

2015–2016 Connecting Communities, People, and Land



Some of the beautiful and productive farm land permanently protected in the Town of Dunn south of Madison this year.

ROBERTA HERSCHLEB

Saving the nation's best farmland

Did you know that some of the best farmland in the country is right here in south-central Wisconsin? The vast prairies that once blanketed this part of the world built a soil that is second to none for growing the food that sustains us and the agricultural economy that is so important to our state.

Did you also know that over half of the 10,700 acres Natural Heritage Land Trust has permanently protected since we were established in 1983 have been on working farms? In the last three months alone we completed four more permanent conservation agreements on working farms – three in the Town of Dunn and one in Rock County.

In **Rock County**, thanks to the Sayre family, we completed a conservation easement that not only protects great farmland but also provides public access for hunting at Footville Wildlife Area.

This 356-acre farm easement was completed in partnership with Rock County's Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements program, with funding provided by the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

We continue to have great success in our partnership with the **Town of Dunn** and their Rural Preservation Program just southeast of Madison. Three new permanent conservation agreements are in place on farms owned by Steve Greb and Julie Andersen, Josh and Matt Dunn, and Ann Carley and Josie Dersien. Together, these farms total more than 160 acres of prime agricultural soils and woodlands. Funding for these easements came from the USDA Agricultural Easement Program and the Town of Dunn. Next year will be the 20th anniversary of the completion of our first project in partnership with the Town of Dunn. All told, we have collectively protected almost 3,000 acres on 25 farms across the town.



Conservation Roundup

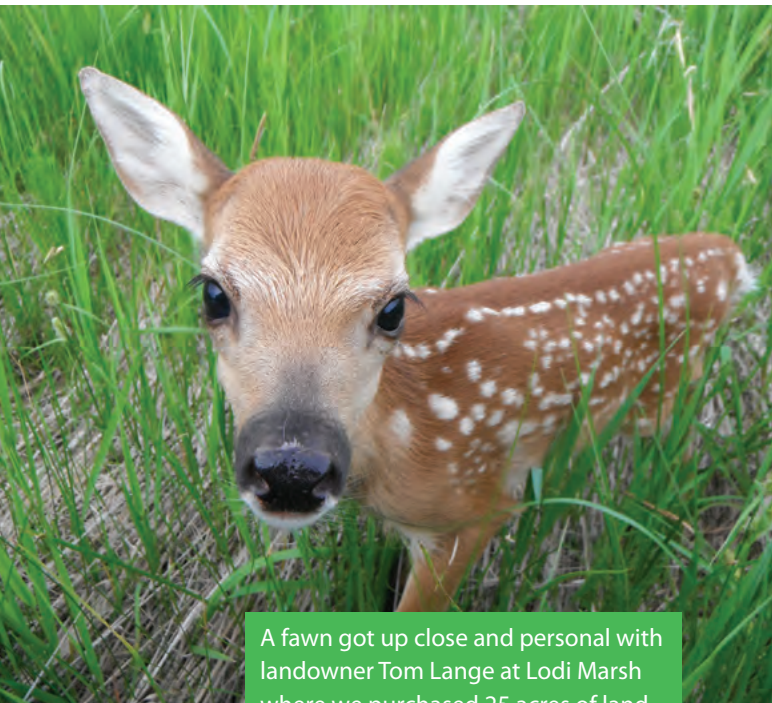
Thanks to your support of conservation where you live, Natural Heritage Land Trust had another fantastic year. We achieved a landmark, surpassing 10,000 acres protected in our 33 years of working together, and we continued to build on our organizational strengths. Our staff and board are proud of and grateful for the positive mark all of us—landowners, land trust supporters, partners, staff, and board—have made on the beautiful and productive landscape of south central Wisconsin. Please read on for some of our recent accomplishments. None of these successes would be possible without our community of support. Thank you!

