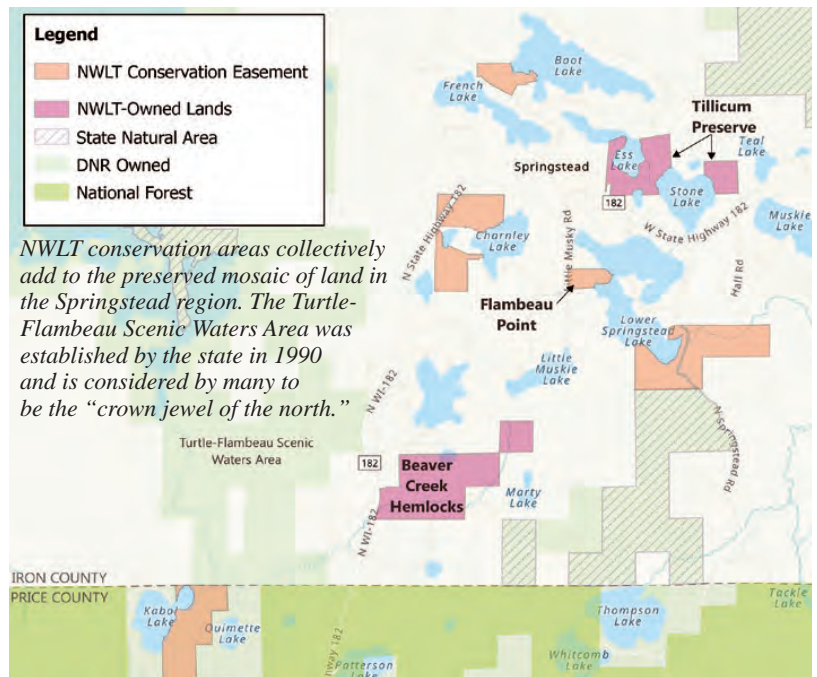
“The visits that myself and my three Killebrew siblings made to Springstead Lakes throughout our lifetimes provided a powerful refuge for us,” said Kip. “Originally acquired by our great-grandfather, Randall W. Burns, coming to Springstead allowed us to nest and explore nature at its best.

“Nearly every summer, when school let out, our mother would drive us the distance from Colorado then Pennsylvania to northern Wisconsin where our grandmother Helena Paulus would be waiting. Work and play blended into the existence of everyday life in Springstead. Cleaning, wood cutting, swimming, painting, cooking, boating, canoeing, bird watching, fishing and tramping kept us fit and happy. The woods, the lake and the amazing creatures of nature that were all around us were healing as well.

“As adults the tradition of coming to Springstead continues. Now with the fifth generation coming to the cabin, time marches on and the world continues to change. We realized that as much as possible we want to limit the development of the land and maintain the lake and its forests.



The mature forest on Flambeau Point.



NWLT conservation areas collectively add to the preserved mosaic of land in the Springstead region. The Turtle-Flambeau Scenic Waters Area was established by the state in 1990 and is considered by many to be the “crown jewel of the north.”

“Fortunately, we had the option to protect the land around Flambeau Point by placing it in a conservation easement. We are very grateful for this option and feel it best allows the lake and land to continue to provide refuge to those so fortunate to visit,” ended Kip.

To-date a total of five families have protected their land in the Springstead region with NWLT. In addition, NWLT’s recently acquired Beaver Creek Hemlocks Conservation Area is located here. Together, these properties are serving a public good, protecting sensitive shoreline, water quality, wildlife habitat, large swaths of forestland and a bit of northwoods history.

The completion of the Tillicum Preserve and Flambeau Point Conservation Easement projects were supported through grants from the Caerus Foundation, Inc., Modestus Bauer Foundation and James D. & Jane P. Watermolen Foundation, Inc. 🌲

Join Us at Our 2022 Annual Meeting

When: Friday, June 10th at 1:00 pm.

Where: Sherman Town Hall outdoor pavilion, Iron County, WI.

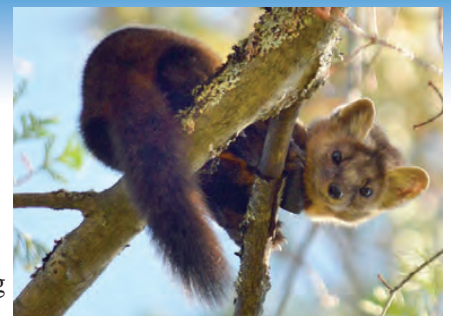
The meeting will showcase the conservation projects over the past year in Iron County and beyond, as well as programmatic accomplishments and a financial report.

The featured guest presenter is Zach Wilson of the Iron County Land & Water Conservation Department. Zach is the County Conservation Specialist who has been studying the endangered American marten over the past fifteen years. He leads the Marten Project where students learn about marten ecology, habitat, tracking and trapping. Researchers from all over have used data collected through this program to better understand more about this special animal.

Following the meeting, there will be a social with refreshments and hors d’oeuvres.

Following the social, there will be two optional outdoor excursions to conservation project areas in the Springstead region. The first is a pontoon ride launching from Upper Springstead Lake, where the new conservation easement on Flambeau Point will be viewed. The second option is a paddle on Stone Lake where participants will launch from the newly donated Tillicum Preserve. Space is limited.

RSVP by June 8th online at www.northwoodslandtrust.org and click on the homepage event post. Or, email carrie@northwoodslandtrust.org or call us at (715) 479-2490. 🌲





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Leaving a Lasting Legacy for the Northwoods

Springstead Conservation Donations Build on the Past

Located in northern Wisconsin, Springstead, a small unincorporated community within the Town of Sherman in southern Iron County, has a long history that centers around its connected waters and forests. The Chippewa navigated the lakes and rivers that later became trade routes for French-Canadians and transportation routes during the great pinery days.

After the virgin forests were cut over and agricultural attempts failed, the tourism industry began to take shape. Wilderness lodges hosted visitors and guides who came by train and used the waterways and portage routes for hunting and fishing expeditions.

These waters and forests continue to be of significant importance today. Local townships rely on the natural resources to attract residents and grow commerce and tourism. While the Springstead area has been changing with more residential development along its lakeshores, it continues to be rural and remote in nature.

Local conservation projects through the efforts of Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) have been making their own collective impact in Springstead. On December 29, 2021, two families stepped up to conserve their lakeshore properties, adding to the mosaic of protected resources.

Sisters Helen Towner of Cape Girardeau, MO and Jeanne Sposito of Waukegan, IL donated approximately 122 acres of land

outright to NWLT, establishing the Tillicum Preserve, which sits just north of Highway 182.

The Tillicum Preserve includes a remarkable 7,500+/- feet of natural shoreline on three lakes. The majority of the frontage is on Stone Lake, with the rest being on Ess Lake and Keough (Helena) Lake.

Continued inside on page 6



Stone Lake is featured in this watercolor painting by land donor Helen Towner.

Join the Northwoods Land Trust on June 10th for the 2022 Annual Meeting. See page 7 for details.