

# THE WORK CONTINUES....

Hi there,

Thank you for taking time to join us in reflecting on what has been a great year for North Central Conservancy Trust. In the past year, we've added to the number of properties we've permanently protected, built stronger ties with conservation partners, and worked with a number of amazing volunteers, landowners, and even our first intern along the way. As the board president, I'm proud of the work that we do and the amazing job that our Executive Director, Betsy Kerlin does to organize our members to have this lasting conservation legacy in Central Wisconsin. As I was recently discussing plans for an upcoming meeting, I was struck by the pace of change within our organization since I became involved in 2011. Our evolution is both an indication of the passion that all current and former members, volunteers, and directors have for conservation, as well as recognition of the need for our work. These are changing times, and new challenges to natural resources seem to emerge with the turn of every season. Here at NCCT, we strive to partner with conservation-minded landowners who see the need for efforts to protect the places they love and want to act to see them protected in the long-term.



As we move into the winter season, know that our efforts don't slow down with the weather and your support is needed. We are taking on new challenges and pushing forward on efforts to protect special places like the Plover River watershed, while also exploring new partnerships that would allow us to engage with agricultural landowners to help keep productive farmland free of development forever. My call to each one of you is to please become an active part of the transformation of our organization that we are building together every day! Without your involvement, we can't protect the places that are most special to you.

We continue to add new voices to our efforts to promote conservation in Central Wisconsin, and NCCT is in need of committed volunteers, conservation-minded landowners, and financial support for our work. Please consider NCCT in your gift-giving plans this year. As provided by law, all gifts to NCCT qualify as charitable contributions. We work hard to make sure that every donation counts, so consider a contribution of cash, land, or other financial support to help keep our momentum going into the coming year!

*Aaron Thompson, President*

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## GRANTS

North Central Conservancy Trust has preserved over 1,000 acres in Portage County since its inception in 1996. Many at NCCT believe this is due to the Portage County Land Preservation Fund (PCLPF) who has been assisting easement landowners and NCCT with the expenses associated with completing a conservation easement. Through the generosity and assistance provided through the PCLPF, 15 grants have been awarded since 2006, helping NCCT protect over 880 acres! The most recent grants that were awarded include \$3,000 each towards the Henderson conservation easement and the Wilke conservation easement. NCCT thanks the PCLPF for recognizing the crucial role NCCT plays in protecting the rural character of our region. The PCLPF was created by the County Board in 2003 to protect open space and outstanding natural features.

North Central Conservancy Trust also benefited through their partnership with the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point (UWSP). UWSP sponsored the first Leaving a Forested Legacy Workshop through their Renewable Resources Extension Act program. The workshop was held in April and addressed ways to protect private forestland from undesirable development or use. Expert panelists spoke on family land ownership issues, land conservation options through land trusts, understanding local land-use regulation options to address forest fragmentation and estate planning.

In the summer, NCCT was the recipient of subcontract from the UWSP following the successful award of a Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation grant. With this subcontract NCCT hired their first full-time Conservation GIS Intern. April Ann Opatik, from Baraboo, Wisconsin, was hired to assist staff and volunteers with furthering NCCT's understanding and use of ArcGIS for NCCT's land conservation needs. April assisted NCCT's Executive Director with learning the basics of ArcGIS Spatial Analyst software for the purposes of NCCT's easement, baseline, and public relations needs.

During the summer, April also built upon existing data collected by past UWSP Land Use Planning students on the Plover River watershed and assisted NCCT's Executive Director in searching for grant sources to fund this work. One of their proposals was successful and thanks to the James E. Dutton Foundation, April will serve in her Conservation GIS Intern roll through February.