—Jed White, Board President
and Jim Welsh, Executive Director

Our success always begins with conservation-minded landowners like Tom and Connie Lange who sold us 25 acres of Lodi Marsh within the **Lodi Marsh State Wildlife Area**. Lodi Marsh sits in a beautiful valley featuring almost 1,200 acres of state land open to the public for outdoor recreation on the Dane/Columbia counties border. According to Tom, “parting with the property just felt it was a good fit for Lodi Marsh. In particular, this gives access to the west end.” Much of our work is devoted to protecting environmentally valuable land like this, lengthening wildlife corridors, strengthening buffers to pollution, and increasing territory for all of us to enjoy and explore.

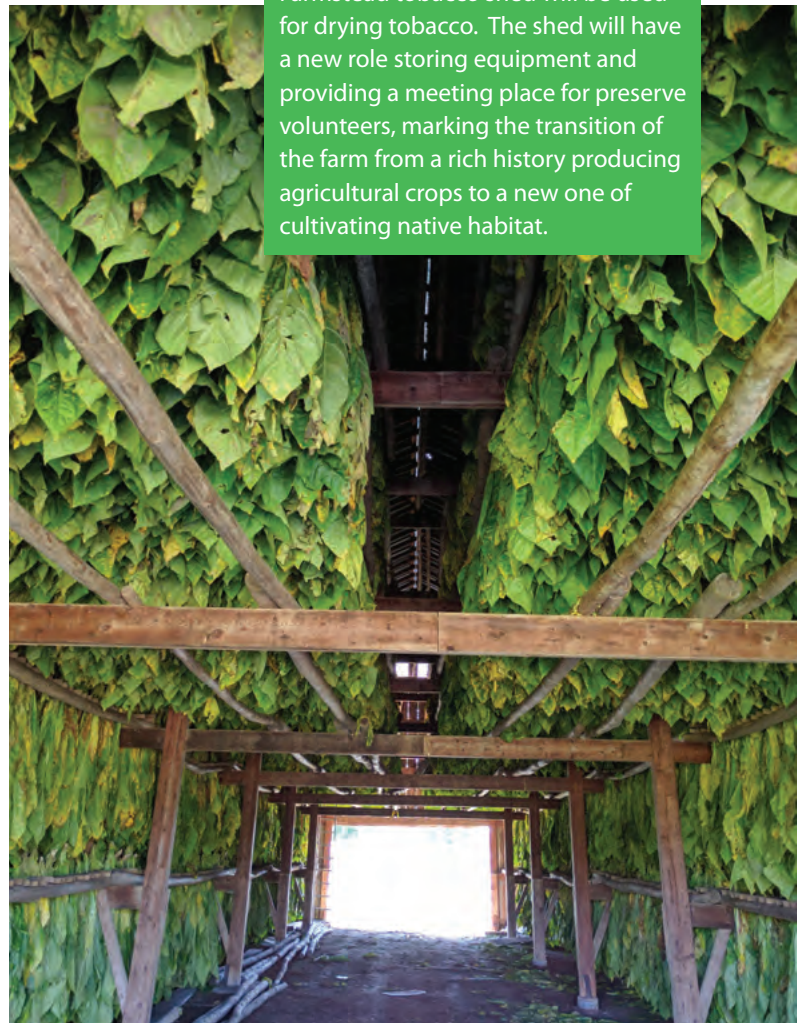
In Green County west of New Glarus, **Hefty Creek** has been designated an Exceptional Resource Water by the Wisconsin DNR. Hefty Creek is a “Class 2” trout stream providing habitat for the natural reproduction of trout. Bob and Nan Rudd worked with Natural Heritage Land Trust to place a permanent conservation easement on their 252-acre farm, permanently protecting farm land, prairie and savanna habitat, and a 5,000-foot stretch of Hefty Creek. Our work augments sections of Hefty Creek already protected by DNR streambank easements.

