



Photo by Roger Zimmermann

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kay Meyer

In her 2021 book *The Birdman of Koshkonong*, author Martha Bergland recounts the life of Swedish immigrant naturalist Thure Kumlien. While struggling to eke out a living for his family on his plot of land near Lake Koshkonong in the mid-1800s, Kumlien continued to follow his calling as a naturalist, identifying many of the fish, birds, fauna, and especially flora of his new land. He also later taught at Albion Academy and was curator of the Milwaukee Public Museum.

In an 1876 issue of *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, he published a paper titled, “On the Rapid Disappearance of Wisconsin Wildflowers,” in which he writes of the loss of plant species over 30ish years due to development from agriculture, by immigrant farmers just like him. In 1877 in, “The History of Madison and Dane County,” he writes again of the loss of so many plant, bird, and fish species to human overreach. He tells of “what he saw that is no longer there to see.”

Kumlien writes his observations without prescriptive suggestion, but his underlying message is clear. Had people the tools we have today to measure, evaluate, and disseminate information, and given forethought to the greater whole of the combined costs of plowing over many acres and cutting many acres of trees, the many species may not have been lost.

Our mission at NCCT is to protect and preserve the conservation value of properties in our Central Wisconsin area. While we can't know precisely what the future will bring, we're here to heed the counsel of people like Kumlien and Aldo Leopold to value and protect the lands around us, for today and for the future. We can't thank you enough for your support of our efforts.



Photo by Roger Zimmermann

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Chris Radford

As we reflect on another successful year at NCCT, I am continually impressed by the overwhelming support for conservation initiatives in this region. The attendance at this year's Annual Dinner at Bukolt Park was a statement in itself. Over 160 of us coming together from all over the country to gather and share stories of conservation projects, to support the endeavors of NCCT and others, and to strengthen our collaborative efforts to protect the places we all love and enjoy, and that provide ecological and environmental security for the future.



We all know that if we aren't out there protecting these places, who else will? The reward for our collective actions to protect and steward our natural resources is one that we all share and it's an incredible gift to future generations. That is why we all cheer loudly together when announcing land protection projects, stewardship efforts, community wide out-planting projects and future opportunities for us to come together once again to show our support for conservation locally and beyond. The applause and celebration are truly for you, our dedicated land protectors, volunteers and supporters who are making a difference each day.

During this time of Thanksgiving, I would like to say “thank you” to all of you who care about these initiatives, for doing your part in your neck of the woods and for your continued support for the North Central Conservancy Trust. It is because of your support and dedication that our local land trust can continue to do amazing things for the community and the environment for generations to come. Thank you!

UPDATE FROM THE OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

By Becky Wadleigh

Each time I write a thank you note to a donor I find myself writing, “it’s an exciting time to be with NCCT.” And I mean it, each time! We are growing—our protected acreage, our family of conservation easement landowners, our membership (if you donate to NCCT, we consider you a member), our body of volunteers—is all increasing, and it’s something to be excited about. The number of new members and first-time donors to NCCT has doubled over the past few years. We are bringing more people into our fold, and spreading the word about our important mission, which leads to more interested landowners and more protected acreage. It’s a big circle—and we are genuinely excited to have you be part of it. To our new members: thank you and welcome! To our long-time, sustaining supporters: thank you for helping NCCT get to this place. It is exciting!



Give me a call sometime so we can chat (715) 344-1910, outreachncct@gmail.com

NORTH CENTRAL CONSERVANCY TRUST ENDOWMENT FUND

NCCT is excited to announce its new endowment fund through the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin! NCCT requires significant, ongoing funding to protect land in perpetuity. This endowment was created to support NCCT’s conservation mission and to help ensure that NCCT can continue growing and protecting land for future generations. Thank you to the donors of a \$2,000 leading contribution. Make your long-term investment in NCCT today.



Donations can be made **online at www.cfcwi.org/funds**

or by mail:

Make checks payable to:

Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin, include memo “for NCCT Endowment Fund”

Mail checks to:

Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin
2801 Hoover Rd., Unit 1B
Stevens Point, WI 54481

2022 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT:

DAVID M. JAMES

NCCT is honored to recognize David M. James as the 2022 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award! The Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals for their outstanding contributions and volunteer service with NCCT. Past recipients include Joe Freeman, Dave Hillier, Tuck Mallery, Bob Freckmann, Kerry Brimmer, Alan Haney, David Worth and the Worth Company, and Doug Henderson.



