



# NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY  
FOR THE NORTHWOODS



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

Fall 2014

## Crawling Stone Woods - A Conservation Land Donation (Part 2)

*NOTE: Part 1 of the Crawling Stone Woods story was included in the May 2014 newsletter. The newsletter can be downloaded from the NWLT website at [www.northwoodslandtrust.org/NWLTnews](http://www.northwoodslandtrust.org/NWLTnews).*

The 42.4-acre Crawling Stone Woods property was donated to the Northwoods Land Trust on December 31st of 2013. Gifted as a charitable contribution from Richard (Dick) Galaty and George and Carol Schneider this parcel of woodlands and wetlands is located near Crawling Stone Lake in the Town of Lac du Flambeau in Vilas County.

According to Dick, the adjacent lake property was originally acquired by grandparents Charles and Adelaide Rice in 1921. What is now the Crawling Stone Woods property has been part of the backyard playground for five generations of the extended Rice, Galaty and Schneider families.

Dick and Debby Galaty and brother Bill Galaty's wife Diane continue to live in the original two cabins. Sister Carol Schneider built a new home with her husband George on the lakeshore in 2002.

As Dick noted in Part 1, they continued the family lake tradition even while living in California. Debby brought their kids to the lake all summer for five or six summers. "We never missed a summer up there," Dick stated. "It is my sense of place. And now for our kids, it



*George Schneider and Diane Galaty view a new sign celebrating the extended family's donation of the Crawling Stone Woods property.*

has also become their sense of place."

Dick's career in banking focused on managing risks in lending and investments for First Interstate, CitiCorp and Wells Fargo banks. He retired as Executive Vice-President and Risk Manager for the Rocky Mountain Region for Interstate Bank. Debby taught elementary school before raising their three kids and doing volunteer work.

Bill Galaty started as an Episcopal Priest in their home town of Oak Park, Illinois. Now deceased, he spent 20 years in the ministry serving a church in DePere, Wisconsin. Diane was also a primary school teacher.

*(Continued next page)*

### **MISSION:**

*The Northwoods Land Trust (NWLT) 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.*

*Phone: (715) 479-2490 Email: [nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org](mailto:nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org) Web site: [www.northwoodslandtrust.org](http://www.northwoodslandtrust.org)*

## Northwoods Land Trust

### Purpose:

- To provide education and utilize voluntary conservation options with private landowners.
- To preserve natural shorelands on lakes, rivers and other waterways for protection of water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, erosion control, and natural scenic beauty.
- To conserve private woodlands and encourage landowners to manage their forest lands in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- To accept perpetual stewardship for secure conservation agreements with private landowners, such as easements, land donations and property acquisitions.
- To annually monitor NWLT land protection agreements.
- To seek support through donations, grants, endowments memberships and volunteers.
- To leverage our conservation efforts through partnering with other organizations and agencies.

Newsletter Editor: Bryan Pierce  
Staff Writer: Trisha Moore



## Crawling Stone Woods - *continued*



*Third generation siblings Carol Schneider, Dick Galaty and Bill Galaty and their families gathered each summer at their Crawling Stone Lake cabins (1992 photo).*

Carol taught school for many years in Bellevue, Iowa, where George owned Bellevue Sand & Gravel Company. Dick commented that “she practically became ‘Mrs. Bellevue.’ She did everything for that little town. She taught swimming lessons, ran the Campfire Girls program, and served on the library board. She also started a preschool when they didn’t have one, which she ran until Alzheimer’s made it impossible for her to continue.”

The three families all started coming up together for two weeks and sharing the cabins. “It was a great way for all the cousins and aunts and uncles to get to know each other,” said Dick. “We had a great big confectioners table on the porch of the old cabin, which we still have, and we all ate on the porch. It was just like going to camp. It was a great time.”

“It is nice that our kids’ generation is now very close because they grew up together for two weeks each summer,” Dick continued. “They would get up in the morning, and the minute everyone was up the boats were running, and people were water skiing or sailing. When the sun went down, the boats were put away and that was it for the day, but they spent their whole day on the water. All three families that remain spent a lot of time up there together, and we still do.”

