



Great Horned Owl

Photo by Roger Zimmermann

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Wisconsin Potato &
Vegetable Growers Association
The Worth Company

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Great things are happening at the North Central Conservancy Trust as the days get longer and the weather warms up—we couldn't be more excited for spring!

We currently have several conservation easement projects underway to protect and conserve more land in Central Wisconsin. Projects like these are essential to our mission, and we are always seeking new ecologically important lands to protect.

Thanks to contributions from NCCT members and supporters, our Land Conservation Center has recently seen major capital improvements, and our fundraising challenge to raise money for a solar power system is currently underway.

Dedicated NCCT volunteers have been hard at work removing invasive species and improving our property next to Bukolt Park in Stevens Point, and our network of volunteers and members continues to grow in our service area of Adams, Taylor, Lincoln, Clark, Waushara, Wood, Marathon, and Portage Counties.

We also recently welcomed Molly McGuire to the team as our new Stewardship and Development Assistant. Molly is a Junior at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point and will be working with us through the spring semester. Welcome to the team Molly!

As our organization continues to evolve, so does the world around us. We are frequently reviewing our strategies for land conservation in Central Wisconsin to ensure that we are taking advantage of every available resource in our efforts to identify lands that will provide the greatest long-term benefits to our ecosystems and the public. This means using science, technology, local knowledge, and collaboration with partner agencies to be as strategic as we can in our pursuit to protect more land.

Our Board and staff members have been busy this year attending virtual conferences, webinars, and meetings in an effort to learn as much as possible from our partner agencies and fellow land trusts. These experiences all contribute to our growth and strength as an organization, giving us new tools, knowledge, and resources to better serve our region and the people who call this place home.

As we work hard to continue fulfilling our mission of conservation in Central Wisconsin, I often think about the incredibly important role NCCT plays in resource protection on a broader landscape scale, not just protecting land for today or next year, but forever. That's pretty awesome to

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Just a few months into my term as President of the Board of Directors, I am so honored to be a part of NCCT's tradition of preserving our natural heritage by protecting lands in Central Wisconsin. During these first few months, two things have jumped out at me regarding the workings of NCCT.



First, is the generosity and willingness to serve from volunteers both young and old. The hard work eradicating invasive Buckthorn plants at our property adjacent to Bukolt Park by members of the SPASH Women's Cross-Country team along with our dedicated NCCT volunteers. The incredible donation of a new and upgraded heating and cooling system for our office by longtime supporters. The heavy lifting on some very cold days by a group of retirees making our Wisconsin River island a safer and more beautiful place to visit. All of these contributions illustrate a dedication towards ensuring that both current and future residents of Central Wisconsin can continue to have many locations to enjoy our beautiful outdoors.

Second, is the emerging focus on climate as a vital reason to preserve and protect land. The national 30 X 30 initiative to protect 30% of our lands, rivers, lakes, and wetlands by 2030, and the proposed Trillion Trees and National Carbon Storage Act that has increased focus on both newly planted and existing forests, underscores the missions of local land trusts like NCCT to protect the properties in our own "backyards".

As spring arrives and Covid-19 restrictions ease a bit, I hope you will consider visiting one of our properties that welcome the public. Take a bike ride on the Green Circle Trail through our property near Bukolt Park in Stevens Point. Go for a short hike at the Rice Lake preserve at 1813 Hwy 13, south of Hatley. The property is owned by the Ice Age Trail Alliance and protected with an NCCT conservation easement. In the city of Wausau, check out a delightful, short, hiking trail at Green Acres, just off Hawthorne Avenue. Finally, go and visit our Mumford property located east of Wausau at 180572 Hwy 52. The property provides outstanding views of the Eau Claire River and some lovely spring wildflowers.

Call our office for directions and more information and you'll be all set for a fun outside experience close to home!

Kay Meyer
NCCT Board President

Spring 2021

WELCOME TO THE NCCT TEAM, MOLLY MCGUIRE!

Molly joined the NCCT team in January, and will continue to work with us until the end of May as the Stewardship and Development Assistant. She is originally from the northern suburbs of Chicago, is from a large family of two brothers and three sisters, and is currently a junior at UW-Stevens Point studying Natural Resource Planning with minors in Spanish and Sustainable Energy. She is heavily involved with environmental activism through her role as President of 350 Stevens Point and as co-founder of the UW Divestment Coalition, which is dedicated to divesting Wisconsin system universities from fossil fuel-related companies and investing in a sustainable future. Molly is passionate about building social unity for equitable, sustainable causes, and plans to continue her path in the United States Peace Corps post-graduation. In her spare time, she enjoys snowboarding, camping, yoga, science fiction novels, and great conversation accompanied by coffee or tea. Molly states, "I am excited for the opportunity to work for NCCT, and continue to discover the network of groups and individuals in Central Wisconsin passionate about deepening our connections and preservation of the natural world. Land conservation is at the core of maintaining a healthy, prosperous Wisconsin for generations to come."



