



Trumper Swans

Walking the Walk

Photo by Emily Weber



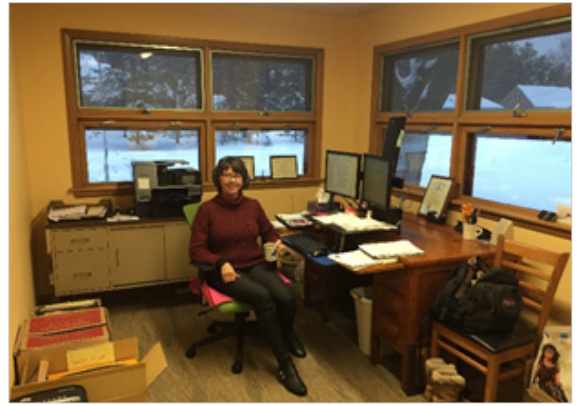
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FLOWING LIKE A RIVER

The last three and a half years have floated by for me as NCCT's Executive Director. It has been a journey of new experiences, friends, and landscapes that I treasure. I am proud to have accomplished many of my goals for this beloved organization: acquiring a preserve for NCCT to showcase our protection efforts (the Mumford "Three Rolls" Preserve); finding a permanent home office for NCCT; hiring a second staff member for outreach and development; and drafting and updating our policies and practices to prepare NCCT for eventual accreditation with the national Land Trust Alliance.



As I have met the above goals and also approach a milestone year in my life, I feel it's time to cede the Executive Director position to another worthy individual who can carry on our critical mission to conserve the natural heritage of Central Wisconsin through the protection of land. Although NCCT is very well positioned for succession, there is still much work to be done: raise NCCT's profile in our service area, increase membership and sponsors, and continue to strategically protect Central Wisconsin's forests, shorelands, wetlands, and farmlands.

I am eternally grateful for having had this leadership opportunity, and for helping bring about the protection of over 650 acres of land under conservation easement with seven landowners in the last 3.5 years (with more on the way!). I thank everyone from NCCT past and present who welcomed me, mentored me, and worked with me to conserve our irreplaceable landscapes. It's been delightful getting to know our easement landowners, volunteers, and supporters. I will continue to serve as E.D. until mid-September, and plan to train the new leader so as to ensure a smooth transition. Land conservation in a land trust's world is a perpetual responsibility; thus, I intend to continue my role as a volunteer with NCCT, and maintain the wonderful connections I've made. As has been said, "Keep on keepin' on" ...flowing like a river!

Gratefully,
Janet Smith



Plover River.

Photo by Roger Zimmermann

INTERESTING TIMES

From the President:

These certainly are interesting times! I am writing this article on Friday, March 13, 2020. Just yesterday I learned that the Gathering Waters conference scheduled for next week has been cancelled as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. No doubt this is just one of many disruptions that we will face in our lives in the coming weeks. I hope each of you is well and safe and looking forward to springtime in Wisconsin (or wherever you may be).

Trying times like these often prompt me to reflect on “what really matters.” No doubt like for many of you, it is family and friends that are at the top of the list. While my love of the outdoors influences many decisions I make, a major motivating factor for my volunteer efforts with North Central Conservancy Trust is my daughters, Clara and Lyla. While there is immediate benefit to all of Central Wisconsin in the good work of NCCT and our easement donors, it was the chance to have a lasting, positive impact for future generations that initially got me engaged.

Now, part of what keeps me going with NCCT is the community of people that make up this organization. One of those people, our Executive Director Janet Smith, is moving on. While Janet’s time as ED is coming to an end, I know her passion for the land and for NCCT will keep her connected to us for many years to come. Thank you, Janet, for all that you have done!

As you reflect on what matters to you during these challenging times, I hope you too will find a strong connection to both NCCT’s mission and the wonderful community of donors, staff, and volunteers that make up NCCT. If you have not visited the new office already, I invite you to stop by and connect with Janet and Emily. The transformation of that space by a dedicated group of volunteers is yet another example of what this amazing community can accomplish.

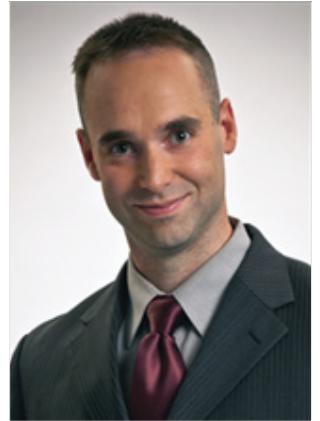
As always, to all who support NCCT—thank you.