“When my grandparents bought the cabin, there were virtually no trees in sight,” remembered Dick. On the backland property, “there wasn’t a tree standing there when I came up in the 1950s.” The property had been logged for pines in the late 1890s or early 1900s, and it had also burned over. Before the trees grew back, the back 40 was mostly used for picking blueberries.

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*“When my grandparents bought the cabin, there were virtually no trees in sight.” - Dick Galaty*

### You Can Help!

The Northwoods Land Trust is a non-profit, tax exempt conservation organization. Your gift of cash, stocks, bonds or other financial support is fully tax deductible as charitable contributions under federal law. Donations of property or conservation easements may also provide tax benefits while promoting the conservation of our northwoods.



## Crawling Stone Woods - *continued*

“About nine years ago we started thinking about what to do with the back property,” Dick related. “By then, the ownerships passed down to succeeding generations had become more complex. We had two cousins who never came up there and had no attachment to the property. We were trying to figure out what to do with it. We had a few choices. We could keep it and buy out the cousins, put it into some kind of conservancy, or put it on the market. We struggled with that question for years.”

“We knew we didn’t want it developed if we could prevent it,” continued Dick. “My cousins were willing to let George and me acquire their interests. The three families - the Rice family, Schneider family and Galaty family - all worked together to get this accomplished. When you think of the fact that we had seven owners, and everybody worked together to make sure we could get it done, it was pretty incredible.”

“It was real important to all of us to try to preserve the open space,” Dick said. “George, my sister and I were able to give it to the Northwoods Land Trust. The next generation is very attached to the lake property, and their kids are getting attached to it too. We wanted to preserve the area as close as possible to the way it has always been.”

“The Crawling Stone Lakes Association is also trying to preserve the lakes,” Dick noted. “We knew we had wetlands which are extremely important to the viability of the lake. We wanted to keep those wetlands as pristine as we possibly can. It made sense to us to try to preserve it and keep it undeveloped forever.”

NWLT’s long-term goals are to manage the forest for northern red oak, white pine and red pine as it remains valuable woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitat. A forest stewardship management plan has been prepared for NWLT by professional foresters John Huppert and Timothy Mulhern. NWLT is in the process of enrolling this land into the state’s Managed Forest Law program.

According to Huppert, the first shelterwood cut is expected to take place in about 12 years to release the forest canopy sufficiently to allow for new oak and pine regeneration. Access roads for logging will be gated for use as hiking trails open to the public. The land is adjacent to Lac du Flambeau tribal reservation land, and close to two properties previously conserved with conservation easements granted to NWLT.

“One thing I am really happy about is that, although my sister (Carol) is in the final stages of Alzheimer’s, this is something she really wanted to get done,” said Dick. “I wish she was capable of understanding that we did get it accomplished, because keeping the land in open space and getting it into a conservancy was very important to her too. At least we got it done. It is a real special place in my heart and in the hearts of all the family.”



*NWLT dedicated Crawling Stone Woods on June 6, 2014 with a guided walk through the property. The hiking trail is now open to the public.*

*“It was real important to all of us to try to preserve the open space... We wanted to preserve the area as close as possible to the way it has always been.”  
- Dick Galaty*

### DIRECTIONS TO THE PROPERTY:

To get to the Crawling Stone Woods, turn north on Silver Beach Drive about one mile east of County Hwy. D on state Hwy. 70 south of Lac du Flambeau. Go 1/2 mile north to the T-intersection and turn east to the property. Parking is along the road.

*Credit: portions of the stories were written by Diane Galaty for publication in the Crawling Stone Lakes Association newsletter.*

## Pickerel Lake and the Whisker Lake Wilderness Area

John and Timmie Clemetsen of Harvard, IL, granted the most recent conservation easement in August to the Northwoods Land Trust to permanently protect 23.82 acres of land with 2,142 feet of frontage on Pickerel Lake in Florence County. Pickerel Lake was identified by the DNR as a “wild lake” warranting enhanced protection. The conserved parcel is also adjacent to the federally-designated Whisker Lake Wilderness Area on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

The part of their property placed under the conservation easement was selected mainly because of the watershed. “John and I are very concerned about water and the future,” said Timmie. “It seemed like a natural place to start to protect the spring seep hillside and stream bank where the overflow from Shadow Lake comes into Pickerel Lake and another stream that comes in from the Whisker Lake Wilderness Area.”

