



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

HELP LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY FOR THE NORTHWOODS

Wisconsin Land Trust of the Year Award Winner

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

Winter 2009-2010

A Celebration of Conservation Milestones

The close of 2009 brought with it several truly major milestones for the Northwoods Land Trust. By the end of the year, the land trust has now protected a total of **over 5,000 acres** of natural shorelands, woodlands and wetlands in northern Wisconsin. These conservation lands included over 50 different private properties.

In addition, these projects have permanently preserved over **20 miles** of shorelines on 40 different lakes, and another nearly **7 miles** of natural shorelines on rivers and streams. Among these are protected shorelines on nine lakes identified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as “wild lakes” and at least five more priority river and stream segments recognized by the WDNR Northern Rivers Initiative.

In 2009 alone, the land trust permanently protected about **1,050 acres** of land with eight conservation projects. These projects included completion of seven more perpetual conservation easements and our third outright donation of conservation land.

In early 2009, Thomas and Eileen Pawlacyk of Neenah signed a conservation easement on 23 acres of woodlands in the town of St. Germain. This site is located along the Hwy. 70 corridor and includes public snowmobile trail and



A total of 27 miles of natural lake and river shorelines have now been protected by NWLT, including this additional 1,500 feet of frontage on the Eagle River and Nine Mile Creek by Don & Sue Kratsch.



Tom and Eileen Pawlacyk granted a conservation easement protecting 23 acres of productive woodlands and preserving natural scenic beauty for a paved bicycle trail and a snowmobile trail as public recreational resources.

paved bicycle trail corridors. The Pawlacyks are also previous conservation easement donors for other large properties in the towns of Plum Lake and St. Germain.

Don and Sue Kratsch of St. Paul finalized their second conservation easement, providing protection for over 1,500 feet of natural shoreline frontage on the Eagle River and Nine Mile Creek. Located immediately across the stream from their previously-conserved 21-acre property, a scenic corridor of shoreline is now preserved upstream from the Burnt Rollways Dam on the Three Lakes Chain of Lakes.

(Continued on page 2)

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. The Northwoods Land Trust covers areas of Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Iron and Price Counties.

Phone: (715) 479-2490 Email: nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org Web site: 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



Conservation Milestones *(continued)*



Jeff Wiesner (holding sign) celebrates granting a conservation easement on his family land with NWLT Board members (from left) Mitch Olson, Vice-President Bob Martini, Bill Dickens, Executive Director Bryan Pierce, President Mary Schwaiger, Dan Wisniewski, Treasurer Sue Coffman, Secretary Willa Schmidt, Meta Reigel, Beth Tornes, Jerry Parker and John Huppert.

Jeff and Sara Wiesner of Waukesha also protected a 37.8-acre parcel of productively-managed woodlands along with over 1,000 feet of entirely natural shoreline on Bearskin Lake in the town of Hazelhurst, Oneida County. This property features a natural spring open year-round that flows into the lake, as well as active bald eagle and broadwing hawk nests. This property was protected in honor of Jeff's parents who purchased the land a number of years ago to keep it from being over-developed.

Also in honor of their parents, the Behm family of Jeffery Behm, Donald Behm, Jeanette Schachtner, Sylvia Behm and David Behm granted a conservation easement on their family's 78.5-acres. This former farmstead includes valuable woodlands and wildlife habitat in the town of Washington, Vilas County.

As volunteers and supporters of both the Northwoods Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin, Dr. Walter and Donna Gager of Brookfield made their own personal commitment to conserve their 120 acres of woodlands and wetlands in the town of Pelican, Oneida County. Managed as productive

(Continued on page 3)

Valuable ephemeral ponds, swamp and other wetlands, and productively-managed woodlands were conserved by Dr. Walter & Donna Gager in the town of Pelican, Oneida County (right), and on a former farmstead property by the Behm family in the town of Washington, Vilas County (left).



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.

Conservation Milestones *(continued)*

forest land, the property includes several vernal ponds of importance to breeding frogs and salamanders.

A unique, 11-acre property in the town of St. Germain, Vilas County, was protected by ecologists Dr. Gene and Phyllis Likens of New York. Both work for the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. The property was previously owned by Dr. Forest Stearns, a forest ecologist from Milwaukee.

Dr. Stearns initiated a study of forest regeneration on this property over 50 years ago, which was continued by Dr. Likens. A research report titled “One Hundred Years of Recovery of a Pine Forest in Northern Wisconsin” was published in *American Midland Naturalist* in 2002. The site includes natural frontage on both Found Lake and an unnamed bog lake.