2016 is the last year the Koltes Farmstead tobacco shed will be used for drying tobacco. The shed will have a new role storing equipment and providing a meeting place for preserve volunteers, marking the transition of the farm from a rich history producing agricultural crops to a new one of cultivating native habitat.



TOM LANGE

A fawn got up close and personal with landowner Tom Lange at Lodi Marsh where we purchased 25 acres of land to add to the state wildlife area.





This year we partnered with Operation Fresh Start to build a wildlife viewing platform overlooking Patrick Marsh. The platform is uniquely-shaped like a bird and was designed so that an entire class of students can get a front-row view of the marsh.

PAT ARNDORFER

By the Numbers

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

Your individual gift makes a big difference!

750 Members

450 Acres Permanently Protected

\$692,900 Value of Land Permanently Protected

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 Natural Heritage Land Trust received \$405,197 for operations and spent \$368,730 for operations. In addition, Natural Heritage Land Trust received \$356,404 from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Dane County Conservation Fund to acquire and protect 449 acres of land.

Income for Operations

Contributions from individuals	\$310,807	77%
Grants and restricted gifts	\$51,608	13%
Consulting fees and rental income	\$11,489	3%
Endowment distributions from Madison Community Foundation		5%
Easement Enforcement Endowment	\$7,557	
Operations Endowment	\$4,941	
Bob and Anne Bolz Gift Endowment	\$7,826	
Other	\$10,970	3%
Total operating income	\$405,197	100%

Total capital income for land acquisition **\$356,404**

Expenses for Operations

Program services	\$224,678	61%
Management and general	\$56,465	15%
Fundraising	\$87,587	24%
Total operating expenses	\$368,730	100%

As of June 30, 2016 Natural Heritage Land Trust had total assets of \$6,897,612 and liabilities of \$76,084. Most of our assets (\$5,598,493) are our nature preserves.

To view the details of our financial health, please see our financial reports posted at www.guidestar.org. The 2015-2016 report should be posted by December 2016. You can also view our federal tax returns at our website under the tab "ways to give".

Mission

Natural Heritage Land Trust protects natural areas, wildlife habitat, working farms, healthy lakes and streams, and recreational land to provide a high quality of life in the Dane County, Wisconsin region.

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We also completed an important addition to our preserve at **Westport Drumlin State Natural Area**, east of Waunakee. For landowner Jim Koltes, the sale was a happy ending to the family's long history with the land. "This farm has been in and out of my family for over 125 years. I know it is a special place and it means so much to me to know it will be preserved forever in its natural state." The farmstead includes a remnant of prairie sod, part of the once-vast Empire Prairie that, at the time of European settlement, spread across the land between Madison and Arlington.

Beyond willing landowners, much of our work depends on the cooperation and support of local governments. **Jefferson County** is one of the few municipalities in Wisconsin, like our long-time partner the Town of Dunn, that sets aside funds for buying conservation easements on its rich farmland. This year, Natural Heritage Land Trust helped Jefferson County permanently protect a 162-acre farm so it can continue to contribute to the area's agricultural heritage and economy for years to come.

We have continued to be mindful that our lands must not only be protected but also managed to preserve their environmental value. Our **Prairie Partners** summer intern crew was back to work again this year, improving prairie and savanna habitat at Westport Drumlin and Patrick Marsh Wildlife Area. The Prairie Partners is a consortium of five local conservation groups that jointly hire a five-person crew of college students for 12 weeks each summer. Among other projects, the crew cleared the non-native brush off our newly-acquired Koltes Farmstead prairie remnant. It is the first time in many years that the prairie has received full exposure to the sun.