“It is not the only, but it is the main water supply for our lake,” Timmie added. “We don’t know what could happen in the next 25 years, whether our family will still own the property or not. Since we are across the lake from the Wilderness Area, it is an ideal spot for a hunting or fishing lodge. Who knows what they would do?”

John recalled that “we became more aware of doing something like this because we put 55 acres of land we own into what is called the Land & Water Reserve with the State of Illinois, which is essentially a conservation easement. It is very similar to what we have here in that it protects a lot of water.”

John Clemetsen was born and raised and lived in Long Grove, Illinois, with his family. Later, after he and Timmie were married, they moved there also. John’s parents were Erling and Florence Clemetsen. “Both went by a nickname,” he noted. “My father was known as Clem and my mother was Fitzie.”

“We were in the woodworking business, doing cabinet making in Chicago,” said John. “My family all liked the outdoors. I can’t say we were much campers, but we enjoyed canoeing, fishing and a little bit of hunting. I grew up with that.”

John’s parents were very close friends with their neighbors in Florence County – the Guy Reed family on Shadow Lake. “They were neighbors where we lived in Illinois too,” he said.

“Our land was originally owned by the Reeds,” John recalled. “We never did figure out if the Reeds wanted neighbors up here or if they wanted to get rid of my



*John & Timmie Clemetsen celebrate the permanent protection of 23.82 acres of their family land on Pickerel Lake in Florence County.*

parents as house guests all the time, but that is how we were able to buy the property.”

“My parents had my sister Beryl and me buy the property, because they didn’t want it in their estate,” John said. “We’d never seen it, so we didn’t know what we were getting into. Beryl passed away quite a while ago. She liked it, but was never here very much because she lived farther away in Iowa. After we were married, Timmie bought my sister’s interest out.”

Timmie was born and raised in Florida. “I loved the outdoors,” she said. “My parents did not hunt or fish, we just grew up outside in Florida. I moved to Illinois because sorority sisters and I spun the bottle and it landed on Chicago. We all wrote for jobs and got jobs in the Chicago area. I met John on a blind date.”

The Clemetsens bought the land from the Reeds in 1958. John and Timmie were married in 1961. “When I came up here, I recognized that it was heaven and loved it,” she commented.

Altogether, the Clemetsens now own 360 acres in Florence County, including the original purchase of 125 acres from the Reeds. They added land acquired from other people all the way up to the border Brule River on the north.

“The cabin was built in 1959 by Otto Kohlberg, a contractor from Florence,” said John. “We hired a stone mason who had a cabin just outside our property to build the fireplace, so it was all done locally. Mr. Reed was very strong about hiring local people to do things, and he

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## Pickerel Lake - *continued*

convinced my father to do the same. Being in the wood-working business, we also used to prefab some things down in our factory and ship them up here to be assembled – like our outhouses.”

The cottage isn’t insulated, so it is primarily used from May to October. “We used to come up for Thanksgiving weekend,” said John. “We always had heat and electricity, but it was hard to get water since we had the cabin drained. We used a hand pump or sometimes we’d bring water from home in jugs.”

“We always had Thanksgiving dinner here and we cut a Christmas tree,” added Timmie. “We got very innovative with heating buckets of water on the stove.” Originally the electricity was from a generator, although now it is on a utility line.

For years they also didn’t have a telephone. “The guy who owned the grocery store in town would send one of his kids out to tell us there was a phone call, and we’d have to go back into town to make the call,” remembered John. “That got pretty old, so we put the telephone in. Even now, when the phone rings, we jump. We just aren’t used to the phone ringing here.”



*Spring seep hillsides, stream banks and about 2,142 feet of entirely natural shoreline frontage was protected on Pickerel Lake.*

John and Timmie have three sons – Bruce, Scott and Dean. “Scott is the only one who still lives in Illinois and is close enough to enjoy it,” said Timmie. “Scott has four sons, and they hunt and fish and really love it up here. The other two sons live in Denver, Colorado and Albany, Oregon, so they don’t get here very often. Unfortunately their children aren’t banking as many memories of it, but they love it when they come.”

