



North Central Conservancy Trust

Vol. 13 No. 2

Autumn 2013



KEEPING NATURE WHOLE

Eastern Tiger-swallowtail

Photo by Roger Zimmermann

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KEEPING NATURE WHOLE

Alan Haney

I spent several hours last week mowing out winter ski trails. Our trails wind through our woodlands, but mostly through meadows long abandoned from agriculture. The meadows have grown up into bluegrass, goldenrod, and associated perennial weeds introduced from Europe. We converted one 7-acre piece to prairie, and flowers of many prairie plants were conspicuous among the tall grasses. Along with the goldenrod, many large patches of common milkweed were in late bloom. Over the course of three hours, I saw only three monarch butterflies. I did see many medium-sized bumblebees that, to my untrained eye, were all the same species, but I saw only a few honeybees, and scarcely any of the other usual bees, wasps, or butterflies that would ordinarily be abundant at this time of year. Researchers estimate that wild bees have declined 90% over the past 50 years, and domesticated honeybees have decreased by two-thirds. There are only vague guesses of the extent that most wild insect populations have declined.



Most of us know that anxious sensation when something “doesn’t feel right.” Based on experience and expectations, and maybe that sixth sense that has become dulled by too much technology, we often anticipate a problem before it is manifested. As I worked, not only last week but on many other days this summer, the alarm bells have gone off repeatedly. I acknowledge that I may be looking for problems because of all the horrible news on colony collapse, droughts, wildfire, lowering of water tables, and a host of other environmental problems, most related to climate change. But I’ve spent more than enough time out-of-doors, alert to nature in all of her glory as well as her subtleties to recognize when something has changed. The decrease in pollinating insects, both Hymenoptera (bees and wasps) and Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), has been confirmed world-wide.

We don’t need another “canary in the coal mine” analogy, but from an ecological perspective, even more than an economic perspective, a marked decline in pollinating insects spells potential problems in so many ways. So important are pollinators that ecologists consider them to be “environmental indicators.” Their numbers indicate a great deal about the health of an ecosystem. Scientists estimate that worldwide value of pollination services in hundreds of billions of dollars per year. Over 90

percent of fruits and vegetables are dependent on pollination, followed by edible oil-seed crops such as canola and soybeans. What is not known and, therefore, not included in these estimates, is how much pollination is done by non-commercial insects, often overlooked or ignored by growers. Even when pesticides are applied carefully to minimize harm to bees, they may damage other pollinators. Recent studies have reported, for example, that fungicides, previously thought to be harmless to insects, increase sensitivity to other pesticides, and perhaps to other stressors such as those associated with climate change.

Pollinators provide other ecological benefits, especially in control of insect pests. Many bees that collect pollen also are predators on other invertebrates such as insects or their larvae. Researchers at Michigan State University estimate pest control provided by beneficial insects is worth \$240 million a year just in soybean crops. Successful seed production in wild plants, many of which also require pollination, is of critical importance to birds and small mammals. Without beneficial insects, hundreds of other species would suffer.

What does all this have to do with land trusts? The most important reason wild species are declining is loss of habitat. Too often we think only of vertebrate animals, but native diversity is many times greater and probably of much more importance among invertebrates. Diverse habitats, even those growing up to perennial weeds like my meadows, are important refuges for invertebrates as well as vertebrates. Protecting the diversity of nature can happen only if we protect diversity in our landscape. The mission of North Central Conservancy Trust is to do everything we can to keep central Wisconsin both beautiful and healthy, and the pollinators are telling us that we need to be doing more. Please help.



photo by Lora Hagen

CENTRAL WISCONSIN, HOME

Betsy Kerlin, Executive Director

In May of 2013, I joined the North Central Conservancy Trust as their first full-time Executive Director. Since that time, I have quickly learned to adjust to the Midwest, including frost in June! But I've also learned why people choose to live in such a beautiful place. I have been awed in the presence of massive prairies, forests, and wetlands; I've rejoiced in adding to my "life-lists" of new species; and I have been blessed to be in the presence of a community which understands the importance of allowing our natural landscapes to remain undisturbed and dominant. As residents (albeit new residents) we are blessed to live in a beautiful landscape worthy of protection. Without your support through donations, whether cash or human hours, central Wisconsin's lakes, wetlands, and forests in our own backyard can quickly fall victim to unchecked development.



There is plenty of work to do. During my tenure I hope to continue our growth as an active and vital land trust. I plan to do this by sharing my expertise and passion. I hope to increase membership, grants, events, and partnerships. You may see me at your local public meetings, attending an NCCT event, or out enjoying one of central Wisconsin's boundless recreational opportunities. Feel free to share your insights with me. Stop by our brand-new office, give me a call, or send an email.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the leadership and wisdom of NCCT's pioneers, who came before me. I'm especially thankful to Jo Seiser, who retired at the end of May after 14 years serving as board member, secretary, president, and most recently Executive Director. As Secretary, she signed NCCT's first easement, the Mumford easement in Marathon County, and she coordinated the signing of our most recent easement, the Robertson easement in Waushara County, marking over 3,000 acres protected. Her historical perspective, experience, and kindness have been especially helpful as I have moved into my new role. I also want to thank our committee members, Board of Directors, and NCCT's membership. Your kindness and support have been overwhelming.