At the close of the year, the largest single conservation easement to date protected by the Northwoods Land Trust was completed on over 800 acres of land in the towns of Newbold and Pine Lake in Oneida County. Purchased by Walter and Janet (Nina) Wellenstein, and gifted to their adult children through the Highlands Limited Partnership of Wisconsin, the Wellenstein family protected in perpetuity several miles of natural shorelines on Fredrich’s Flowage, Douglas Lake (a DNR-identified “wild lake”), and Tom Doyle and McCabe Creeks.

Siblings Michael Wellenstein, Charles Wellenstein, Rick Wellenstein, Anna Wellenstein and Bart Wellenstein signed the easement to ensure these family lands will remain intact. This property is also adjacent to a 595-acre conservation easement protected by the Wellensteins in 2007, providing for an extensive block of 1,400 acres of conserved lands.



NWLT's third outright donation of conservation land, the new Dugan Squash Lake Nature Preserve west of Rhinelander, features over 4,000 feet of shoreline frontage including a long, narrow esker ridge.



Above: the site of over 50 years of research documenting 100 years of forest recovery in Vilas County was preserved by Dr. Gene & Phyllis Likens of New York with a conservation easement.

Below: several miles of Fredrich's Flowage and other water resources were conserved by the Wellenstein family through NWLT's largest single conservation easement to date on over 800 acres in Oneida County.



NWLT's third outright donation of conservation land includes over 4,000 feet of natural shoreline on Squash Lake west of Rhinelander. Donated by Pat Dugan and Sue Hausserman-Dugan, this unique property features a long, narrow esker peninsula extending out into the lake. This generous gift will become the “Dugan Squash Lake Nature Preserve.”

Look for more details on all of these outstanding conservation contributions in future newsletters. Our sincerest Thank You to all of these landowners for their outstanding commitment in 2009 to leaving a legacy of protected shorelands, woodlands and wetlands for all future generations to come.



Preserving Shoreline on Big Crawling Stone Lake

By Trisha Moore, Conservation Specialist

The Vilas County area is considered one of the most highly concentrated freshwater lake areas in the world. With increased development and use, shorelines and the habitats they provide suffer from erosion, invasive species, pollution, and unnatural modifications. The Northwoods Land Trust continues to make shoreline protection a top priority. NWLT reached a new milestone at the end of 2009 with over twenty miles of lake shoreline conserved.

One significant shoreline protection project was completed last year. Helen and Dick Thomas of Winnetka, IL, signed a conservation easement on 675 feet of frontage on Big Crawling Stone Lake in the town of Lac du Flambeau, Vilas County. With few stretches of undeveloped shoreline remaining on Big Crawling Stone Lake, the Thomas family made an important contribution toward conservation on the 1,466-acre lake.

In the early 1970s the Thomas family moved back to the Chicago area from England and searched for property on Lake Geneva, where they had once owned a home. After seeing how expensive homes had become there, they began a search in the northwoods for property on a lake. When they happened upon the Big Crawling Stone property that their home now sits on, they were taken by the large trees and the views. Dick, Helen, and their three children spent much of their summers on the lake boating, swimming and wildlife watching.



Dick and Helen Thomas ensured lasting preservation of 675 feet of natural shoreline on Big Crawling Stone Lake in Lac du Flambeau.

With a diverse wildlife habitat, the Thomas family has had the pleasure of observing loons, ducks, turtles, beaver, a bald eagle family, and a variety of other animals on their land. When asked what they have enjoyed most about their property, Helen answered that the children liked water sports growing up, but that it is mostly the natural beauty that they love now. “I think it’s just the tranquility,” she said. “Living a busy life in the city with lots of cars and people, you come up here and it is quiet...the trees, the wonderful aspects of nature all around you, it’s relaxing.”

Several years ago, much of the land surrounding the Thomas property was being sold. Helen and Dick decided to purchase 3.5 acres, which was already split into multiple lots and also included about 1.5 acres of wetland and the 675 feet of frontage on Big Crawling Stone Lake. The Thomas family bought the property with the intention of conserving it with no structures on it, despite a few very valuable building sites.

“The intent was to preserve it, to keep it more natural,” Dick stated. After meeting with the Northwoods Land Trust’s executive director, Bryan Pierce in 2006, Dick and Helen decided to move ahead. The conservation easement was completed in December of 2008.

