

North Central Conservancy Trust

Vol. 14 No. 2

Autumn 2014



THERE IS A SEASON....

Photo by Roger Zimmermann

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LANDSCAPES AS LIVING PLACES

Aaron Thompson, President

The array of reds, oranges, and yellows in the forest canopy is clearly showing us the wonder of nature and signaling change to all. At NCCT, we too have seen many changes over the last couple of years, but rising to the challenge of protecting environmental resources for the benefit of the people of Central Wisconsin is a passion that drives us every single day. In the past year, we have lost some close friends of our organization, but are renewed by the commitment of new volunteers and supporters stepping in to sustain our efforts. As we end our fiscal year we ask all of you to consider ways in which you can do more in the coming year to advance our conservation mission.

One way you can help is to tell us your conservation story! As you know, we serve a large area, the eight counties we work in at the heart of our state sit in an important ecological transition zone encompassing the central sand plains that fall away from the glacial moraine, while continuing north brings us through forest transitions from a mix of hemlock and sugar maple into the northern stands of aspen, pine, and hardwoods. It's also a unique place because of the people who work the land for food and timber production as others enjoy the landscape for the wildlife, scenic views, and recreational amenities—often on the abundant rivers and lakes.

What places in Central Wisconsin are special to you? Please take some time to think about what types of land are worthy of protection and where NCCT can have the biggest impact through our efforts to protect land. *Write down your story send it in to our Executive Director, Betsy Kerlin, who will work to share your ideas with our passionate volunteers and supporters.* Your stories can help us find the special places worthy of protection and understand how NCCT can work with you to ensure that these places receive the special care and attention they need to remain protected into the future.

Keeping these special places in mind, we also ask that you please join us in our mission to help protect the landscape that makes Central Wisconsin special by becoming a member, renewing your financial commitment to our organization, or by making the commitment to protect your land with a conservation easement. As a non-profit organization, our members are critical to our success and your contribution of land, cash, or other financial support can help us work to protect these special places before they are gone!

TURN, TURN, TURN

Betsy Kerlin, Executive Director

On a rainy Monday afternoon in August, I was suddenly struck by the lyrics in The Byrds song Turn! Turn! Turn! I was pleasantly happy with my brain's choice, as it seemed fitting. Summer was coming to an end and fall, my favorite season of warm cider, sweaters, and the forests' vivid display of colors was quickly approaching. The song's lyrics struck me in other ways as well. This past year I've experienced some tremendous highs, as well as times that broke my heart. We preserved over 150 acres and had great success with our first summer intern April Ann Opatik. But over the past year we also lost a number of dear friends.

In my line of work we often talk about the power of a pen. A few signatures can permanently protect a nature preserve, habitat for wildlife and plant communities, scenic vistas, and a family farm. George and Jeanette Rogers, Rowe Klade, Lois Siler, and Lowell Klessig all understood the importance of their signature. Together, they preserved nearly 600 acres in central Wisconsin. George and Jeanette Rogers permanently preserved a nature preserve for the benefit of the students at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Rowe Klade and his family preserved their 145-acre family farm along the banks of Wisconsin River. Lois Siler preserved over 290 acres of diverse habitat in two counties. And Lowell and his wife, Christine, were the first to place a conservation easement on property in Portage County.

With the passing of George and Jeanette Rogers, Rowe Klade, Lois Siler, and Lowell Klessig, I am reminded of what a true privilege it is to preserve land. It is due to the voluntary action of landowners that we have preserved over 3,000 acres since our inception. George, Jeanette, Rowe, Lois, and Lowell understood the importance of leaving our natural lands undisturbed and dominant. They understood that their decision would inspire and impact family, friends, communities, and generations to follow. It is with their signatures that we are literally changing our future.



JO SEISER NAMED CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

John Dolan, President of the Bill Cook Chapter of the Izaak Walton League announced awarding Jo Seiser of Stevens Point the Outstanding Conservationist Award (2013).

Jo's work with the North Central Conservancy Trust over the last decade identified notable accomplishments. Her involvement since 1999 spanned years of educating landowners and citizens about the value of protecting worthy lands from unrestrained development with conservation easements donated to the land trust by landowners who continued to own the land. During that time, 39 easements were signed, protecting over 3000 acres in Central Wisconsin.



l-r: Jo Seiser, John Dolan.