I leave you with this quote from Aldo Leopold:

“We shall never achieve harmony with the land, any more than we shall achieve absolute justice or liberty for people. In these higher aspirations, the important thing is not to achieve but to strive.”

Be well,

David M. James



Birdfoot violet, Starpoint easement.

Photo by Lora Hagen

AN UPDATE FROM OUR OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Emily Weber

As many of you know, I joined the NCCT family in August! These past months have flown by, and I am grateful to be working for an organization that makes a difference in land conservation. Since August, I have been busy working to engage new audiences, grow NCCT's membership base and sponsorship, plan NCCT's events, and to build new partnerships with other conservation-oriented organizations.

NCCT has had many exciting opportunities in the past few months! One of them being raising significant funding to renovate our new NCCT office. Janet and I moved in thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and substantial funds from our generous donors. We plan to continue raising funds for ongoing and future costs related to the office. Please join us to celebrate this accomplishment at our Open House event on May 30, 2020 (more details below). Another wonderful opportunity was the acquisition of the 5-acre parcel and island adjacent to Bukolt Park in Stevens Point. This was a possibility thanks to the fast work and collaboration of the City of Stevens Point, the Green Circle Trail, and NCCT. Stay tuned for a special event that will showcase this unique property and the new section of the Green Circle Trail that will run through it.

More recently, NCCT has also undergone some serious changes behind the scenes. I believe these changes will strengthen our organization and help us grow. We have completely revamped our website, ncctwi.org, and it now includes great new features such as a page that provides information on our publicly accessible properties, a page for our sponsors, a donation page that allows for recurring donations, and much more! If you haven't already, please check it out. The other major behind the scenes change has been the shifting of our database from outdated software to a new database system with Little Green Light. We hope that switching to a new donor database will help us efficiently run our organization and communicate with our supporters!

This summer and fall, you will find me at our upcoming events listed below and around our service area, exhibiting NCCT at other conservation-oriented events and meetings. Please contact me if you would like to know if I will be in your area exhibiting at an event, or if you have an event in mind that NCCT could join. I am also willing to give a talk to any interested group to provide more information about our organization.

As I continue to work toward NCCT's outreach goals, I ask our supporters to help me by giving feedback, and by reaching out to me with personal and organizational contacts that NCCT can connect with to continue to advance its mission. When you talk about us within your network, you are helping NCCT in a BIG way! Nothing is as powerful as your voice within your own network of family and friends, so please help me spread the word!



Wood frog.

Photo by Roger Zimmermann

PROPERTY MONITORS: VOLUNTEERS WHO “WALK THE WALK”

Most of us are familiar with the phrase “If you’re going to talk the talk, you’ve got to walk the walk”—a modern version of the old saying “actions speak louder than words.” Well, NCCT has a dedicated bunch of volunteers who walk NCCT’s conservation easement properties. Some of them do it year after year, a significant commitment! This past year, 21 volunteers hiked a total of 40 of NCCT’s protected properties in order to complete the annual monitoring task that all land trusts are obligated to do.

Every year, NCCT protects more land under easement, and therefore, every year there are more properties to monitor. This year NCCT has 54 properties we must monitor. It only takes an average of two hours to walk these beautiful properties, and you often get to meet the owners, which is another treat. We always need volunteers to monitor properties, so if you like to walk Central Wisconsin’s lovely natural landscapes and have a couple hours to spare (who doesn’t?!) [please come to our spring training for monitors and learn how it’s done!](#) See NCCT’s [2020 Schedule of Events](#) for details.

We’d like to extend a sincere and heartfelt [thank-you](#) to all of these committed volunteers who helped NCCT meet our annual goal of visiting and monitoring each of our protected lands last year:



Larson easement.

Photo by Janet Smith

Eric Anderson	Greg Dahl	Cathy Mauer	Robert Sander
Annie Baker	Doug Fields	Kay Meyer	Sarah Wolf
Nichole Besyk	Bob Freckmann	Owen Patterson	Roger Zimmermann
Mindy Borchardt	Heather Huebner	Doug Pledger	
Steve Bradley	David James	Jacob Prater	
Kerry Brimmer	Megan Mapes-Martins	Nancy Sander	

GIS MAPPING INTERNSHIP PROJECT

North Central Conservancy Trust has good news to share about an opportunity that has literally come knocking at our door. A few weeks ago, our NCCT staff were surprised by a knock at the door of the office. Jana Harris, a student at UWSP, came to ask about our organization and was wondering if we might need help with our GIS maps. We were excited at the opportunity this could present for NCCT. It has been our intent over the past several years to update our existing service maps and to create a new map that includes our entire 8-county service area and incorporates land trust priority areas such as public lands, wetlands, watersheds, etc.