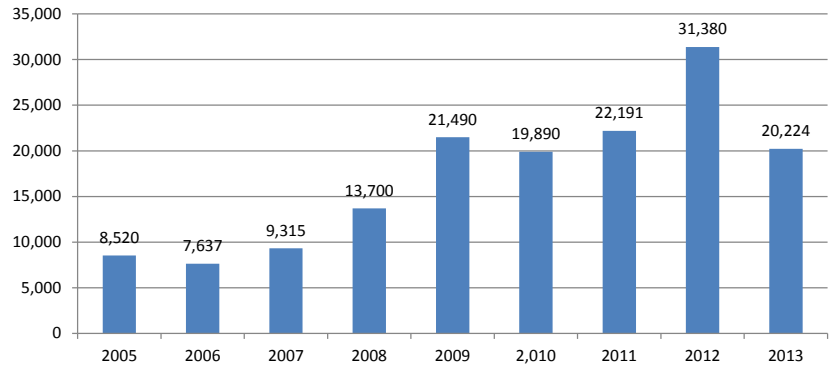
NCCT benefited from a total of \$15,900 in grant funding in fiscal year 2014.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

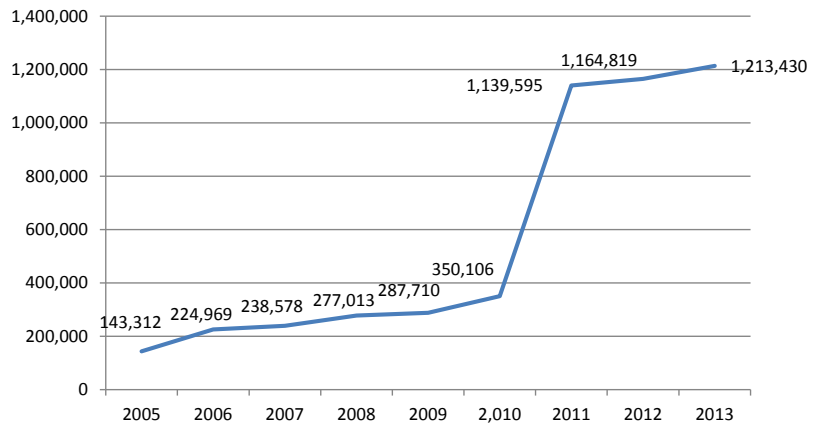
We continue to see growth in our endowment funds in spite of the sluggish economy. This comes, in part, from continued support from landowners who help with easement expenses, from good investments, and from our supporters. At the end of September, our total assets, including the land that we own, were \$1,213,430. This includes \$110,997 that we have with the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin, \$495,560 professionally managed with the assistance of Robert W. Baird & Co. and Associated Bank, and \$603,750 in land we hold in Adams County.

Annual giving in the last year decreased by 35%. This has been noted by NCCT's Board of Directors as an area of growth for fiscal year 2014. Thank you to our contributors who renew their membership annually. We would also like to especially thank our contributors who provided additional support through our Summer Solicitation, and those who provided an additional contribution to help us celebrate at our Annual Meeting. Growth is expected as we implement a new student membership for our university supporters, and as we continue to develop and expand our community connections. If you know of a business that would benefit from sponsoring the only land trust serving central Wisconsin, please contact Betsy Kerlin at 715-344-1910.

### Annual Giving



### Total Assets



## MAJOR GIFTS

### ANNE E. MERONK, AS TRUSTEE OF THE LOIS A. SILER REVOCABLE TRUST

NCCT has received one major land gift this year. After numerous years of generous support through conservation easements and membership donations, Anne E. Meronk, as Trustee of the Lois A. Siler Revocable Trust, took another step this past May to further the work of NCCT in central Wisconsin. The Siler family donated a 40-acre parcel of land in the Town of Rome, Adams County. The Siler family protected the parcel with a conservation easement in 2007, and donated the property to NCCT in 2014 with the understanding that the property would be sold. A few short months following the 40-acre gift, NCCT located a private buyer. The proceeds from the sale will go towards furthering the work of NCCT in central Wisconsin.