As important was the training and experience of community members to create organizational infrastructure to educate landowners, evaluate possible easements and have events to share successes. Jo Seiser joined with many others to create a sustainable land trust to continue to do work of the present and the future.

Jo Seiser attended the Izaak Walton League's awards banquet unaware that she was to receive this award. As John Dolan began his presentation, she was alerted to the fact that she was the recipient when Dolan said, "this person was a National Park Service ranger at Mt. Rainier National Park and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore." Seiser thought it unlikely that anyone else present had worked both places without her knowledge.

Seiser was the Portage County Water Quality Specialist in the 1980s, and two members of the Izaak Walton League knew well this work. One was Robert Schmitz, who was the head of Environmental Health at the Health Department and Jo's boss. And the other was friend and co-worker for Portage County, Jerry Ernst who led the County Parks Department.

Ernst said, "The Bill Cook Chapter of the IWLA was very proud to present Jo Seiser with their Outstanding Conservationist award on April 12, 2014. The yearly award started in 1969, and the first recipient was Leo Gwidt. To name a few other well-known recipients over the years, they included Dan Trainer 1977, George Rogers 1981, and Malcolm and Margaret Rosholt in 1998."

Jo Seiser was honored to receive the Outstanding Conservationist award from her colleagues of the Izaak Walton League.

CLEAR LAKE PROTECTED

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 lakeshores, 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. A gift such as this has many wonderful benefits. In addition to securing lakeshore for wildlife and aesthetics, the value of the property is a generous philanthropic donation with good tax benefits to the donors, and the proceeds from the sale will be used to support our efforts in protecting other properties.



L-R: Clarann Stocker, Kerry Brimmer, Betsy Kerlin, David Worth.

FAMILY LONG-DEDICATED TO NCCT DONATES 40 ACRES

In July of 2007, Anne E. Meronk, as Trustee of the Lois A. Siler Revocable Trust, donated a conservation easement on 202 acres of land in the Towns of Colburn, Leola, and Rome in Adams County. That same month, the Siler family donated another approximately 88 acres in the Town of Deerfield, Waushara



County. With both easements, the Siler family entrusted North Central Conservancy Trust with the responsibility to protect the ecological and aesthetic features of the properties. And so began the Siler family's support of NCCT's mission to protect the rural character of central Wisconsin.

After numerous years of generous support through conservation easements and membership donations, the Siler family 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.

Those wishing to protect their land from undesirable development or use after they no longer can oversee it have the option to donate their land. This strategy is best suited for landowners who are looking for alternative approaches for divesting ownership, or to reduce a tax burden on the owner or the estate. By donating land to NCCT, a tax credit for the full value can be realized. NCCT will respect your wishes for the land, and will sell the property to a buyer who understands and accepts your wishes. Landowners receive the full tax advantage, plus the satisfaction of knowing the proceeds from the sale are used to promote conservation across central Wisconsin.

ANNUAL MEETING

Many thanks to our members who attended North Central Conservancy Trust's Annual Meeting on October 7th at The Hills Restaurant at Greenwood Hills Country Club in Wausau. The evening started with a social hour, followed by dinner and presentations by Betsy Kerlin and Roger Zimmermann. The Annual Meeting was an opportunity to celebrate the successes of the past year which included the protection of over 160 acres and the hiring of our first intern, April Ann Opatik. The silent auction fundraiser at the Annual Meeting raised \$841 to support the mission of NCCT to protect worthy scenic, working lands, and environmental resources for the benefit of the people of central Wisconsin. Thank you for your support!



REVAMPED WEBSITE NOW LIVE

Check out North Central Conservancy Trust's new website at 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.

And don't forget to like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ncctwi and follow us on Twitter to stay up-to-date on all NCCT news and events.