Jana quickly formed a team to start the project within an existing UWSP GIS class. After completing the project, she plans to continue work for NCCT with an internship. We are glad that Jana, Casey, Hannah, and Kye are willing to use their education to benefit local land conservation. It is an invaluable learning opportunity for them as they develop another tool we can use to further our mission. We hope this new map will help us strategically prioritize our future land conservation efforts within our service area and that it will allow us to better demonstrate to our current and future supporters the land we have currently protected within each county. We are so excited to see these students use their skills to do something good within their community!

Once this great project is complete, Jana plans to demonstrate her work while also publicizing NCCT by presenting the maps at symposiums. After displaying her work and the work of her team, she will then provide us with a poster that we will proudly display at our NCCT office. We are excited that these students thought “outside the box” and found a way to support local land conservation from an unlikely perspective, and for that, we are grateful!

A CALL TO ACTION

NEW OFFICE

“Ranger Fund”

As reported in our fall 2019 newsletter, NCCT took ownership of our new, permanent home office in Upper Whiting Park in October. Thanks to over 400 hours of donated labor led by Doug Henderson, NCCT staff moved in the first week in December. Most recently, B.J. Welling of Welling Kitchens donated custom cabinets and counter for our kitchenette, and local artist, Shelby Weber, is painting our Freeman Legacy Tree in the conference room.

The office’s interior renovation work is largely complete, but there are ongoing capital needs for the space. For example, in the near future we will require a new furnace. NCCT’s fall 2019 newsletter called for donors to our newly established Ranger Fund. We continue our call to action to help cover these Phase 2 expenses and ongoing capital needs for the office and other NCCT properties.

Please consider contributing to our Ranger Fund. As a donor, your name will be permanently displayed on our legacy tree, planned for completion this spring.

As a reminder, the donor levels are:

- White Pine \$5000-2500
- White Oak \$2499-1500
- Sugar Maple \$1499-1000
- Elm \$999-750
- Birch \$749-500
- Basswood \$499-250
- Aspen \$249-150

SPONSORSHIP

NCCT is looking for individuals and corporate sponsors to offset our monthly office expenses—which are new to us as we have lived expense-free for the past 7 years courtesy of Dave Worth and The Worth Company. Our monthly costs are approximately \$330. If you want to sponsor a month of the office or more, let us know and you will be featured on our social media pages and our newsletter. We appreciate your support!

BOARD MEMBERS

NCCT is always interested in hearing from supporters willing to commit to 3 to 6 years as a Board member. Board members learn so much about our land conservation efforts and how we accomplish it. Best of all, you can be proud to say you made a significant difference in furthering our conservation mission!

This year NCCT is recruiting 2 to 4 board members. Please let us know if you are interested!

VOLUNTEERS TO MONITOR PROPERTIES

NCCT has 54 properties that require annual monitoring. As described in the “Property Monitors” article in this newsletter, we want YOU to come and try it if you haven’t already. Anyone can become a monitor—you just have to go to the brief training session to become oriented, and it does help to accompany an experienced monitor if you haven’t ever done so.

Office garage space available: space available for your workshop! Contact NCCT if you are interested in using our large 4-bay garage for an educational workshop.

POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING

Nancy Turyk, NCCT board member and UW-Extension educator

Springtime in Central Wisconsin spurs thoughts of the return of birds, baby animals, and emerging leaves. Many of us rummage through seed catalogs and gaze out on the receding snow and subdued-colored landscape, daydreaming of sunnier skies and longer daylight, and perhaps, how we can attract more birds or animals to our yards this year. Some are drawn to the little things in life like bees and butterflies, which are not only fun to watch but also need our help. It is these small creatures that pollinate many plants, ensuring the success of plant reproduction and provision of food for animals, including us. However, pollinator populations have been declining due to habitat loss; use of lawn, garden, and agricultural chemicals, fungus; our changing climate; and hybridized plants whose flowers don't produce pollen.

All is not lost! Whether you live on a tiny lot in the city, or are responsible for many acres of land, planting or nurturing pollinator habitat can help pollinator populations. As an example, a study by Chicago's Field Museum indicated that planting milkweed in cities could play a large role in helping to stabilize monarch butterfly populations. Imagine what could be accomplished in Central Wisconsin if lawns or patches of non-native grasslands were replaced with prairies that include milkweed and other flowering, nectar-producing plants?