### DAVID WORTH AND THE WORTH COMPANY

Through the generosity of David Worth of The Worth Company, based in Stevens Point, NCCT continues to occupy their office at 214 Sherman Avenue. In addition to the office space, The Worth Company also donates use of their conference room, equipment, and telephone services. This is by far one of the largest donations NCCT has received. We are grateful to David Worth and The Worth Company for providing a home base to conduct the important work on NCCT.

### LOWELL KLESSIG

Following the passing of our friend and first easement benefactor in Portage County, North Central Conservancy Trust learned that they would be a beneficiary from the estate of Lowell Klessig. Lowell and his wife, Christine, were the first in Portage County to place a conservation easement on their property. Lowell's conservation easement in 2001 inspired many more conservation easements to follow—over 1,000 acres more and growing. His generous gift from his estate will be invested in order to maximize earnings and support for NCCT for many years to come.

# THE POWER OF A PEN

During the 2013-14 fiscal year, NCCT completed easements on five properties that totaled 162 acres. The first easement to be completed was Richard Wilke's easement, which was signed on November 15, 2013 protecting 27 acres in the Town of New Hope, Portage County. The Wilke easement will forever protect a scenic vista of Hintz Lake, a diverse wetland ecosystem, a spring breeding area for waterfowl, and one of the largest fall staging areas for geese and sandhill cranes in eastern Portage County. The signing of the Wilke easement was significant as it pushed the total number of acres permanently protected in Portage County by NCCT to well over 1,000 acres!

On December 30, North Central Conservancy Trust and Doug Henderson signed a conservation easement on a 44-acre property located in the Town of Buena Vista, Portage County. The Henderson easement will forever protect a mosaic of wooded and open land, including a significant habitat for wildlife and plant communities in eastern Portage County. The meadows that occupy the eastern portion of the property consist primarily of pasture grasses and common associated forbs and small shrubs. Scenic islands of trees and shrubs set off the grasslands and contribute to beautiful natural scenic vistas.

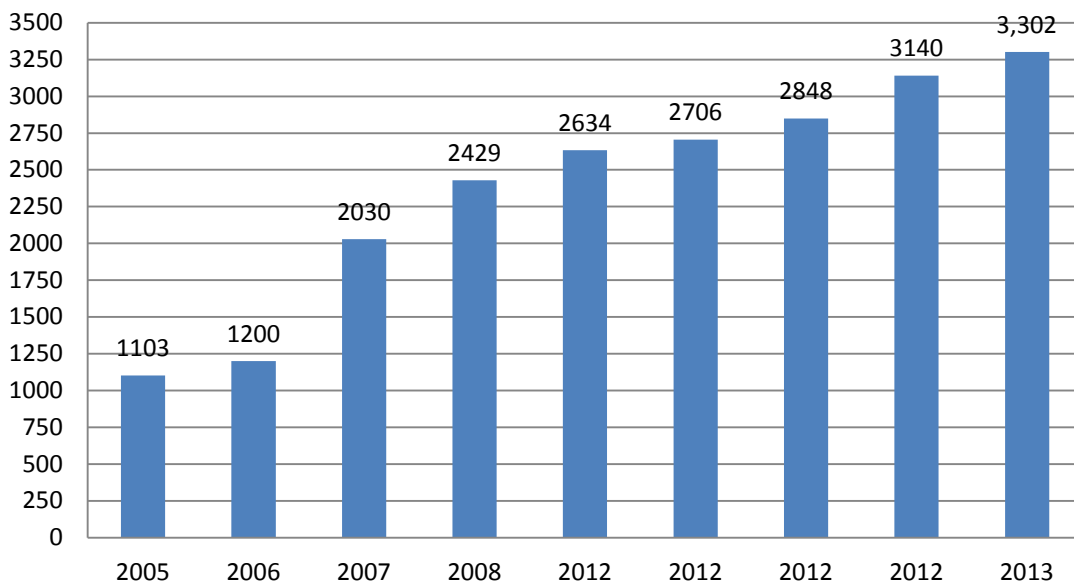
In early February, NCCT and the Ice Age Trail Alliance worked together to protect 41 acres in the Town of Reid in Marathon County. The land will one day hold a section of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, a 1,200-mile hiking path that traces the geology left by the most recent glacier. Claire Pflieger of Milwaukee donated the property to NCCT in 2011 to preserve these natural features, which also retains a conservation easement that further protects the property from development. The property includes 1,000 feet of shoreline on Rice Lake, a spring-fed, undeveloped marl lake. White cedar forest covers the majority of the property's acreage and protects the water quality of the lake.