“It is kind of special,” reflected John, “the last two years all three boys have come back to go bird hunting and fishing for a two or three-day visit, so all four male Clemetsens get together. The boys grew up here, and we have baby pictures of them crawling around before they could even walk. Some of them were probably here before they were born.”

“All three hunt and fish, and are quite the naturalists as well,” said Timmie. “They love the outdoors, and we are very proud of them. They are passing that on to their children in their respective areas, which we are also very proud of.”

One of the major things John and Timmie have enjoyed most on the property is the solitude, peace and quiet, “unless all the eight grandchildren are here – then it is not so peaceful and quiet,” said John. “It is not a bad chaos, but there is enough area to get away from it too if you want to.”

The Clemetsen family has a long list of wildlife they have seen including bear, otter, bobcat, fisher, and lots of deer and turkeys. “The only thing we haven’t seen is a wolf, but we hear them,” noted John. “The last three years have been fun because we’ve had a pair of trumpeter swans that migrate through here and spend four or five days on the lake in the fall. We are not on a major flyway for waterfowl, but we also have resident wood ducks, mergansers, mallards and geese. We had an eagle’s nest for a while on the conserved property and we see eagles and osprey all the time. It has only been in the last seven or eight years that we’ve seen wild turkeys here. Now they are all over the place.”

“Since the late 1970s, I’ve become very involved and very interested in ruffed grouse hunting,” said John. “I learned about grouse habitat work from the Ruffed Grouse Society. I’ve had their biologists here as consultants about the habitat. Dan Dessecker really got us started. I’ve also worked with Florence County, DNR and Forest Service staff on grouse habitat in the Florence District. I kind of became known as the ‘Grouse Guy.’ I just got very involved with it. I also joined The Wildlife Society, and it has been a real enjoyment.”

“When I started grouse hunting, I was the dog,” said John. “I came up with several friends to try it. My Dad hunted once or twice up here with Mr. Reed, and he said ‘no way can you ever hit one of them.’ Maybe that was the

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## **Pickerel Lake - *continued***

challenge. So we started asking ‘where do you go look for these things, where do they live, what do they eat?’ It grew from there.”

“I learned what the birds need, which is early successional forest and particularly aspen,” he reflected. “We have tremendous numbers of birds because we have early successional forest habitats as well as older forests. We already had quite a bit of aspen forest, so we started to do clear-cutting in small patches. We’ve kept that up since then, and some of our first harvests are probably ready for cutting again within the next five or ten years.” Retired DNR forester Stu Boron is now their private forester. “I’ve known Stuart for 30 years.”

“One result of those timber harvests is that we have golden winged warblers,” noted John. “Researcher Amber Roth from Michigan Technological University did her Master’s thesis on woodcock and golden winged warblers. She was working for the DNR in Rhinelander at the time so we had her come over. She found golden winged warblers all over the place.”

“We’ve had a lot of surveys done on the lake, including a bat survey one night,” said Timmie. “We had no idea we had three different bat species.”

John stated that DNR fish biologist, Greg Matske, also visited Pickerel Lake recently. “Greg came in and said, ‘don’t even touch this lake. Don’t ever do anything to it. This is probably one of the least disturbed, lowest human impact lakes in the entire county.’ He was very impressed.”

*“Don’t even touch this lake.  
Don’t ever do anything to it.  
This is probably one of the least  
disturbed, lowest human impact  
lakes in the entire county.”  
- from DNR fish biologist  
Greg Matske*

“We were a little worried about what might have happened to the lake and fish this past winter with the length of the winter, depth of the ice and amount of snow,” he added. “But we still caught bass this summer, which are one of the species most affected by low oxygen rates.”

“It has just been a lot of fun,” John commented. “The biology that I’ve learned has been very interesting.” With his knowledge, John was appointed to serve on the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board.

The Clemetsens also remember when Whisker Lake became designated a federal Wilderness Area in the late 1970s. “We used to take our jeep and go wandering around the trails through it years ago,” said John. “We really

didn’t know where our property line was until the Forest Service surveyed the Wilderness boundary. People used to go through the National Forest land and come to the lake. When the Wilderness Area was designated, that stopped a lot of people from coming in with their human impacts.”