Prairie patches can be planted with a variety of plants that will provide a palette of flowers from early spring through frost. Native plants come in a range of shapes and sizes and if desired, can be carefully arranged to produce a controlled or managed appearance while still providing pollinator habitat and food. Clean water and healthy soil are other benefits that come with native vegetation and in addition, plants native to Central Wisconsin and matched to your soil type typically get everything they need to flourish so fertilizing is not necessary and after the first year, additional watering is not needed. Some brightly colored flowering native plants that are favorites of pollinators include marsh (or "red") milkweed, butterfly weed, blazing star, bee balm, and many varieties of aster. It is important to obtain your seeds or plants from a reputable source. Many commercial stores sell seed for these plants, but they may be hybrids that lack pollen or may even contain "systemic" herbicides that will harm or kill pollinators.

Join us at our open house on May 30 to learn more about native plants! Noted author (*Aquatic Plants of the Upper Midwest*) and president of The Wild Ones' Central Wisconsin chapter, Paul Skawinski, will present a workshop on landscaping with native plants. The workshop will include a demonstration of planting native shrubs and wildflowers at NCCT's new office!



Monarch butterfly. Photo by Roger Zimmermann



Karner blue butterfly on lupine, Shillinglaw easement.

NCCT 2020 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

NCCT VOLUNTEER PROPERTY MONITOR TRAINING (2 SESSIONS)

- Northern session, in Wausau:
 - Date: Thursday, April 30
 - Time: 5:30 PM-7:00 PM
 - Location: The Vistas at Greenwood Hills subdivision entrance: Turn south onto Green Vista Drive from CTH N/Townline Rd in Wausau. Meet at the entrance to the Hawthorn Trail.
 - Rain Date: Thursday, May 7, 5:30 PM-7:00 PM
- Southern session, near Plainfield:
 - Date: Thursday, May 14
 - Time: 5:30 PM-7:00 PM
 - Location: To Be Determined
 - Rain Date: Thursday, May 21, 5:30 PM-7:00 PM

Open to anyone interested in monitoring NCCT easement properties, both new monitors and those who want a refresher. NCCT would like to draw new volunteers from a broader geographic region to cover conservation easements in the northern and southern parts of our service area. One-on-one training can be made available if you are unable to make the above dates.

How to register: Please email edncct@gmail.com or call NCCT at 715-344-1910 so we can confirm the number of attendees.

NCCT OFFICE OPEN HOUSE

- Date: Saturday, May 30, 2020
- Time: 12:30 PM-3:30 PM.
- Location: 301 W. Cedar Street, Stevens Point, WI 54481

Save the Date! Saturday, May 30th, 2020, NCCT is hosting an Open House to showcase our new office space. Please join us to enjoy refreshments, a ribbon-cutting ceremony, special presentations, yard games, and a fun workshop! Paul Skawinski, President of The Wild Ones, will lead a native plant workshop where he will talk about how to landscape your yard with native plants and demonstrate techniques for planting them right here in NCCT's new office yard. The event will be free so please bring your friends and family and help us celebrate!

How to register: Please email ocncct@gmail.com or call NCCT at 715-344-1910 to confirm that you are coming and how many people will be in your group!

LAND TRUST DAYS: *BOTANY AT THE BOG*

- Date: September 12, 2020
- Time: 2:00 PM- 4:00 PM Exploration of the property, and 4:00PM-6:00PM is an after- party at a local eatery
- Location: 1813 County Hwy Y, Hatley, Marathon County, Wisconsin

Join NCCT for a wonderful walk on the Rice Lake Property, owned by the Ice Age Trail Alliance and protected with an NCCT conservation easement. This is a perfect place to spend a Saturday afternoon in the summer. Bob Freckmann will lead us through the property, pointing out plant species and answering questions! The event is intended to highlight this beautiful property and to encourage people to explore other protected and publicly accessible lands. After our walk through the bog is complete, we will head to Pike Lake Resort for some refreshments. Pizza will be provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. Registration for this event is free, but please let us know if you plan to attend so that we can have an expected headcount for the day.

How to register: Please email ocncct@gmail.com or call NCCT at 715-344-1910 to confirm that you are coming and how many people will be in your group.

NCCT ANNUAL HARVEST DINNER

- **When:** Thursday October 15, 2020 5:00PM-9:00PM
- **Where:** SentryWorld Atrium, 601 Michigan Ave N, Stevens Point, WI 54481

It is not too early to start thinking about attending NCCT's Annual Dinner Event! This year's event will be taking place in Stevens Point at the SentryWorld Atrium. We are delighted to announce that our keynote speaker for this year will be Craig Thompson, The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Conservation Program Integration Chief. He is a migratory bird expert and has a wealth of conservation knowledge. You do not want to miss the Annual Dinner this year! Stay tuned for more information!