Dick and Helen’s three children were in favor of the easement. With three grandchildren growing to know and use the land, Dick and Helen hope that the property will be taken care of and enjoyed in the same way that they have throughout the years. “They are careful kids and love the wildlife too,” Helen said of her children and grandchildren.

Both Helen and Dick say that this decision to conserve their land was a very personal choice. Dick noted: “I think for anyone interested in preserving what they have, this is a very logical way to do it; but, it is so highly personal... It depends on personal situations, whether (the property) has monetary value or not, all of those things (are factors).”



Dick Thomas overlooks the natural lake shoreline that will never be developed thanks to the Thomas family conservation easement.



Conserving the Eagle River - A Continuing Story...

By Trisha Moore, Conservation Specialist

In December of 2005 Don and Sue Kratsch of West St. Paul, Minnesota, decided to place 21 acres of their property in the town of Three Lakes, Oneida County, into a conservation easement. With the help of the Northwoods Land Trust they permanently protected their woodland property as well as roughly 2,000 feet of frontage on the Eagle River and Nine Mile Creek. The easement allows for managed forestry; but no buildings may ever be built on this property or its shorelines.

Four years later, the Kratsch family went one step further to conserve an additional family parcel across the river. In November of this year, Don and Sue Kratsch signed into perpetual protection an additional 4.4 acres.

The land includes 1,525 feet of frontage where Nine Mile Creek flows into the Eagle River. The signing of the property took place at the Northwoods Land Trust office where Don shared stories about the land and his family's enjoyment of it through the past 70 years.

"My kids always complain that 'everything at the cabin has a story' and I say 'yes, that's because everything DOES have a story,'" Don said smiling. "My Aunt Edna Kratsch, who taught biology at the Oshkosh High School, bought this property in 1938 from the Thunder Lake Lumber Company. As a little kid I remember thinking this is the most wonderful place in the world; why can't my parents just leave me up here all summer? As I got older, I was able to spend more time at the cabin and I have a lot of good memories. The basement floor was just sand so I built a bunk bed downstairs that would hang from the ceiling."

The small cabin was built in 1946. Don's Aunt Edna, who transferred the property to him, drew up the plans for it. "She wanted a big fireplace in the middle and a basement for storage. It was pretty exciting for me because they dug the basement with a horse and a big scoop."

"Little Donnie" sat and watched the horse for hours until one day his two sisters called him away to go canoeing.



The Kratsch family added 1,525 feet of frontage with their cottage along the Eagle River and Nine Mile Creek to the 2,000 feet protected in 2006.



Don & Sue Kratsch continued their land and water conservation efforts by granting a second conservation easement on family land in the town of Three Lakes in Oneida County.

When they were quite a distance from the building site they heard a huge explosion. The construction team had blasted out a hole for a dry well. "I would have loved to see it!" Don exclaimed, reliving that exciting time as a child.

Each generation since has added to the cabin. Don went on to describe the cabin in a bit more detail: "My dad built a loft over the porch and it has secret hiding places. It's not a very big place, but things are put in really well. I built a wall off the bedroom area so my parents could have privacy." His love of and connection to the northwoods and the cabin flowed through each story.

"One thing that worries my wife a little bit is that in my mind I have shifted home to be here instead of in West St. Paul. She's attracted to the Twin Cities because there is a lot going on and her genealogy work is there. What's tough for her is, well, dial-up internet isn't very good is it?"

"When Sue and I were dating and we first came up here we got out of the car and she (looked) around and said 'Wow!' I thought: 'she is a keeper'." Don, who has a pilot's license and has flown up to the Eagle River area often, explained that Sue was also a "keeper" because she too likes to fly.

Don and Sue, in agreement with their family, worked with the Northwoods Land Trust to create the legal document. Don said of the building rights maintained on the property: "We worked with Bryan on what the limitations of the building zone should be. The whole concept of the building zone, I think, is very good. There is a lot of flexibility, but it also keeps condos from being put up there."

The agreement protects the conservation values of the land and the river shoreline while still allowing the family to continue utilizing the property as a seasonal residence. Now the family stories can continue.



NWLT Awarded a Land Trust Alliance Great Lakes Enhancement Grant

The national Land Trust Alliance has awarded a 2009-2010 Great Lakes Enhancement Grant to the Northwoods Land Trust. The grant program receives major funding support from the John Stewart Mott Foundation of Michigan. Land trusts throughout the great lakes region are eligible for the award, which is designed to help land trusts increase their capacity for land protection.