Friends of Arboretum Award

We are honored that the Leopold Restoration Awards program has chosen Natural Heritage Land Trust to receive its 2016 Virginia M Kline Award for Community-Based Ecological Restoration. The award was made in recognition of our restoration work at Westport Drumlin Preserve and the “variety and effectiveness of partnerships [we] have created to manage the Westport Drumlin State Natural Area”. We were nominated by Wisconsin DNR conservation biologist Nate Fayram who wrote, “Thanks to the focused efforts of Natural Heritage Land Trust to control and remove acres of non-native invasive brush, herbaceous weeds, and imposing tree lines, the habitat quality of the DNR property at the drumlin has been greatly improved.” We are thankful for the wonderful partnerships we have at Westport Drumlin, including with The Prairie Enthusiasts, DNR, Prairie Partners, preserve neighbors and landowners, the Town of Westport, and Dane County. The award program is administered by the Friends of the Arboretum in collaboration with the Aldo Leopold Foundation and was presented to us on October 6th at the UW Arboretum.

Community Connections

Land conservation requires more than protecting habitat for plants, birds, and other animals – it requires connecting people to the land and growing the next stewards of our cherished landscapes. Thanks to generous grants from Madison Community Foundation, James E. Dutton Foundation, and Alliant Energy Foundation, Natural Heritage Land Trust has launched its Community Connections program to foster those connections with the land. Our goal is to increase opportunities for people to enjoy, learn about, and contribute to our nature preserves.



As the late summer sun begins to set, community members share stories on our first Introduction to Patrick Marsh field trip.

Through our Community Connections programs, we are developing projects and activities that engage schools and community members in our preserves. This year we led education days at our preserves for AmeriCorps volunteers and Madison College faculty, where volunteers collected prairie seed and managed invasive species while learning about important conservation issues. We also increased the educational component of our Prairie Partners internship program by inviting conservation leaders to the field to discuss career development and pathways to success.

We are also more regularly engaging and educating volunteers and supporters by offering more work parties and preserve field trips. This year we held our very

first birdathon, and with the help of volunteers, spotted 106 species on a single day in early May. We led a field trip for Madison College photography students taking pictures of plant life and wildlife, began our community input discussions on the future of our Westport Drumlin Preserve gateway, held our first “Introduction” field trip where we invite community members to learn the basics about our preserves, and held several work parties to remove invasive species and collect prairie seed.

This fall we began working with two local schools to plant prairie restorations at Westport Drumlin and Patrick Marsh. Faculty members from Madison College hope to return every year to collect seed. Scout troops have asked to be part of projects in our preserve gateway planning. Fostering deep, meaningful connections between people and the land is the most important strategy we can adopt to increase public support for permanent land conservation. After all, people ultimately decide which places are protected and which are not, and those who feel a deep personal connection with the land are more likely to work to protect it.





Anne with her
grandma, Dorothy

Elizabeth with her husband
Dave and two children,
Katherine and Teddy.



Anne Sayers

Natural Heritage Land Trust Welcomes Three New Board Members

We are pleased to welcome Anne Brindley, Elizabeth Kluesner and Anne Sayers to the Natural Heritage Land Trust Board of Directors.

Anne Brindley grew up on a small, fifth-generation dairy farm next door to her grandparents. Working with the elderly and families seemed a natural progression from where it all began, and has proven to be where Anne feels most at home. She is an associate at Haskins Short LLC where her practice includes estate planning, Medicaid qualification, guardianship, and small business and residential real estate matters. Anne lives with her husband, Ben, in Monona, and spends her free time immersed in the outdoors, traveling, and rooting for the Badgers. *"My fondest memories are rooted in the outdoors. I'm excited to be part of an organization that preserves and protects natural, wide open spaces for future generations."*

Elizabeth Kluesner is the liaison for the DNR to local and federal governments. Previously she was the Nature is our Business Project Coordinator at the DNR and served as former Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk's Director of Policy and Program Development, focused on land acquisition, recreation, and land use planning. Elizabeth is married to husband Dave, with two children, Katherine – 18 and Teddy – 15. She and her family enjoy biking, hiking, fishing, skiing, swimming, archery and any other fun recreational pursuits that can be done in Wisconsin's great outdoors. *"I am honored to be on the Land Trust Board. This is a group that I have watched preserve some of the best places in Dane County, while serving as one of the most effective voices for conservation in the public arena. I look forward to working with the incredible staff and my fellow board members on many exciting projects that connect people to nature."*

