



North Central Conservancy Trust
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VOLUNTEERS: MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

Bloodroot

Photo by Roger Zimmermann

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A CALL TO ACTION

Aaron Thompson, President

Have you felt the call to action? NCCT needs your involvement now more than ever as volunteers are what make our conservation efforts possible.

I am asked the question quite often -- what will it take to protect Central Wisconsin's critical scenic, working, and natural lands that provide environmental resources to so many people in our region? In my time as an officer and volunteer supporting the important work of the North Central Conservancy Trust the answer has become quite clear. Conservation does not simply happen because there are land resources under threat that are too valuable to lose, it only happens when dedicated individuals make this challenge their priority and take action! Local action to raise awareness about how conservation benefits all of us, volunteers of all sorts that complete the work necessary to run our land trust, donors that support our efforts, and the caring landowners who to date have protected more than 4,000 acres by deciding to create a different future for the properties that they love.

As NCCT continues to pass important milestones like acres of land protected, completed projects, and support raised to fulfill our mission we need you to step up your involvement! We are a volunteer driven organization that for more than two decades has been demonstrating our commitment to Central Wisconsin's special places through dedicated volunteer action. Moreover, we are just getting started and the next step is that we need a commitment from you now!

We need your time, talents, and financial support to help grow our organization and take the next steps to ensuring that critical conservation lands across Central Wisconsin are there for the next generation. Come join our passionate group of volunteers by becoming an easement monitor -- and if that does not sound that interesting, perhaps I should let you in on our little secret that this means we need volunteers who would like to take a walk in the woods on one of NCCT's protected properties. Join our UWSP student organization, the Land Conservation Society, for a workday to lend a hand to the landowners who have permanently protected our environmental resources. Support our organization financially: 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 to protect central Wisconsin's special places before they are gone!



GIFTS OF TIME

Janet Smith, Executive Director

I consider myself a most fortunate person, because I get to work with some of the nicest and most interesting people I've ever known: NCCT's volunteers. In addition to making my job a positive experience every day, our volunteers make my job possible! Indeed, NCCT would not exist without our volunteers. Our Board of Directors, committee members, and those who monitor and manage NCCT's properties under conservation easement all do so voluntarily because of their passion for preserving and protecting the beautiful lands and waters of central Wisconsin.

Volunteering has been aptly called "Gifts of Time." Last year, volunteers put in an estimated 679 hours for board- and committee meetings, monitoring, and management of NCCT's protected properties. That's over 4 months of full-time work!

NCCT's volunteers happily give us their time, and provide a multitude of services from the sciences to business and the arts. One or more of these subjects is bound to be of interest to YOU!

One group of volunteers I would like to highlight is the UWSP students of The Land Conservation Society (LCS). LCS is our partner in managing invasive plants plaguing some of our easement properties. Nancy Stevenson, who owns 40 acres protected under conservation easement, has said "I have enjoyed and appreciated the help I have received from LCS, first in cutting black locust, (a "thorny" and perennial problem), then in brushing out one of my trails."

We love the energy and youthful enthusiasm the LCS students bring to controlling invasive species and everything else they do in their mission to promote conservation of public and private lands.

Becky Wadleigh and Kerry Brimmer, both of whom are members of NCCT's Properties Committee and monitor easement properties, share what they enjoy most about volunteering with NCCT:

"Volunteering with NCCT is important to me because it gives me an opportunity to work with an organization that does important, perpetual, and sustained good for my community. It takes a great deal of trust on the part of a landowner to work with an organization to recognize and protect the conservation value of their land, and I greatly admire an organization that works so intently and successfully on such a mission. Protecting our valued lands is a big job, and I am proud to do what I can to help NCCT to achieve its goals." - Becky

Continued on page 7

VOLUNTEER CORNER: NICHOLE BESYK

If you are one of the many volunteers who enjoy monitoring NCCT's easement properties, you will likely get to know Nichole Besyk, our new Monitoring Coordinator. NCCT's Monitoring Coordinator is a volunteer position responsible for implementing the annual monitoring program of NCCT's 49 conservation easements and fee-owned conservation properties. This job includes assigning volunteer monitors to properties, helping train those monitors, and ensuring each property is monitored every fiscal year.



Nichole's background is well-suited to her volunteer roles with NCCT. She grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, but always loved going "Up North" for family vacations. When a grade-school art project called for students to draw a picture of their favorite family vacation, hers really stuck out—among all the beach scenes with "Florida" and "Hawaii" written across the front, hers featured bald eagles and was titled "Lac Du Flambeau, WI"—the location of a YMCA camp she visited first as a 5-week-old, and continues to visit today. Because of this, her earliest memories came from Wisconsin: loon calls, the slap of screen doors, the smell of pine needles.