In early April, Jeanette Rogers and her two children, Jim and Jane, made the important decision to permanently preserve their family's forest with a conservation easement signed with NCCT. The conservation easement will forever protect the wooded land in a rapidly urbanizing region of central Wisconsin, providing habitat for wildlife and plant communities. Following the signing of the conservation easement, the property was donated to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to benefit the education and research mission of the College of Natural Resources.

In May, Tomahawk Mayor Clarann Stocker and North Central Conservancy Trust signed a conservation easement protecting 10.89 acres between Clear Lake and Half-Moon Lake in the Town of Bradley, Lincoln County. The conservation easement protects one of the last remaining undeveloped parcels on Clear Lake, and provides natural and scenic space on the shores of Clear Lake and Half Moon Lake, which are otherwise extensively populated with cottages and homes. The property was originally donated to North Central Conservancy Trust with the condition that it be protected with a conservation easement upon sale. Limited development along lake shores, wetlands, and stream margins is especially important for protecting water quality and wildlife habitat. NCCT places a high priority on easements that protect these critical habitats.

NCCT is grateful to have contributors like Rick Wilke, Doug Henderson, the Ice Age Trail Alliance, Jeanette Rogers, and Clarann Stocker, who care deeply about protecting the beautiful central Wisconsin landscape where we work, play, and live. Conservation easements help protect in perpetuity quality habitats, species diversity, watersheds, and beautiful places with inspiring histories.