Dave began his six-year term on NCCT’s Board of Directors in May of 2016, including two years spent as Board President. During this time, Dave played an instrumental role in strengthening the partnership between NCCT, the City of Stevens Point, and the Green Circle Trail Organization that led to NCCT’s acquisition of the property north of Bukolt Park and Bukolt Island, both of which are now preserved and open to the public.

Dave also volunteered his time and legal expertise while serving as a member of the statewide task force of professionals who created the Wisconsin Model Grant of Conservation Easement. This model serves as a guide for drafting conservation easements, and is used by land trusts statewide, including NCCT!

Dave has been an ongoing advocate for the organization to invest in resources like staff, the properties we own that are open to the public, and a permanent office space to grow our mission and provide more opportunities for people to connect with the work that we do. In 2019, Dave and other NCCT folks worked closely with the Village of Whiting to convert the old DNR Ranger Station into what is now the Land Conservation Center—NCCT’s first official office!

Dave is an attorney with Anderson O’Brien Law in Stevens Point. He was presented with the Distinguished Service Award at NCCT’s Fall Harvest Dinner, held on September 22, 2022 at the Bukolt Park Lodge in Stevens Point. NCCT is grateful for everything that Dave has done to benefit, improve, and support the organization. He volunteers to support NCCT’s mission, the environment, and our community. Dave stepped down from the Board of Directors in May of this year after six years of service and will continue to serve on NCCT’s Public Relations Committee. Thank you for everything, Dave!

NCCT WELCOMES DON ROMUNDSON TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Don grew up in the village of Park Ridge, spending a great deal of time in Iverson Park where he was a member of the Ski Jumping Club. In high school, Don's father purchased the farm next to his grandfather's century farm, and the family moved to New Hope Township. Don holds a B.A. from UW-Milwaukee and a law degree from UW-Madison. After law school Don served as a law clerk in the Wisconsin Supreme Court to Justice William Bablitch following a clerkship in the Wisconsin Court of Appeals. He then spent fifteen years in larger law firms in Green Bay and Madison, specializing in appellate practice, environmental law, product liability law, and business litigation. Don eventually returned to the judiciary as the resident senior staff attorney for the last sixteen years in the Wisconsin Court of Appeals in Wausau. He currently serves on the Board of the State Bar Appellate Practice Section, was its first chairman, and previously served as treasurer.



Don just recently retired from public service and is operating his 300-acre family farm, as well as managing the family woodlands in the winter months. In his spare time, he can be found kayaking, hiking local trails, skiing, snowshoeing, reading, and enjoying music.

\$10,000 RAISED FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE LAND CONSERVATION CENTER!

This spring NCCT was awarded a \$26,136 grant from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin's (PSC) Energy Innovation Grant Program to help fund window and insulation upgrades for our office building. With total project costs upwards of \$35,000, we asked for your help to raise \$10,000 to fully fund the project. We are grateful to report that you helped to surpass our goal entirely, raising a total of \$10,250! Construction is expected to begin January 2023. Thank you to everyone who donated and to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin!



ONGOING RESTORATION ON BUKOLT ISLAND!



This May, nearly 50 NCCT volunteers across multiple work days helped to enhance two-acres of pollinator habitat on Bukolt Island! Volunteers spread 2.5 lbs of native seed and planted over 2,500 native, pollinator-friendly plants on the island and in the shallows of the shoreline. More than 40 different species were selected for the project, including aquatic, wetland, and upland types.

These species provide enough diversity to ensure that flowering plants will be available to feed and house pollinators during each growing season throughout the year. Thank you to the adventurous volunteers who helped with this project, and special thanks to Paul Skawinski, Amberle Schwartz, Cory Rusch, Jan Nelson, Kerry Brimmer, and our Project Sponsors for their additional help!

This project was made possible with a \$5,000 grant from the American Transmission Co's (ATC) Pollinator Habitat Program, and \$400 of additional support from the US Fish & Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.



NCCT and Golden Sands RC&D are now working together with other local partners to remove invasive species from Bukolt Island and NCCT's 5-acre mainland property. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is providing grant funds to support these efforts through summer 2024. Stay tuned for more information if you'd like to continue to help support the recently planted pollinator species!

A DOCK FOR BUKOLT ISLAND

With \$2500 from the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin (CFCWI) through their Community Grants Program, \$500 from an anonymous donor, and fabrication and installation support from the Prime W.A.T.E.R. Anglers (Wisconsin Anglers Together Enhancing Resources), a small dock will be installed on Bukolt Island this winter to help ensure safer access to the Island. Thank you, CFCWI and Prime W.A.T.E.R. Anglers!