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think about and I'm truly honored to be a part of the process.

What's also awesome is the high level of support, involvement and passion for this work that comes from our Board, Committee members, volunteers, members, and from our community. It's clear that the unified vision, collaborative efforts, and cohesiveness among our members and supporters is what makes NCCT a strong and resilient organization. Your generous support is what makes it possible for us to continue to protect our natural resources, steward our properties, and make much needed improvements to our Land Conservation Center. Thank you for joining us on this path of discovery, exploration, and the protection of land in Central Wisconsin.

Yours in Conservation,
Chris Radford
Executive Director

EATING LOCAL IN CENTRAL WISCONSIN

by Molly McGuire, NCCT Stewardship and Development Assistant

Coming from the concrete jungle of Chicago, Illinois, I simply did not grow up with a connection to where my food was grown and how it travelled hundreds or possibly thousands of miles to reach my refrigerator. My family and I just bought our food and didn't think twice about the potential impact we were having with our dollar each week.

Arriving in Central Wisconsin however, I have learned the value and uniqueness of this area to provide community support for small-scale, sustainable farming practices and purchasing opportunities.

Local production and consumption of food typically provides economic stability for farmers; often supports higher ethical treatment of animals and employees; is better for nearby ecosystems; and fosters community culture, health, and wellbeing. This all sounds magical, and it is. However it is important that communities create opportunities for local food sale and consumption to thrive. Oftentimes, communities do not have local food systems because of a lack of small-scale farmers, productive land, storage, and selling opportunities. Central Wisconsin is chipping away at these barriers year by year.



Farmshed serves as the matchmaker for consumers to find love in their favorite local goodies. Each year they create the Farm Fresh Atlas, an all-encompassing guide to the fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses, and specialty items produced right in our backyard, as well as farm-to-fork cuisine and businesses with sustainable agriculture in mind.

Tony Whitefeather, owner of Whitefeather Organics in Custer, Wisconsin, started his own mixed-vegetable farm from scratch in 2007. This area was suitable for him and his family because of the affordable and plentiful land offered. However, he states that "it is still a struggle to build awareness to the general public



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about the high-quality food produced close by.” Customers can enjoy Tony’s vegetables mainly through a program called Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). It operates by having customers pick up a weekly share of freshly picked produce during the spring, summer, and fall months.

Land conservation plays a valuable part in building a local food system. Across Wisconsin, 249,800 acres of agricultural land were converted to low-density housing or urban and highly developed land uses from 2001 to 2016. In the eight-county area served by North Central Conservancy Trust, many acres of farmland are permanently protected through conservation easements. NCCT wants to keep agricultural land in farmers’ hands to continue the tradition of growing high-quality, delicious foods for all of us to enjoy, while supporting best-management practices.

Find the 2021 Farm Fresh Atlas here: <https://www.farmshed.org/>

Support Whitefeather Organics here:

<https://www.whitefeatherorganics.farm/>

THANK YOU TO OUR HARD-WORKING COMMITTEES!

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

- Kerry Brimmer, Chair
- Nichole Good, Secretary
- Greg Dahl
- Jill Falstad
- Randy Falstad
- Bob Freckmann
- Alan Haney
- Doug Henderson
- A.J. McCaskey
- Kay Meyer
- Sharon Schwab
- Janet Smith

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE (A SUBSET OF PROPERTIES COMMITTEE)

- A.J. McCaskey, Chair
- Kerry Brimmer
- Greg Dahl
- Bob Freckmann
- Alan Haney

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

- Marv Noltze, Chair
- David James
- Robin Rothfeder
- Janet Smith
- Nancy Turyk
- Emily Weber

MAJOR GIFT PROVIDES FUNDING FOR NEW FURNACE AND AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM AT NCCT HEADQUARTERS!

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to long time NCCT members, Shirley Klapperich and Bill Clendenning for their generous contribution to our office building and Land Conservation Center to cover costs for a new furnace and air-conditioning system.

As many of you know, NCCT acquired the old DNR ranger station, located in the Village of Whiting, in 2019, to serve as a Land Conservation Center where NCCT staff and members can meet, conduct our work, host events, as well as offer a space that can be used for collaboration with other organizations.

When NCCT acquired the property, the building had not been updated since 1960, and it needed a ton of repair work. So far, our dedicated members and volunteers have contributed over 600 hours of volunteer time to completely renovate the building. Thank you! One major update we had not been able to make, until recently, was replacing the very old, energy inefficient furnace. Additionally, the building did not have air-conditioning for hot summer days.