North Central Conservancy Trust

DONATE
Your contributions help to protect the places that make central Wisconsin special

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What We Do

In the News

Rare Lady's Slipper Orchid Found Near Rice Lake

Town of Rice, Marathon County Last year, North Central Conservancy Trust (NCCT) volunteer Roger Zimmermann was walking through a publicly owned bog near Rice Lake and came upon what he thought ... [\[Read More.\]](#)

Current Events

Annual Meeting

North Central Conservancy Trust's Annual Meeting will be held Tuesday, October 7th at The Hills Restaurant at Greenwood Hills Country Club in Waikuku. Join us to celebrate the successes of the past ... [\[Read More.\]](#)

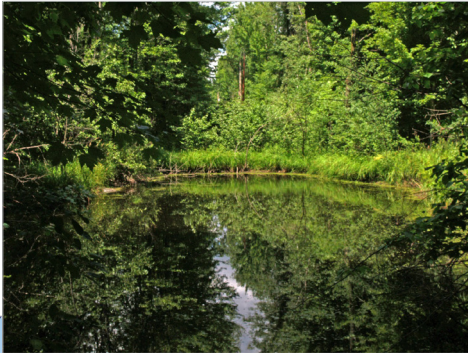
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a conservation easement?

A conservation easement is a legal agreement that restricts the type and amount of development, or certain management practices that may take place on a property. Each easement's restrictions are ... [\[Read More.\]](#)

THANK YOU PORTAGE COUNTY LAND PRESERVATION FUND

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.



EARTHSHARE WISCONSIN: WORKPLACE GIVING CAMPAIGN

Starting this fall, employees at Accenture, UnitedHealth, JP Morgan Chase, Ameriprise, Piper Jaffray, Thomson Reuters, Walmart, and other small employers can donate to North Central Conservancy Trust through EarthShare Wisconsin in their workplace giving campaign, primarily through payroll contributions.

Giving to North Central Conservancy Trust through EarthShare Wisconsin is an easy and cost-effective way to support our organization. EarthShare Wisconsin's goal is to be the public's trusted and proven way to support Wisconsin's and the nation's most respected environmental and conservation charities at work. They are proud to have earned the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance accreditation.

EarthShare Wisconsin's benefiting organizations work hard every day to safeguard public health and the environment by seeking solutions to climate change and sustainability issues, advocating for clean and renewable energy, protecting ancient forests and conserving wildlife and habitat, cleaning up our water and air, saving endangered species, and many other vital initiatives. "We are very happy to have North Central Conservancy Trust as a member of EarthShare Wisconsin," says managing director Darren Blankenship. "They have been a very effective organization for many years protecting vital lands, lakes, and streams in central Wisconsin and beyond."

If you would like more information about EarthShare Wisconsin and how they can be an option in your workplace giving campaign, please contact managing director Darren Blankenship at Darren@earthshare.org or (608) 274-1173.



SUMMER EVENT



North Central Conservancy Trust's Summer Event was held at the Benn Conservancy in Rosholt on Saturday, August 9. NCCT's annual Summer Event is a day where we highlight one of our preserved properties with a hike and picnic. This year, in addition to the nature hike lead by Alan Haney, NCCT offered family friendly nature activities for our younger members, including nature journaling and pine cone bird feeders. Thirty-five members came out to learn more about this great public preserve, which NCCT helped protect! A potluck followed the hiking and nature activities at the Lions Club shelter on Mill Pond. Many thanks to our event leaders Jim Grygleski, Alan Haney, Janet Moore, and Erin Thompson and the Public Relations Committee who helped plan and run the event.



A NOTE FROM APRIL ANN OPATIK, NCCT'S FIRST INTERN



I remember it was a Friday morning and I was on the phone with another possible internship (that later dissolved), and as soon as I hung up I received a call from an unknown number. It was Betsy calling to inform me that I was picked as the new intern for the summer! Is that destiny or what? I knew right away that someone was looking out for me—because looking for a land trust internship is not an easy task. I couldn't have been more grateful and excited for the next ten weeks that were to come—saving land from development and working for a non-profit.

For the past ten weeks I have been able to not only expose myself to the non-profit conservation world, but I was able to make great friends and learn directly from the gracious Betsy Kerlin, the executive director of NCCT. A lot of people asked me what my favorite and least favorite moments were of my internship—I am still asking myself what those least favorite moments were. I think it was probably all of the legal duties and terms. How much does a 21-year-old know about endowments and title insurance? Not much, but I can at least say that this 21-year-old right here does... well, a little! There were a lot of favorite moments for me during this internship. I know that a lot of interns cannot say they get to go outside at least once a week, but I was able to in this job. My favorite moments were when Betsy and I tromped around in the woods for our yearly monitoring duties on some of our easements. We were able to directly speak with landowners, get to know their stories, and be able to enjoy their beautiful land. It was delightful to experience the passion that some of these landowners had for their land—an example of this would be the Field-Reitz property. Their land was the first I was able to monitor during my experience, and not only did I get to know a man who drastically changed his landscape from old agricultural fields to 10,000-plus trees, I got a home-cooked lunch with everything made from their garden. I will always cherish that moment—not because it was my first property visit, or a free lunch, but because my dream is to someday be a sustenance farmer like them. Having the opportunity to see that in action was a very powerful experience for