BIRD-BANDING ON BUKOLT ISLAND

By Susan Schuller, Summer 2022

In May, a mom-and-daughter science team headed out to Bukolt Island via kayak for the inaugural year conducting bird surveys using the eBird app and banding birds on the island. The idea is to start a yearly monitoring project to assess local populations and use of the island by bird species.

Banding took place early May with a total of nine days banding birds from 6 am to 10 am. In total, 66 birds were captured. 51 birds were banded. 15 birds were recaptured (already banded by the team but flew into the nets again). Twenty-one species of birds were banded. Volunteers from Aldo Leopold Audubon Society and UWSP students volunteered with the effort.

The idea is to gather baseline data on the birds using the island. By banding during spring migration, we can capture avian use of the island for possible breeding, or perhaps just migrating through using it as a stopover site.

This was an important year to start the data gathering. With a major land-restoration project planned for the end of May, the team wanted to get preliminary data on avian use this year before the planting project started. Then as the study continues each spring, they can measure the change in species use over time.

So, who is this mother/daughter science team? Susan and Joy Schuller have been volunteering with master bird-bander, Bob Welch, at the Waupaca Biological Field Station for the last 9 years. This year, Susan received her bird-banding subpermit to start her own studies. Naturally, she brought in her top research assistant for the job, Joy Schuller. Joy is 11 years old and has already banded an impressive resumé of birds. She is a natural at handling birds, and is extremely patient. She has the right combination of being fearless to approach and handle wild birds while remaining calm, patient, and diligent to carefully extract the birds from the nets without harming them. As a 5th grader at Madison Elementary, she is focused on becoming an ornithologist when she gets older. She cannot wait to get her banding subpermit, but will need to wait another 7 years.

Susan says, “Joy has been my true inspiration for pursuing my banding license. I enjoy contributing to the local knowledge and information we have on birds while spending time with my daughter. Joy is so good with the birds and is often the one teaching the university students and volunteers on technique.”

Banding birds on Bukolt Island is expected to be an annual study conducted in May.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT AT HIDDEN TRAILS CONSERVATION EASEMENT

In May 2022, Eagle Scout Candidate Aaron Pozorski planned and hosted a buckthorn-removal work day at the Hidden Trail Conservation Easement in Wausau as part of his Eagle Scout service project. Aaron is a high school senior from Weston, and joined Troop 439 in second grade. The Hidden Trail CE is one of NCCT's earliest projects



, and protects a nearly 7-acre outlot in the Hidden Trail Subdivision in Wausau. The property is managed by neighbor Shane Brzezinski, who is Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 435, and approached Aaron with the project idea shortly after Aaron learned about buckthorn and its impacts on the landscape. Aaron handled all the planning and preparation for this project, with an added step of working with NCCT to ensure his plans were compatible with the terms of the easement. Aaron is finishing follow-up paperwork, and hopes to earn his Eagle Scout Badge prior to graduating and heading to college next year! Thank you to Aaron, the hard-working Scouts of Troops 439 and 435 (and their families), and Shane Brzezinski for your impact!

PARTNER NEWS: WHITE CEDAR SEGMENT OF ICE AGE TRAIL OPEN AT RICE LAKE PRESERVE!

In July, 88 volunteers with the Ice Age Trail Alliance's Mobile Skills Crew built the White Cedar Segment of Ice Age Trail through the Rice Lake Preserve in Marathon County. The new trail and boardwalk pass through a beautiful white cedar swamp and highlight prominent eskers found on the Preserve. This segment has been a vision in the works for many people over the years. In 2011, a portion of what is now the Rice Lake Preserve was donated to NCCT by the Pflieger Family Trust. In 2014, NCCT sold this property, protected with a conservation easement, to the Ice Age Trail Alliance so it could one day host the Ice Age Trail. This wondrous property is now more accessible than ever, thanks to the IATA's dedicated Mobile Skills Crew volunteers, IATA Central Moraines Chapter (Marathon County), and Ice Age Trail Alliance. The trail head is located off of Rice Lake Drive in Hatley.