Anne Sayers is a veteran of conservation advocacy at the local, state, national, and international level. She is currently the Deputy State Director of For Our Future and has previously served as the Program Director for Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters and the Director of Marketing and Communications for the International Crane Foundation. In her free time, Anne can be found at a local dog park or in her garden. *"Access to beautiful, natural places—and the clean waters they provide—shouldn't be a privilege. It's a right, which is why I'm proud to support an organization that works so effectively to protect these places for all of us who call Dane County and surrounding areas home."*



Holiday Open House

Wednesday, December 14th

4:00 – 6:00 pm

Natural Heritage Land Trust office at 303 S. Paterson St, Suite 6, Madison

We invite you to visit our office to get to know the staff and board members, learn how your support is making a difference, and meet others who care about conservation where you live. Stop by any time between 4 and 6 pm and enjoy some snacks and refreshments. No RSVP necessary.

Thank You Natural Heritage Land Trust Supporters

Whether you gave a gift to Natural Heritage Land Trust for the first time this year or have been a long-time supporter, and whether your support came in the form of dollars, time, or expertise, we THANK YOU. All donors listed on these pages gave to Natural Heritage Land Trust during the last fiscal year, July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. Each and every gift, no matter the size, helps protect more of the local land and water you love, forever.

\$50,000 & Above

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\$10,000 -- \$19,999

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Sun Prairie Rotary
William Van Haren

\$5,000 -- \$9,999

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ATHEA DOTZOUR PHOTOGRAPHY

I originally joined Natural Land Heritage Trust because I wanted to support conservation efforts close to home. Since I started volunteering at the office and have seen first-hand the dedication of the staff, my ongoing support is further motivated by the knowledge that decisions on how best to use resources are made with the utmost integrity.

—Pat Arndorfer, dedicated volunteer, supporter, and Legacy Circle Member

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2016 Prairie Partner crew

Westport Drumlin on the north side of Lake Mendota is being maintained because of a shared Prairie Partners intern crew and their generous sponsors. We all are fortunate to partner our support with Natural Heritage Land Trust in holding and maintaining in perpetuity this special part of our natural land history.

—Nancy Heiden, Prairie Partners crew sponsor and one of our founders.

\$100 – \$249 (continued)

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*We support Natural Heritage
Land Trust because of its
leadership in land conservation
in Dane County and the
surrounding area. We have chosen
to place the Land Trust in our will
because we believe that our small
contribution will assist them for
many generations in the future.*

*—Bill Lunney and Judie Pfeifer,
Legacy Circle members and Land
Trust founders.*



Pope Farm Homestead

We are pleased to support Natural Heritage Land Trust with our donation and as part of our estate planning because we believe in the importance of its mission to protect the natural beauty of our land and water. The Land Trust may focus on Dane County, but our land and water is connected to the rest of the state which makes our support, in Dane County, a value-added legacy.

—Jodi Bruss-Sherman and Jack Sherman, new Natural Heritage Land Trust supporters and Legacy Circle members

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In preparing this report, we made every effort to ensure that it is accurate and complete. If there is an omission or error, please accept our apologies and contact Sara Graves at (608) 258-9797 or sara@nhlt.org so we can correct our records. This report lists all gifts between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. Gifts made after that date will be published in next year's report.

THANK YOU Volunteers Thank you to the dedicated volunteers who devote many hours to serve on our board and committees, help with field trips, assist in the office, manage our land, and more.



In July Mel Pope with the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy led a tour of the park, including adjacent property the Land Trust may help to preserve.