LTA Midwest Director Erin Heskett and Program Director MaryKay O' Donnell recommended NWLT as a recipient for the award. The \$6,225 total grant is helping to fund our half-time Conservation Specialist position over the grant period.

Grant goals include increasing the capacity of the Northwoods Land Trust to monitor all of our conservation lands and easements. In 2009, with the assistance of trained volunteers, NWLT monitored all 42 of our conservation easements and both of our donated conservation lands. In 2010, NWLT's annual monitoring will need to encompass over 50 sites, including all of our newest projects. More volunteers are always welcome.

In addition, NWLT purchased four fire-proof filing cabinets to store copies of essential conservation easement and other records off-site, as well as in the office. The upgrading of these critical records will also assist NWLT as we work toward submission of our application for national Accreditation next year. Currently only one of the fifty land trusts in Wisconsin has applied for and been awarded national Accreditation.

Our thanks to the Land Trust Alliance for all of their help and support as NWLT works toward this next major step in our organizational development!



A total of 42 conservation easements were monitored in 2009 by Conservation Specialist Trisha Moore and many volunteers.



This property on the Eagle River and Nine Mile Creek was protected in part with funding assistance from a DNR River Planning Grant.

NWLT Completes Oneida County Rivers Project

The Northwoods Land Trust has recently completed a DNR grant-funded project to encourage private owners of natural river and stream frontage in Oneida County to consider conserving their properties. Based on the highly-successful Vilas and Oneida County Private Lake Shoreland Protection Projects, the Oneida County rivers project is a critical component of NWLT's five-year strategic plan.

The project used plat map pages and Oneida County digital aerial photos to select all properties on DNR Northern Rivers Initiative's priority river and stream segments with an estimated 500 feet or more of natural shoreline frontage remaining. The selected properties were then matched with the Oneida County tax roll database to generate a mailing list.

Over 300 Oneida County river property owners were mailed a copy of our Landowner's Conservation Guide. A total of 23 properties received direct, on-site technical assistance from NWLT staff. Six of those technical assistance efforts resulted in new conservation easement donations.

Overall the project helped to permanently protect over 318 acres of land, including 2,395 feet (nearly 1/2 mile) of river and stream frontage. The total appraised value of lands newly protected as a result of this river protection project amounts to over \$600,000 - further leveraging the state grant and other contributed funds.

Major funding assistance to complete this project was provided by the \$10,000 DNR River Planning Grant award. The required 25% local grant match included significant volunteer and professional assistance. Other project expenses were covered by contributions from NWLT members and supporters.



Thank you to Volunteers

This fall, NWLT has again benefited from volunteer work projects that have provided vital assistance to our conservation efforts.

The staff of WIPFLI LLP accounting firm in Rhinelander provided great assistance by devoting an afternoon of community service work at our 32-acre Holmboe Conifer Forest State Natural Area property. Teams of staff help us control terrestrial invasive species including honeysuckle, buckthorn and spotted knapweed. They also helped rebuild sections of our boardwalk crossing the black spruce swamp.

This site is a popular walking trail open to the public. The natural area features large, climax forest hemlocks and pines, as well as wild turkeys and some rare Canada yew. Our thanks to the staff of WIPFLI for their hard work in getting Holmboe Woods shaped up!



A volunteer work party consisting of the staff of WIPFLI LLP in Rhinelander eradicated terrestrial invasive species and helped rebuild a boardwalk at the Holmboe Conifer Forest State Natural Area.

Gifts Leave a Lasting Legacy

The Northwoods Land Trust has recently received several donations in addition to direct cash contributions. Such gifts, which are also tax deductible, have included a donation of stocks, employer-matched contributions, and a distribution from an individual retirement account. Gail Gilson-Pierce donated a one-of-a-kind yellow lady slipper art quilt for a fundraiser.

We were pleased to receive a contribution from Rob Thoms who gave a Christmas gift membership in NWLT to his father, Robert Thoms of Rhinelander.

The Northwoods Land Trust also received contributions in memory of Marnie Tuttle from Kay and Clayton Hahn of Milwaukee and Virginia and Michael Bolger of Mequon. All of these gifts are being used to support our efforts to help private landowners permanently protect their properties for their conservation values.



Special Celebration Held in Mequon

On November 12th, NWLT held a special event for members and supporters residing in southeast Wisconsin. Conducted as part of the NWLT Council of Trustees, the event was held at the Mequon Nature Preserve. We celebrated the signing of our largest protection project to date - the Wellenstein family's conservation easement!