Nichole studied as an undergraduate at UW-Stevens Point, then wandered to the land of the redwood trees for graduate school, where she earned a master's degree studying forest soils at Humboldt State University. She now works in Wisconsin as a soil scientist and environmental technician for Sand Creek Consultants, a small team of environmental scientists based in Amherst and Rhinelander. Here she is learning how to prevent and remediate environmental contamination. She is especially inspired by "green" remediation—Sand Creek is among the top in the country for use of phytoremediation technologies (using plants to clean contaminated soils and waters).

With roots in Wisconsin, an ecology-based education, and a growing awareness of local environmental issues, Nichole naturally gravitated toward NCCT. In addition to her recent appointment as Monitoring Coordinator, she is a member of NCCT's Properties Committee. Nichole is overjoyed to be part of the NCCT community, working towards conservation of unique Wisconsin landscapes.

ATTENTION ALL VOLUNTEERS! PLAN TO ATTEND NCCT'S TRAINING EVENT

Join Nichole and other volunteers

Ever considered becoming a volunteer? NCCT needs YOU!
Contact Executive Director Janet Smith at 715-344-1910 to match your passion for our natural resources to NCCT's volunteer needs.

NCCT relies on dedicated volunteers like you to help monitor the growing portfolio of lands over which it holds conservation easements. Monitoring is one of the most important ways for NCCT to connect with landowners and to ensure that landowners continue to understand and comply with the terms of their easements.

So that all volunteer monitors are adequately trained and are comfortable with their monitoring responsibilities, NCCT has instituted a Volunteer Monitor Training Program. Training for all current volunteers and those interested in monitoring NCCT's protected properties is highly recommended. Topics include monitoring procedures, landowner relations, completing the monitoring form, and field safety guidelines.

Date: April 27, 5-7 pm.

Rain Date: May 4, 5-7 pm.

Location: Alan Haney farm,
1990 Star B Hill Lane, Custer.

Registration: Call NCCT at
715-344-1910 or email us at
edncct@gmail.com



REMEMBERING BYRON SHAW DEFENDER OF WATER QUALITY

This past autumn, central Wisconsin lost one of its most dedicated conservation activists. Byron Shaw spent his entire adult life defending water resources. A Cooperative Extension outreach specialist, and a professor of water resources in the College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Byron was one of the first scientists in Wisconsin to recognize the threat of contamination of groundwater by nitrate and pesticides. He developed the Groundwater Center and Environmental Task Force at the College to provide water testing of wells throughout the region. By building a database with results of well tests in the region, the Task Force was able to identify the areas most susceptible to groundwater contamination, and alert residents to the need to have their water tested. Byron's groundwater research began 30 years before the widespread realization that what happens on the surface affects this precious resource below the surface. Over time, the program expanded to support water-quality efforts by lake associations and other citizen groups concerned with shrinking of lakes and streams in the region.

While Byron was best known throughout the state because of his work with water resources, those of us in central Wisconsin knew and loved him because of who he was and how he networked with people. Byron was a humble and generous and caring man who always seemed to have time to help a neighbor or friend. He valued the natural environment that we, too, often take for granted, and worked to promote good forest management, prairie establishment, and wildlife protection. The Portage County farm where he and his wife, Margaret, raised their two sons, Jeffery and Daniel, was placed under a conservation easement, and became a frequent gathering place for families interested in sustainable forestry and prairie restoration. Byron's knowledge about living lightly on the land extended to wine-making, wildlife habitat, woodworking, and maple syrup. His handcrafted canoes were works of art. Byron always had time and a smile for those visiting the farm, and was willing to walk his prairies or woods, or share his broad knowledge, much of it learned by experience. He was one of the consistent supporters of the work of NCCT, and encouraged other land owners to protect their property against

future development with a conservation easement.

Byron's passing leaves a huge hole in our conservation community, but countless students, friends, neighbors, and others who were influenced by his deeds and words carry on his legacy. Those of us who knew Byron deeply feel the loss of a good friend and neighbor, but the quality of all of our lives is better because of Byron Shaw.

Alan Haney



Margaret and Byron Shaw

Continued from page 3

“The most rewarding part of volunteering for NCCT is getting to know the people that have donated easements and to learn the story behind the land and what makes it important to the owner. These are really wonderful stories.” – Kerry

NCCT is able to meet our mission to protect worthy, scenic, working lands and environmental resources for the benefit of the people of central Wisconsin because of volunteers like you! We welcome anyone and any amount of donated time. Consider what YOU can do to offer your Gift of Time to NCCT. Thank you!

WAYPOST CAMP ON MISSION LAKE

Lakeshore Protection for Future Generations

It was December 15, 2016, the coldest day of the new winter, and only the second time I had explored the grounds of the Waypost Camp on the shores of Mission Lake in southeastern Marathon County. The below-zero air threatened to freeze my nose shut, but I was so entranced by the beauty of the natural shoreline winding away as far as I could see that I hardly noticed the cold.