We are looking for sponsors for our Annual Dinner costs and for sponsoring our keynote speaker! Providing an entertaining evening for our many supporters takes lots of time and resources. In order to raise significant funds for our mission, we rely heavily on sponsors to offset the costs that come with putting the event together, such as venue, food, drink, music, and other items. Whether you can attend or not, please consider a contribution to NCCT. Your support is greatly appreciated!

How to register: Our Annual Dinner invitations will go out at the beginning of September and an announcement will be made earlier for the online registration option. Please email ocncct@gmail.com if you have any questions.

OTHER EVENTS YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN

PRAIRIE CHICKEN FESTIVAL

- **When:** Saturday, April 18, from 4:00AM- 3:00PM
- **Where:** Eron's Event Barn, LLC. 3471 County Road C, Stevens Point, WI 54481

Mark your calendars for the Wisconsin Prairie Chicken Festival April 18, 2020. Prairie chicken viewing and morning birding tour requires a ticket purchase. All other events are free. NCCT will have a booth at this event.

COOPERATING FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT- CO-OP WORKSHOP SERIES

- **When:** April 18, May 2, and May 30
- **Where:** Mead Wildlife Visitor Center, 2148 County Hwy S, Milladore, WI.

Golden Sands RC&D will be holding a series of workshops this spring, focusing on cooperative land management. A total of three workshops will be held on Saturdays at the Mead Wildlife Visitor Center, 2148 County Hwy S, Milladore, Wisconsin. The first workshop "Cooperating for Wildlife Habitat" is on April 18, the second workshop "Cooperating for Invasive Species Control" is on May 2, and the final workshop "Cooperating for Forest Management" is on May 30. NCCT will give a short presentation at the May 30 workshop before their open house event. For more information about these workshops and to register, visit <https://www.goldensandsrcd.org/woodsandwildlifeworkshops>

FRIENDS OF SANDHILL OPEN HOUSE

- **When:** Saturday, May 9, 10:00AM- 3:00PM
- **Where:** Friends of Sandhill 1715 CR-X, Babcock, WI 54466

There will be free activities and displays. Presenter Rebecca Cristoffel will talk about turtles, and there will be a field trip to the Grange Cabin. NCCT will have a booth display at this event.

WALK WISCONSIN

- **When:** Saturday June 6, 7:00AM-6:00PM
- **Where:** Green Circle Trail. 2419 Northpoint Dr, Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481

Held annually the first Saturday in June, Walk Wisconsin is the premier walking event in the Midwest! This is a non-competitive event, encouraging walkers of all ages and ability levels. The full-, half-, and quarter-marathon events utilize the scenic Green Circle Trail, which passes the Wisconsin River, Plover River, several lakes, and unique ecosystems. The trail base for all routes include a combination of wood chips, crushed granite, paved-road surface, and wood boardwalk. Comfort stops are open based on official start times, and are available approximately every 3 miles. If you start earlier than the scheduled time for your specific event, there is no guarantee of food/beverages at the stops, and transportation is your responsibility. NCCT will have a comfort stop along the trail closest to our office location. The finish line picnic/entertainment at Piffner Park Bandshell: 2:00 pm-6:00 pm.

Registration: Register for the event here: <http://walkwisconsin.com>

INVASIVE SPECIES FIELD DAYS WITH CENTRAL WISCONSIN INVASIVES PARTNERSHIP (CWIP)

- **When:** The details are to be determined, but sometime between June 1 and July 1
- **Where:** The Henderson and Young properties, Portage County.

CWIP and NCCT are working together to host invasive species management workdays on two properties that are protected by conservation easements.

NCCT AND PADDLEQUEST- ISLAND CLEANUP DAY

- **When:** To be determined
- **Where:** Bukolt Park. 100 Bukolt Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

NCCT is seeking volunteers to help clean up debris from the island that NCCT recently acquired, along with the 5-acre parcel adjacent to Bukolt Park. PaddleQuest will be using the island on August 8 and 9 for their event, so in order to prepare the island and to make it a better environment, we are going to host a cleanup day before August 7. Please contact the NCCT Office at (715)344-1910 or by emailing ocncct@gmail.com if you are interested in participating in this event!

If you are interested in volunteering at one of these events, please email ocncct@gmail.com.



Marsh marigolds, Klessig easement.

Photo by Lora Hagen

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 _____

City _____

State/zip _____

Email _____

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

PLEASE SEND MY NEWSLETTER AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE
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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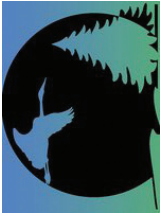
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