Our thanks to event sponsors Mike & Ginny Bolger, Deanna Braeger, Julie Dolinky, Jeff Fleming, Walt & Donna Gager, Jim Holperin, Chris & Mary McCann, Jack & Patti McKeithan, Mitch Olson, Angie Tornes, Beth Tornes, Bryan & Gail Pierce, Willa Schmidt, Dan & Judy Steininger, Sherman Stock, John & Kine Torinus, Tom Tuttle, Mike & Peg Uihlen, Walt & Nina Wellenstein, Dave & Barb Wisniewski, Dan Wisniewski & Fran DeGraff, and other NWLT board and volunteers. Special thanks to our hosts at Ozaukee-Washington Land Trust!



Not currently a member? Please JOIN us.

HELP KEEP THE NORTHWOODS THE NORTHWOODS!

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Membership Contributions

- Individual \$25
- Family \$35
- Supporter \$50
- Founder \$100
- Conservator \$250
- Steward \$500
- Land Legacy \$1000
- My additional contribution of \$_____ is also enclosed.

Please make checks payable to:

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

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 the NWLT Council of Trustees.

For Sale: Pickerel Lake Lot

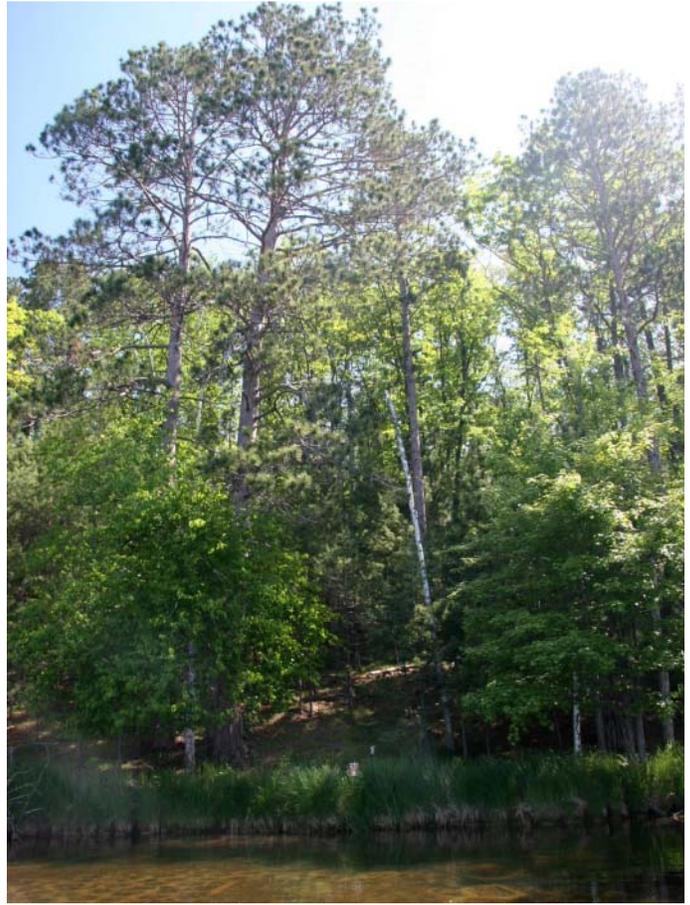
If sunset views overlooking a lake, towering red pines, bass and panfish spawning just off the lakeshore, and the opportunity to build a northwoods cabin retreat while also supporting conservation triggers your imagination, why not consider investing in a lot on Pickerel Lake?

Located west of Eagle River in the town of Cloverland, Vilas County, the Northwoods Land Trust is selling this parcel of just under one acre in size and featuring a west-facing view. Donated outright to NWLT for the purpose of supporting the conservation of the northwoods, this buildable lot includes 100 feet of shoreline frontage on Pickerel Lake.

The lot lines and corners were recently re-surveyed and marked. An overhead electrical utility line crosses the back side of the property. According to the surveyor, the sloping shoreline is suitable for a walk-out residence.

Pickerel Lake is a 293-acre lake. Bass and bluegill spawning beds are on the firm bottom lake bed. The lot is forested with predominantly red pines, white pines, northern red oak and aspen. The site is all high ground with no wetlands.

NWLT's asking price is \$149,500 based on a recent appraisal. Please contact the office at (715) 479-2490 with any questions or to arrange a site visit.



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

P.O. BOX 321, EAGLE RIVER, WI 54521-0321

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