2022 HARVEST DINNER, FRIEND-RAISER, AND FUNDRAISER

NCCT was fortunate to host its largest Annual Harvest Dinner in the organization's history in September at the Bukolt Park Lodge in Stevens Point, with more than 160 people in attendance! Executive Director, Chris Radford, shared updates about the organization before presenting former Board Member, David James, with the 2022 Distinguished Service Award. Following, guest speakers Susan and Joy Schuller presented the findings of their first season of bird-banding on Bukolt Island. The program concluded with a grounding presentation from Dr. Ray Reser titled: "*Pasipahkinnen* and *Weskohsek Sepew* (Menominee language): A place and a river remembered," giving a detailed history of the Wisconsin River corridor as it crosses through what is now known as Stevens Point.



The Board of Directors and staff would like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who attended and supported this record-breaking event. We are humbled, grateful, and looking forward to next year. Thank YOU! Special thanks to our Major Sponsor, Great Northern Distilling! NCCT proudly hosted this event in conjunction with the fifth annual Wisconsin Land Trust Days celebration.



*Photos provided by Mike LeClair

Congratulations to Steve Reinhardt, who had the closest guess of how many pounds of metal were collected and removed from Bukolt Island this spring. Steve guessed 76 lbs., closest to the correct weight of 84 lbs!

Thank You!

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NCCT DONATION WISH LIST

- NCCT Flag for our Flag Pole (\$200-\$300)
- Stihl Brush Cutter (\$350-\$500)
- Fire/Water Proof File Cabinets (\$1,000-\$2,500)
- New Desktop or Laptop computer (\$800-\$2,500)
- New Color Printer (\$300-\$500)
- New or Used Tablets (Android or iOS)

If you are interested in donating any items, please contact NCCT for more details.
715-344-1910, edncct@gmail.com

THANK YOU, JOHN SHILLINGLAW!



**Photo taken by Trace Frost*

In August Dr. Bob Freckmann led a fantastic group of folks on an interpretive hike through the restored prairie habitat maintained on John Shillinglaw's property in Waushara County. The group was delighted to see a diversity of plant species, in addition to numerous Karner blue butterflies (KBB)! John has worked

hard to restore these historic Mecan River prairies, which now serve as habitat for endangered KBB and more! Special thanks to John for hosting, Dr. Freckmann for leading, and to all who attended! John donated a conservation easement for his property to NCCT in 2003. It remains in private ownership and is not open to the public without permission.

NCCT proudly hosted this event in conjunction with the fifth annual Wisconsin Land Trust Days celebration! Wisconsin Land Trust Days is a statewide promotion sponsored by Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts. For more information visit gatheringwaters.org.



NEW NCCT MERCH AVAILABLE!

\$25



\$25

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UPDATE ON SUSZKO RIDGE



NCCT is working with Wisconsin Private Lands Biologist, Brendan Woodall, on a habitat-improvement project at our Suszko Ridge property to help restore historic prairie habitat. Brendan works for the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which is providing funding for this work. To date, volunteers have cleared unwanted overstory vegetation from the site and controlled invasive species, and the USFWS recently conducted a prescribed burn and distributed more native seeds.

Thank you to Harry Suszko for donating this property in 2021; and Brendan Woodall and the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program for help on the project!



*Best wishes
for a safe and happy
holiday season
from NCCT!*



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

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

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING NCCT!

NCCT's mission to conserve the natural heritage of Central Wisconsin through the protection of land wouldn't be possible without your support.



As thanks, supporters who make a donation of \$50 or more between November 29 - Giving Tuesday - and December 31, will receive a handmade, holiday gift: a lathe-turned wooden acorn made by longtime supporter and craftsman, Roger Zimmermann!

Crafted from wood harvested here in Central Wisconsin!

MAKE A YEAR-END DONATION AND RECEIVE A SPECIAL HOLIDAY GIFT FROM NCCT!



IN MEMORY



On the morning of October 22, 2022, Barbara Gifford passed away peacefully in her home in Plover, Wisconsin at the age of 79. Barbara served on the NCCT Board of Directors from 2001-2007. She was active with NCCT and numerous other environmental groups for many years. Barbara was so many things: a successful local business owner, an environmentalist of national recognition, a Master Gardener, a philanthropist, and a profoundly caring and dedicated daughter, wife, mother, grandmother and friend. Above all else, through her laughter and her charm, her hard work and determination, she always made the world a better place.

She is survived by her husband Jim, their three children, and their grandchildren. She will be deeply missed.



NORTH CENTRAL CONSERVANCY TRUST
301 West Cedar Street
Stevens Point WI 54481-0124



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