Camp Director Adam Brandt led our appraiser, surveyor, and me through a cedar swamp, alder thickets, and across the tops of knolls that once were a summer home to indigenous peoples. The oak- and pine-clad highlands held a magnificent view across the lake. We continued on through the forest, the creaking and snapping of frozen trees the only sounds around us. Down the slope we slipped, entering a tunnel of cathedral-like hemlocks lining the shore. Skirting the edge of the lake, we made our way back to the warmth of the cozy lodge, nearly a mile away. Seeing the incredible diversity of plant communities around us, I could vividly imagine the variety of animal life in the green of spring—and now NCCT supporters will be able to do just that! We ask you to join us on May 13 when NCCT and Waypost Camp owners hold a celebration of our partnership and efforts to protect the 88 acre camp and over half the lake's shoreline!

The DNR recommended protection of Mission Lake in 2004, when they identified five Sensitive Areas that provide critical habitat on the Waypost Camp property. These Sensitive Areas include bogs and aquatic and forested habitats along most of the shoreline of the camp and "were selected because of their importance for fish and wildlife habitat, importance for protecting water quality, the natural buffer of terrestrial vegetation, the high quality aquatic plant communities they supported, and for their outstanding, natural scenic beauty."

All of the sensitive areas have the potential to be used for educational

purposes: they provide visual and sound buffers, buffers against the invasion of non-native species and areas of beauty for lake residents and visitors."

The completion of a conservation easement on the Waypost Camp property will accomplish many things. In addition to preventing development and fragmentation around Mission Lake, it will protect wildlife habitat and scenic beauty, better protect water quality, and promote lakeshore- and archaeological conservation via education.

The conservation easement also will preserve and protect archaeological resources, as the entire Camp property is designated an archaeological site by the Wisconsin State Historical Society. In spring 2016, an archaeological study confirmed reported Native American burial mounds and artifacts of a Native American summer encampment.



Per the conservation easement, the goal is "to preserve the Property in perpetuity in its predominantly natural, ecological, archaeological, scenic, educational, and forestry condition, and to prevent any use of the Property that will adversely impact or interfere with its Conservation Values."

Be sure to check out NCCT's website and Facebook page for more details of this exciting event to celebrate with us!

As soon as individuals with a cause have found one another out, they combine. From that moment, they are no longer isolated people, but a power seen from afar, whose actions serve as an example and whose language is listened to.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1840

JOIN NCCT AS WE CELEBRATE
4,000 ACRES AND 50 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS!

Bring the family for children's activities, hiking the camp's trails, and canoeing or kayaking on this beautiful lake. Learn about the significant archaeological and natural resources soon to be protected with a conservation easement that includes over 1 mile of natural shoreline and over 80 acres of forest and wetlands.

Date: May 13 1-5 pm.

Location: Waypost Camp, Mission Lake.

Directions and info: NCCT website

NCCT CLOSES 2016 WITH 60-ACRE CONSERVATION EASEMENT

On Thursday, December 22, North Central Conservancy Trust and Cathy Mauer and Gordon Ruesch signed NCCT's latest conservation easement on a 60-acre property located in the Town of Medford, Taylor County. The Mauer-Ruesch easement will forever protect a diverse and scenic mixture of mature sugar maple, hemlock and oak forest, a stream, and black ash and northern white cedar wetlands within rolling glacial topography. The signing of the Mauer-Ruesch easement brings the total number of acres permanently protected in Taylor County by NCCT to 495 acres and 6 properties.

The act of placing a conservation easement on their property has its roots in Cathy and Gordon's deep love for the land and its wild inhabitants. As Cathy so eloquently describes,



"We bought our property over twenty years ago, but there is always something new and special every year. A first for us this past week was an otter who traveled down the creek, leaving footprints and its distinctive slide marks in the snow. Yet at the same time that we thrill in new sightings, we look forward

to the familiar sights and happenings that each season brings, and we are looking forward to soon hearing the peenting and flight song of the woodcocks. For both of us, going for a walk and having the excitement of a new sighting or just enjoying the sounds of birds or the wind in the trees renews our spirits. We are pleased that others may have a similar opportunity in years to come.

As land in native vegetation disappears, birds and other animals struggle to find habitat in which to live and raise their young or to use as a stopover during migration. We have seen so much land here in Taylor County and throughout the state and the country being cleared for crop fields or development. There is peace of mind in knowing that we are able to preserve this land, which has given us so much joy, and we hope it is a gift to the future."

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 _____

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

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VIA EMAIL TO SAVE TREES AND POSTAGE!

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



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In this issue: NCCT Needs You!

Thank you Volunteers!

New easements

Celebrations

...and more

Save the Date!
Annual Meeting
Oct 12, 2017



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