With your renewed support this fall, we can continue our recent successes throughout the year! Please consider a generous donation to North Central Conservancy Trust. With your support, our ability to protect the central Wisconsin landscapes where we work, play, and live is greatly enhanced.

NCCT HAS A NEW HOME!

Though the generosity of David Worth of The Worth Company, based in Stevens Point, NCCT moved into our first full-time office. Having a home base to conduct the important work of NCCT, new Executive Director Betsy Kerlin can now be found Monday through Friday in her office in The Worth Company's building, located at 214 Sherman Avenue. In addition to the office space, The Worth Company has also donated use of their conference room, equipment, and telephone services. NCCT's office phone number is now 715-344-1910.

This is by far one of the largest donations NCCT has received. We are grateful to David Worth and The Worth Company for their in-kind contributions, as they will help NCCT continue our mission to protect worthy scenic, working lands, and environmental resources for the benefit of the people of central Wisconsin. NCCT hopes to continue to build our relationships with our corporate business sponsors.



*Betsy Kerlin at home in NCCT's new office.
Photo by Tom Brown.*

NORCROSS GRANT AWARDED TO NCCT

In June, the Board of Directors of the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Inc. awarded North Central Conservancy Trust a grant of \$2,500 to cover specific costs related to our office needs. The grant will allow the purchase of a new all-in-one copier, scanner, and printer; much needed software; a water/fire-proof filing cabinet; a digital camera; and Garmin GPS. Thank you to Lora Hagen and Alan Haney for submitting the grant in February.

The Norcross Wildlife Foundation was established in 1965 by Arthur D. Norcross, a native of Monson, Massachusetts and founder of the Norcross Greeting Card Company. The Norcross Wildlife Foundation's mission is to support wildlife and wildland conservation efforts that benefit the public welfare.

NCCT WELCOMES PHOTOGRAPHER ROGER ZIMMERMANN

In June, local photographer Roger Zimmermann contacted NCCT to request permission to walk and photograph the Pfleger property. The Pfleger property, located in Marathon County, one of NCCT's Green Properties, was generously donated to NCCT by Claire Pfleger last year. Permission was granted, and since that time Roger has provided over 300 photographs to be used in NCCT's publications, website, and Facebook page. Roger plans to complete a one-year cycle of the Pfleger property's flora and fauna. Some of his photos can be found within this newsletter as well as on NCCT's Facebook page.



*Mushrooms
photo by Roger Zimmermann*

Roger has had photos published in many issues of Nature Photographer magazine, and was a winner in the Nature Photographers 2012 Fall Contest. He recently finished a year photographing the Robert W. Monk Gardens in Wausau. Thank you, Roger, for sharing your talents with us!

ANNUAL MEETING

Save the date for our annual meeting, to be held Tuesday, October 15th at The Hills Restaurant at Greenwood Hills Country Club in Wausau. The evening event will start at 5 pm with a social hour, followed by dinner and presentations by Alan Haney, Betsy Kerlin, and award-winning writer and fifth-generation Portage County farmer, Justin Isherwood.

New this year to our annual meeting will be a silent auction containing items from local vendors and artists. Should you have an item to donate to this fundraiser, please deliver the item to Betsy Kerlin at NCCT's office, located in The Worth Company building at 214 Sherman Avenue in Stevens Point. She will be accepting items through Monday, September 30th. All funds raised through the silent auction will support the mission of NCCT to protect worthy scenic, working lands, and environmental resources for the benefit of the people of central Wisconsin.

SUMMER EVENT

North Central Conservancy Trust held our annual Summer Event on Saturday, August 24th. The day started with a beautiful morning hike on Jack Scholz's property in Wausau. In the summer of 2008, Jack contacted NCCT and started the process to protect 68 of the 500 acres originally purchased by his grandfather. The focal point of the property is the forest of large white pine and hemlock along the Prahll Creek ravine. There are reputed to be close to 100 trees approaching 3 feet in diameter. In March of 2009, Jack signed a conservation easement with NCCT, forever preserving a portion of the Prahll Creek ravine for the enjoyment of generations to come. About 18 attendees were able to join us for the hike.



*Scholz Easement
photo by Dave Hillier*



*l-r: Alan Haney, Betsy Kerlin, Kerry Brimmer
photo by Cheryl Brimmer*

Following the Scholz hike, a potluck and presentation were held at the nearby Dells of Eau Claire Park from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. Plenty of good food and conversation were on-hand along the banks of the Eau Claire River, and attendees were able to meet new Executive Director Betsy Kerlin. Kerry Brimmer, long-time NCCT Properties Committee, Stewardship Committee, and Board member, was presented with the Distinguished Service Award. Kerry has volunteered for NCCT over the past 14 years, and was a volunteer when NCCT signed our first easement, the Mumford easement, which is located just upstream from the Dells of Eau Claire Park. Kerry has also been the driving force behind the management of many of our green properties, including the 260-acre Starpoint property in Adams County. Kerry shared that he felt honored to be included amongst the folks who have received the award in the past, including Bob Freckmann and David Hillier. He also shared that he has met many great friends through the organization. Thank you, Kerry, for your many years of service!