me. Aside from these experiences, the most comical experience would be having the opportunity to teach Betsy the basics of Arc-GIS. For those of you who do not know, Arc-GIS is a complex computer software program that can overlay different types of maps and perform analysis on different areas. Betsy, who spent hours on Photoshop creating maps for the baseline documents of the different properties, now can spend a mere 20 minutes. It was great to see her reactions towards this program that ranged from both good and bad rage-full screaming!

I cannot even begin to express my sincere gratitude for being able to have this internship opportunity. To list a few, I was able to learn about legal terms, financing a non-profit, monitor properties, create baseline documents, write articles for the media, fund-raising techniques, and more. Even though I only had ten weeks to really delve into all of this material, I know that a year from now I can take all of these learning experiences and knowledge to another land trust (hopefully) and continue the efforts towards preserving land for future generations. Betsy and I were able to consistently express how satisfying it was with this work to be able to preserve and save land from extreme development. I knew from the very beginning that when I started this career path that I can reassure myself how much goodness can come out of this profession. Wildlife and fishery biologists can work as hard as they can to redevelop habitats, but Land Trusts are the first line of defense towards any development and are the first step to helping re-developing that land. I can only hope that all of the work and help I provided this summer to NCCT will be helpful and useful for future endeavors and others.

Furthermore, I would like to personally thank the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation for funding this internship opportunity—because I can now hopefully bring all of this gained experience to future land trusts that I might someday work for in preserving land. I would also like to personally thank all of the committee members of NCCT for welcoming me in and listening to some of my inexperienced comments at meetings, Roger Zimmermann for his amazing photography, Aaron Thompson for his “guru-ness” and teachings, and most of all, Betsy Kerlin. Betsy Kerlin is one of the most hard-working and caring women I have ever met. NCCT should be more than grateful to have such a strong woman leading their land trust towards saving land. Betsy held my hand through it all and taught me everything I could have taken in for ten weeks about Land Trust work. I couldn’t be more grateful for her to have been that person for this learning experience. She will always be a mentor, inspiration, and a really good friend. Thank you North Central Conservancy Trust and Betsy for all that you have provided for me! Keep saving, preserving, and loving central Wisconsin’s land!

DEDICATION OF GEORGE ROGER'S LIVING FOREST



Executive Director Betsy Kerlin and Board of Directors President Aaron Thompson were proud to represent North Central Conservancy Trust at the dedication of the George Roger's Living Forest, hosted by the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point on August 15.

Jeanette Rogers, who died April 22, along with her children, Jim and Jane, honored the wishes of their late husband and father, George Rogers, to permanently preserve a 39-acre managed working forest in the town of Hull. The Rogers family worked with North Central Conservancy Trust to place a conservation easement on the property. This was an essential first step to Rogers.

Following the conservation easement, the family donated the land to the UW-Stevens Point's College of Natural Resources (CNR). The George Rogers Living Forest will be used by as an outdoor laboratory for education, demonstration, and research. "We are grateful to the Rogers family for this generous gift, and we are honored to carry on the legacy of stewardship that George started more than 60 years ago," said CNR Dean Christine Thomas. "This forest has been extremely well-managed, and is exactly the type of woodland property we look for in a field teaching site."



NCCT MEMBERSHIP

Yes! I want to join or renew my membership

Student \$10 ___ Key Donor \$100 ___ Trustee \$1000 ___

Individual \$25 ___ Sustainer \$250 ___ Fellow \$5000 ___

Preserver \$50 ___ Protector \$500 ___ Other _____

\$ _____ Special donation as a tribute for _____

Name _____

Address _____

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For credit-card payment, please go to www.ncctwi.org/donate

Donations are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

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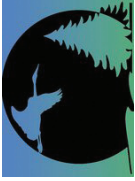
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Annual Meeting
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Working to protect, worthy scenic, working lands and environmental resources for the benefit of the people of central Wisconsin.