## Easement Acreage To-date

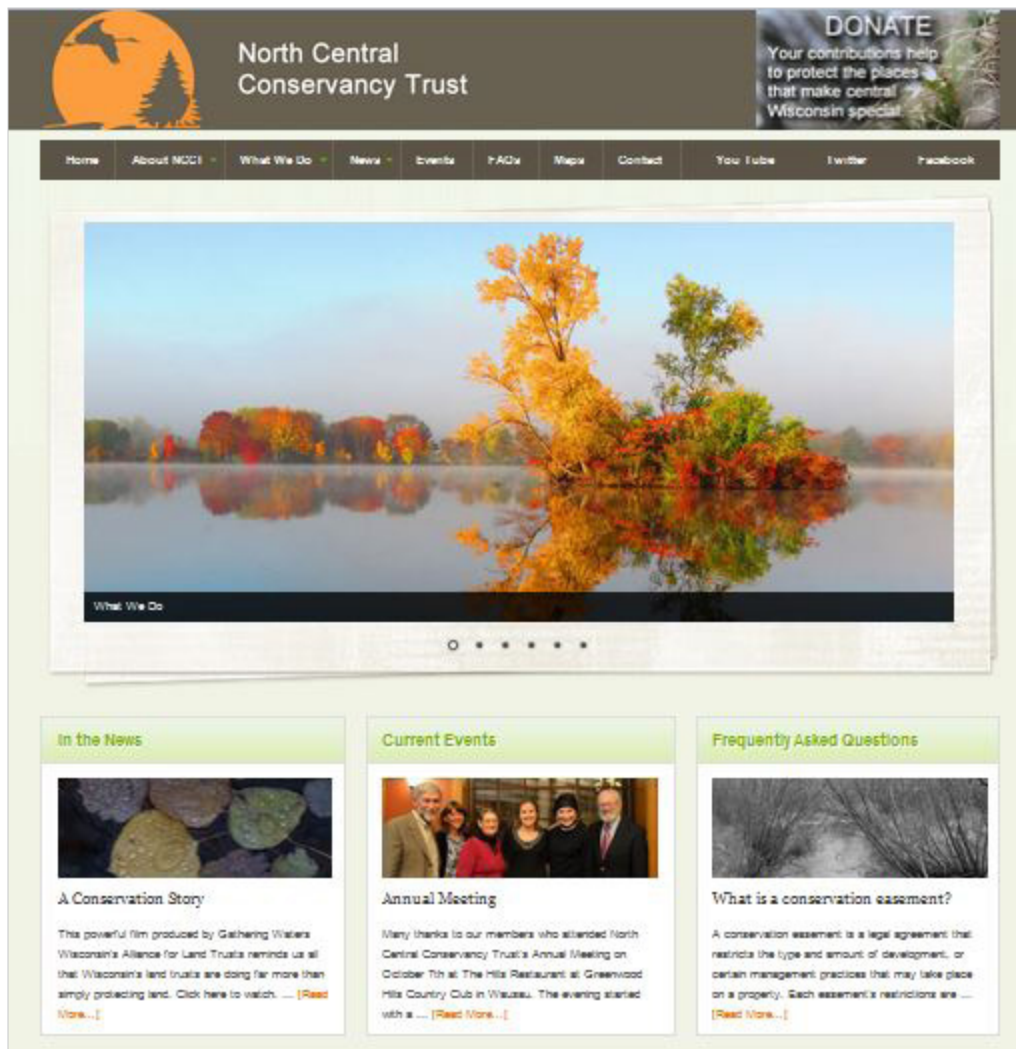


# REVAMPED WEBSITE NOW LIVE

Check out North Central Conservancy Trust's new website at [www.ncctwi.org](http://www.ncctwi.org), reworked to make it easy for landowners, media representatives and the public to find out what they need to know about NCCT. Included on the website homepage is a new slider of photos, featuring photographs of a number of our preserved properties. All of NCCT's conservation easement information is included on tabs on our website to make it easier to understand how NCCT protects our rural landscapes and natural areas. The website also lists green properties for sale. The green properties represent an opportunity to own a piece of central Wisconsin at a reduced price because they will be sold with a conservation easement. Please check the website frequently for all NCCT news and updates on all of NCCT's events. NCCT would like to thank the Public Relations Committee for assistance with the design of the new website.

As you explore the new website, consider joining or supporting our efforts. Whether you've just learned about NCCT or you have been a volunteer since our inception, your support matters! We depend on your financial support, and welcome your direct participation as a volunteer.

Don't forget to like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ncctwi](http://www.facebook.com/ncctwi) and follow us on Twitter to stay up-to-date on all NCCT news and events!



North Central Conservancy Trust  
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[www.ncctwi.org](http://www.ncctwi.org) [edncct@gmail.com](mailto:edncct@gmail.com)

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## **Special Contributions**

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 memory of Dean Kaatz  
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 memory of Lowell Klessig

## **Annual Meeting**

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 Evans  
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 Seiler, Jan & Mark  
 Seiser, Jo & Tom Brown  
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### **Land Donations**

Anne E. Meronk, as Trustee

of the Lois A. Siler  
 Revocable Trust

## **Conservation Easements**

Richard J. Wilke  
 Douglas B. Henderson  
 Ice Age Trail Alliance, Inc.  
 Jeanette M. Rogers as  
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 Clarann Stocker

## **Annual Meeting Silent**

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### **Grants**

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NORTH CENTRAL CONSERVANCY TRUST

# Annual Report

1 October, 2013–30 September, 2014



*Bluebird*

*photo by Roger Zimmermann*

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