GREEN PROPERTY FOR SALE, AND SOLD!

NCCT has two green properties for sale for the purpose of supporting our work. These properties represent an opportunity to own a piece of central Wisconsin at a reduced price because they will be sold with conservation easements. If any of these is of interest, please contact the realtor listed with the property.

Eleven-acre wooded parcel between Clear and Halfmoon Lakes in Lincoln County. Good road access. No building will be permitted, but there is a power stub and the easement allows temporary parking of a camper. Contact Jeremy McCone at Coldwell Banker Mulleady Realtor, Rhinelander, 715-360-4366.



Clear Lake

photo by Dave Hillier



Starpoint

photo by Lora Hagen

Two-hundred sixty-three acres in Adams County off a secondary road, with easy year-round access. Property is all wooded, with a few small, wet meadows. Good woods roads throughout. Contact Todd Reilly at Coldwell Banker, Stevens Point, 715-340-8345.

North Central Conservancy Trust is pleased to announce the sale of one of our green properties. A 40-acre parcel located in Adams County was sold to a private buyer in mid-July, to be used as a hunting property. NCCT received this land as a gift in 2011 from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. The proceeds from this 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

Continued on page 9

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. When appropriate, NCCT will place an easement on the property at the time of sale, to ensure that the donor's wishes are protected in perpetuity. Landowners can receive the full tax advantage of the donation, plus the satisfaction of knowing the proceeds from the sale are used to promote conservation across central Wisconsin.

3000 ACRES—NCCT'S LEGACY OF SUCCESS

In late April, NCCT and the Robertson Family Limited Partnership signed NCCT's latest easement, on a 218-acre property located in the Town of Marion, Waushara County. The Robertson property is a working farm, with 148 acres in Managed Forest Law Program. The easement contains part of a sylvan lake, with an underdeveloped shoreline and more than 60



Robertson Easement

photo by Jo Seiser

acres of relatively natural native forest and savanna ecosystems, providing significant habitat for wildlife and plant communities. NCCT is grateful to have contributors like Allan and Joan Robertson, who care deeply about protecting the beautiful central Wisconsin landscape where we work, play, and live. Conservation easements like the Robertson family easement help protect in perpetuity quality habitats, species diversity, watersheds, and beautiful places with inspiring histories.

The signing of this easement was significant, as it pushed the total number of acres permanently protected by NCCT easements to well over 3,000 acres (3,139.62 acres to be exact!). Since our inception, NCCT has been dedicated to protecting the worthy scenic, working lands, and environmental resources for the benefit of the people of central Wisconsin. From our first easement on 160 riparian acres on the Eau Claire River in Marathon County to our latest easement with the Robertson family, NCCT is grateful to our conservation-minded benefactors, and is dedicated to continuing our growth as an active and vital land trust.

CONSIDER INCLUDING NCCT IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS

Because so much of NCCT's work is about ensuring that the places we save today will be protected forever, estate gifts are indispensable to the work of our organization. Your will or living trust is an important way to provide for family and friends, plan the management and disposition of your estate, and ensure a lasting legacy for the causes that have special meaning for you.



The Haney family. l-r: Alan, Ardea, Jesse, Ryan

Those who include NCCT in their estate planning and notify us become a part of our Legacy Circle. Our Legacy Circle is made up of those individuals or families who recognize NCCT in their estate planning through gifts of securities, cash, or real property. We will protect all qualifying gifts of real estate with conservation

easements that restrict future use of the land according to your wishes, and find a buyer who understands the values being protected.

You may choose to specify that NCCT receives a specific dollar amount or asset, a percentage of your estate, a contingent bequest in case you outlive other heirs, or a portion of the residue (remainder) of your estate after provisions for friends and family are paid. A residual gift is only made if there is anything remaining in your estate after all other terms are met. You may also choose to make an immediate donation to NCCT, in the case of real property, and retain a life interest for yourself.

Creating or updating your estate plans calls for careful planning, with the help of an estate-planning attorney. Thus, it is always best to use an attorney that understands local estate laws. Be sure to consult with your attorney on the language and tax effect of any charitable bequest.

We lose our souls if we lose the experience of the forest,
the butterflies, the song of the birds, if we can't see the stars at night.

~ Thomas Berry

NCCT MEMBERSHIP

Yes! I want to join or renew my membership

Individual \$25 ___ Key Donor \$100 ___ Protector \$500 ___

Preserver \$50 ___ Sustainer \$250 ___ Trustee \$1000 ___

\$ _____ Special donation as a tribute for _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

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Email _____

Discover

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

Make check payable to NCCT, and mail to:

NCCT, PO Box 124, Stevens Point WI 54481-0124



NORTH CENTRAL CONSERVANCY TRUST
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Working to protect, worthy scenic, working lands and environmental resources for the benefit of the people of central Wisconsin.