Shirley and Bill recently stepped up and kindly gifted NCCT the funds needed to install a brand new (99% efficient) American-made Lennox furnace and air-conditioning unit. We are forever grateful for this generous contribution to our headquarters, where we continue to pursue our mission to protect the natural heritage of Central Wisconsin through the protection of land.

While we are immensely appreciative, there are still many other improvements we would like to make to strengthen our beautiful Land Conservation Center. If you would like to contribute, please sign up to volunteer or consider a gift to our Ranger Fund.

The Ranger Fund was established to help cover expenses and ongoing capital needs for the Land Conservation Center and other NCCT properties.

Ranger Fund donors are recognized with their name listed on a leaf of the beautiful Freeman Legacy Tree mural that is painted on a large wall in our office conference room.

**For More Information on the Ranger Fund and the
Freeman Legacy Tree Visit:
www.ncctwi.org/ranger-fund/**

Thank You for Supporting Our Mission!

CONSERVATION EASEMENT LANDOWNER'S CORNER: MECAN PRAIRIE HISTORY

by John Shillinglaw

We were motivated to purchase land in Central Wisconsin by Aldo Leopold's life and writings, and in 1985 we did just that. I was motivated to purchase this land on the Mekan River in Waushara County because I fish trout. This initial purchase led to a winding (like the Mekan River) journey to trout, prairies, paddling, grassland birds, Karner blue butterflies and a good part of the lives of my family and me. The journey continues.

By 1995 a total of 135 acres had been purchased and we were converting old ag fields to restored prairie, savannah, and wetlands. Karner blue butterflies and grassland birds had repopulated the restorations and a primitive campsite had been developed. We began to investigate ways to protect our work in perpetuity with a conservation easement, and decided on North Central Conservancy Trust (NCCT) because of the competent staff, board, and association with the university. Then, unexpectedly, we learned from the farmers "next door" that they were going to sell their land and retire, and had been offered a chance to sell to someone who had plans for a golf course and dwellings on their property. We had a chance to purchase 100 acres and took it, preventing development.

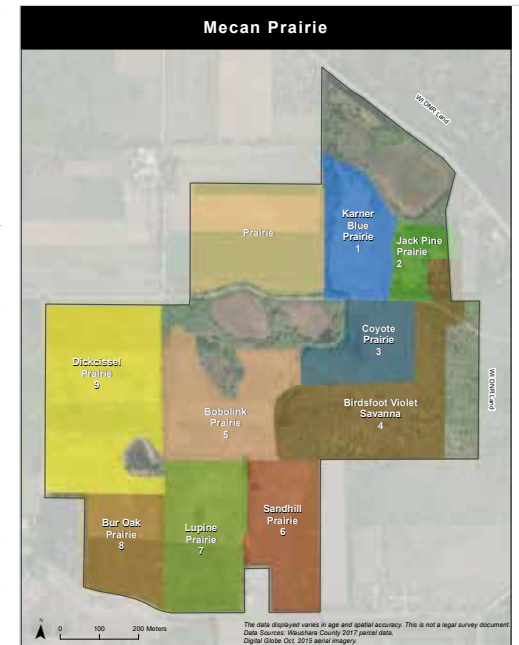


With advice from NCCT, we learned of financial incentives attached to conservation easements and took advantage of this opportunity to purchase the property and combined all we owned on the Mekan Prairie to create a conservation easement, except 14 acres that was set aside to provide a possible building site on that portion of the property. Our easement prohibited any development on all except those 14 acres.

Our next step was to establish an endowment fund through the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin so funds would be available

in perpetuity to continue to manage the property, providing habitat and resources for Karner blue butterflies, grassland birds, and others. NCCT supervises and distributes the funds to those who will carry out the work that is carefully outlined in the management plan.

A detailed map for management was created and used for decisions on controlled burns and other management strategies (map at right). We gave a right of first refusal to the Wisconsin DNR if the property was ever sold. The price of that sale is to be determined by a DNR certified survey. In 2018 we created a final document to add the 14 acres to the easement and place the entire 235 acres with all restrictions under one conservation easement. The only rights reserved are having two temporary campsites. In perpetuity.



The journey continues. We are providing opportunities to tour the property. My two sons, daughters-in-law, and 5 grandchildren play and work on the Mekan Prairie and paddle on the Mekan River. I have met many wonderful friends because of Mekan Prairie, and it has helped me heal after my wife's death. I am considering plans to include Mekan



Prairie and adjacent DNR land in a connected preserve in the Mekan River corridor. There was a time once when sturgeon were speared by native Americans from the Mekan River at Dakota. I hope that time will return.

John has graciously offered to speak with anyone that is interested in learning more about the Mekan Prairie, its conservation values, and how you, too, can protect your land in perpetuity.

Please call or email the NCCT office and we will help you contact him.

NCCT NEEDS YOU!

INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

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! Please contact our office if you are interested.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO MONITOR PROPERTIES

NCCT has 54 properties that require annual monitoring, and we want YOU to join the monitoring team. Anyone can become a monitor—you just have to go to the brief training session to become oriented. We may ask one of our experienced monitors to accompany you for the first site visit.

LAND CONSERVATION CENTER VOLUNTEER NEEDED

We are looking for a little extra help this summer at the Land Conservation Center. If you or someone you know is interested in helping to maintain the grounds of the property, please let us know. Equipment will be provided. This would involve lawn-mowing, weeding, raking, and more! All ages welcome to inquire.

OFFICE GARAGE SPACE AVAILABLE

Space available for your workshop or collaboration project! Contact NCCT if you are interested in using our large 4-bay garage for an educational workshop or partnership event.

Don't forget, when you shop at Amazon, use Amazon Smile and select North Central Conservancy Trust as your non-profit. NCCT will automatically receive 0.5% of the purchase price as a donation at no cost to you!

Special thanks to John Shillinglaw, Lora Hagen, and Spectra Print for their significant contributions to this newsletter.

NCCT 2021 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Invasive Species Removal Workday with NCCT & Central Wisconsin Invasives Partnership (CWIP)

When: Saturday April 17 10am-1pm

Where: Within 15 minutes of Stevens Point, location given closer to the date

CWIP and NCCT are working together to host invasive species management workdays on two properties that are protected by conservation easements. Lunch will be provided for all participants.

How to register:

Call us: (715) 344-1910

Email: internshipncct@gmail.com

Registration link: bit.ly/3kLJuT9





CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Description

We need volunteers to help ensure that protected properties are remaining so. Visit properties once per year, walk the trails, and fill out a form noting the conditions of the property. Provided: training session, maps and other information specific to the property.

Training Event

Thursday, April 15 @ 6:00pm Live via Zoom

*Available on our website after the event

Call or email us to sign up!



Visit Beautiful
Protected Lands

Build
Community

Explore Forests,
Wetlands,
Prairies, & Farms

Training Provided

Low Time
Commitment

NORTH CENTRAL CONSERVANCY TRUST

301 West Cedar Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481

(715) 344-1910

nctwi.org

ednct@gmail.com

FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE FOR SOLAR ENERGY AT THE NCCT LAND CONSERVATION CENTER!

HELP US INVEST IN RENEWABLE ENERGY TODAY!



Fundraiser Details

An anonymous donor has offered \$5,000 towards the installation of solar at the NCCT Land Conservation Center. It's up to us to raise the rest!

Total Estimated Cost

US Made Solar Package Installation.....\$13,380

Contributions to Date: Thank You!

Anonymous Donor Contribution.....\$5,000
 NCCT Board Personal Contributions.....\$1,600
 NCCT Committee Member Personal Gift....\$500
 Northwind Solar Discount Contribution.....\$500
 Grant & Incentive Support (Pending).....\$3,356
 NCCT Member & Supporter Contributions..\$2,424

**Total Needed to Reach Goal: \$0
CONGRATULATIONS, WE DID IT!**



Freeman Legacy Tree

Any donation over \$150 will get your name added to our Freeman Legacy Tree Mural.

This beautiful mural is located in the main conference room at our Land Conservation Center!

How do I Donate?

Credit Card:

- Go to nctwi.org and click "DONATE"
- Enter the amount you would like to contribute, and let us know that it's for the *Solar Gift Challenge*

Check:

- Send a check in the mail to 301 West Cedar Street, Stevens Point, WI 54481
- Write your check out to NCCT, and specify in the memo that your contribution is for the *Solar Gift Challenge*

Donations beyond goal will go into the Ranger Fund for further improvements to the Land Conservation Center

**INTERESTED IN HELPING OUT?
CONSIDER A GIFT TOWARDS THE
LAND CONSERVATION CENTER WISH LIST!**

Major Property Improvements

- New Energy Efficient Windows
- Solar Power Array & Inverter
- Front Door Window Repair
- Garage Roof Repair
- Driveway Asphalt Repair

Property & Office Supplies

- Native plants & seed
- NCCT flag for our flagpole
- Fire/waterproof file cabinet(s)
- Work gloves
- Nitrile gloves
- Shovel
- Yard rakes (metal & plastic)
- Bird houses
- Poles to mount bird feeders & houses
- Fire extinguisher
- Webcam with microphone
- Computer speakers
- Postage stamps
- Wi-fi range extender



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 in tribute/memory/honor of:

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, 301 W Cedar St, Stevens Point WI 54481



NORTH CENTRAL CONSERVANCY TRUST
301 W CEDAR ST, STEVENS POINT WI 54481
www.ncctwi.org edncct@gmail.com 715-344-1910

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NORTH CENTRAL CONSERVANCY TRUST
301 W Cedar St
Stevens Point WI 54481



Conserving the natural heritage of Central Wisconsin through protection of land.