“One time at Thanksgiving we found a campsite on the lake shore with a backpack where someone had roasted a loon,” recalled John. “We passed it on to a warden, but don’t know if anything ever came of it. Whatever he ate, he deserved it!”

“We had the ‘Motleys,’ a group of people from our home town area who loved the outdoors,” reflected Timmie. “We were all amateur naturalists and we would come and spend five days over a long weekend. We were called the ‘Motleys’ because we were all different ages and backgrounds. We made trips throughout the year to places in Wisconsin and Illinois to look at natural areas – prairies, woods and swamps.”

Timmie noted that Wayne Schennum, a private professional biologist who had worked for the McHenry County Conservation District, came up with the group. “He is one of the best all around naturalists we know for birds and plants and fish. He was a very good friend of neighbor Barbara Turner and used to love to come up here botanizing. Wayne would take the ‘Motleys’ all around on our property and the Shadow Lake property to see and experience different things. Wayne found a number of rare orchids on an adjacent white cedar swamp.” That cedar swamp drains from the Wilderness Area and into the conservation easement property.

The Clemetsens made contact with the Northwoods Land Trust when Executive Director Bryan Pierce gave a presentation about voluntary conservation options to the University of Wisconsin’s Coverts Program reunion. “I went through the Coverts program in 1997,” remembered John. “It was about the third session they ever ran. I got

*(Continued next page)*



*Pickerel Lake is a DNR-listed “wild lake” and is adjacent to the federally-designated Whisker Lake Wilderness Area.*



**Pickereel Lake - continued**

involved in that mainly through Dan Dessecker of the Ruffed Grouse Society.”

There are no reserved development rights within the conservation easement except for an access road to adjacent parcels and forest management. From the land trust’s perspective, having the conservation easement right next to the federal Wilderness Area has added benefits. It provides greater protection for both the Wilderness Area and conservation easement property, and more contiguous wildlife habitat.

“Our children wanted to do it,” added Timmie. “We’ve been talking about a putting a conservation easement on the property for many years as a way to keep taxes in check as well as to protect the property. We’ve all grown to be very attached to it. This piece was a way to get started. Protecting the water seemed like the most important thing to do first.”

“We’d like to keep that piece just like it is now,” reflected John. “Things change, but we only want it to change naturally, not with something we’ve done to it.” He hopes future generations of the family will come to appreciate and enjoy it as they have. His advice: “Continue the protection and maybe expand it if you can.”



*“We’d like to keep that piece just like it is now. Things change, but we only want it to change naturally, not with something we’ve done to it.”  
- John Clemetsen*



**JOIN THE NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST**  
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**Membership Contributions**

- Individual \$25
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- 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.

**Please make checks payable to:**

Northwoods Land Trust, Inc.  
PO Box 321  
Eagle River, WI 54521-0321

- I am interested in contributing to NWLT in my will.



# NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

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*Please remember NWLT in your annual and planned giving. Give a gift that will last forever!*


## Trade Lands

### What are they and how can they help?

Trade lands are properties that may not meet NWLT's minimum conservation criteria for lasting protection. Landowners may still consider donating those properties to the land trust as trade lands, and allow them to be sold to provide funds for conservation of ecologically significant land elsewhere.

There are several benefits to outright donation of land: (1) it is a simple transaction, (2) it releases the landowner from responsibility for managing the land and paying the property taxes, and (3) it may provide substantial income tax deductions and estate tax benefits. Properties with significant conservation values may also be protected first with a conservation easement and then sold with the permanent restrictions in place, using the proceeds to protect other land.

Trade Lands can include properties with lake or river shorelines - with or without a cabin or other structures (see the Pickerel Lake lot donated on the right). However, trade lands can also include residences in town and even commercial buildings or lots. Trade lands can be donated up front to take advantage of income tax benefits, or as a bequest in a will.

For all land donations, it is important that the landowners and NWLT agree in writing on the intent of the donation. The NWLT Board of Directors must also agree to accept any land donation, so we encourage any prospective donors to contact us well in advance. We also always recommend donors consult with their own financial and legal advisors. For more information, call (715) 479-2490. 



*Proceeds from the sale of this Trade Land donation of a 100-foot lot on Pickerel Lake west of Eagle River will support NWLT's efforts to conserve other properties. Note the bass and panfish spawning beds in the lake.*