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Patricia Reamer Bequest Pat Reamer knew what she wanted her legacy to be and now we can fulfill her wishes. Just two years ago Pat told her attorney she wanted to give money to support local land conservation. Initially she wanted a restful place in nature to honor her husband James C. Reamer who died in the Vietnam War in 1971. So we took Pat to see our Westport Drumlin Preserve east of Waunakee in August 2014. The day of that visit, Pat gave us a gift of \$5,000 for our work at the preserve. In recognition of that gift, we placed an engraved rock in memory of her husband in the prairie by the kiosk and overlook. She died a few months later, but her legacy for the land lives on in a \$58,600 unrestricted gift she left to Natural Heritage Land Trust this year. Pat's gift is already at work making habitat and gateway improvements at Westport Drumlin. Part of her gift has strengthened our Easement Enforcement Endowment at Madison Community Foundation, ensuring we can uphold our 65 conservation easements in perpetuity. We are very grateful to Pat for her lasting legacy.



When you include Natural Heritage Land Trust in your estate plans, you're helping secure the future of our cherished local lands. There are many ways to join Natural Heritage Land Trust's Legacy Circle:

- Bequest in your will or living trust
- Life insurance designation
- IRA designation
- Charitable gift annuity
- Charitable remainder trust

Contact Director of Major & Planned Gifts, Heidi Habeger at (608) 258-9797 or heidi@nhlt.org to learn about joining our Legacy Circle. www.nhlt.org/legacy

Legacy Circle

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Norman & Peggy Anderson
Patricia Arndorfer
Jodi Bruss-Sherman
& Jack Sherman
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Larry Hartzke
Pam & Craig Heilman
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Nicole & Paul Staskowski
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Did you know there are many ways to support conservation where you live?

- If you are age 70 1/2 or older and wondering what to do with your **annual IRA distribution**, a permanent change in federal law now makes it possible to give individual retirement account (IRA) assets to charities, free from federal tax, every year. Consider directing your IRA charitable rollover to Natural Heritage Land Trust, lowering the income and taxes from your IRA withdrawals, while supporting local land conservation.
- **Your company may match your donation**—making every dollar go twice or even three times further to protect our natural resources.
- You can donate to Natural Heritage Land Trust through **EarthShare's** workplace giving campaigns.

MARIO QUINTANA



Rough Blazing Star at Westport Drumlin

No matter how you chose to give, every Natural Heritage Land Trust supporter helps permanently protect our local lands and water. Contact Director of Major & Planned Gifts, Heidi Habeger at (608) 258-9797 or heidi@nhlt.org for more information about these and other ways to give.



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Places worth knowing

Whether you're looking for serenity in nature or adventure and fun, you won't want to miss the upcoming season's snowshoeing experiences. These field trips are free but space is limited and pre-registration is required. Visit us at www.nhlt.org to register online today.



Merrimac Preserve Snowshoe

Saturday, January 28th, 2017

9:30 – 11:30 am

Join us on this easy 1.6 mile snowshoe through the beautiful Merrimac Preserve on The Carbon Cycle Trail led by Linda Lynch of Riverland Conservancy. The preserve is made up of forest, prairie, savanna, wetlands and streams that provide an important wildlife corridor between the Baraboo Bluffs and the Wisconsin River. The trail crosses Manley Creek and has views of the terminal moraine at Devil's Lake State Park. If there is little or no snow cover, the event will be a hike instead of a snowshoe.

Patrick Marsh Snowshoe and Bonfire

Saturday, February 11th, 2017

3:30 - 5:30 pm

Hiking and snowshoeing at dusk, a roaring bonfire, roasted marshmallows and warm refreshments await you at our first snowshoe and bonfire at Patrick Marsh east of Sun Prairie. Traverse 1.5 miles of easy trails, with a warm beverage and snacks to be enjoyed at the end. If there is little or no snow cover, the event will be a hike instead of a snowshoe. Don't miss this opportunity to visit a place you've helped protect and enhance and meet other Natural Heritage Land Trust supporters who share your commitment to conservation where you live.

Thank you to our sponsor:

