

DANE COUNTY NATURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

A local land trust dedicated to the protection and preservation of natural areas in Dane County.

Fall 1993

Whiteside Donates Easement River Road Woodland Protected

Naomi Whiteside, long time River Road resident, has donated a conservation easement to DCNHF on 17 acres of uplands adjacent to the Cherokee Marsh. Of this land, 13 acres is mixed woodlands of white and red pine, white oak and maple. The remaining land is in cover crops and planted with black walnuts. This property lies within the Yahara Watershed and the river is visible to the east.

A lifelong environmentalist, Naomi has planted thousands of trees on property she owns in Dane County and throughout the state. When she arrived in the Madison area after World War II prepared to buy property, realtors refused to take her seriously "because she was a woman". Undaunted, she purchased land north of Madison and began planting wind-breaks and cover for wildlife. Talking to her today, one immediately recognizes her enthusiasm for the land and her love of the birds and the animals that inhabit it.

She noted that the woods is "something that needs to be left alone." Her donation of a conservation easement ensures protection of this natural area forever.



Naomi Whiteside in the woods now protected by conservation easement.

State Land Trust Conference

January 21-22, 1994

Door County "Landmark Resort"

Sponsored by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Trust for Public Land, the Nature Conservancy and the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation.

For more information and registration materials call Heather Mann 258-9008

Get the news . .

on three additional completed land projects and one upcoming prospect

... inside!



Celebrating our 10th Year! 1983-1993

Stewardship - Projects and Prospects

by Jane Licht, Stewardship Chair

Those of us serving on the DCNHF Stewardship Committee are amazed over the number of Dane County citizens who contact us regarding their ideas for preservation of land parcels in the County. We have discovered that there are many conservation-minded and generous people living in this community.

For example, Naomi Whiteside read about the land that Dr. Alice Watts donated in the Waubesa Wetlands and it inspired her to contact us about donating a conservation easement on 17 acres of her land adjacent to the Cherokee Marsh in the Town of Westport. (see article on front page). Mrs. Whiteside wanted assurance that this natural land would be protected, and we suggested using the conservation easement to achieve her goal.

DCNHF Easements - Permanent Protection

A conservation easement is a legal instrument which can be tailor-made to suit the desires of the donor and the goals and the objectives of the agency agreeing to hold, monitor, and enforce this type of easement. Usually a conservation easement does not allow development, though some building for agricultural use may be permitted. Often a conservation easement will specify permitted activities such as pasturing, forestry, trail maintenance, prairie burning etc. as outlined in a management plan.

Each time DCNHF receives an inquiry regarding the gift of a conservation easement, our committee reviews the land to determine if it has special natural or historical features, or is a good candidate for restoration. Projects must be recommended by the committee and approved by the board of directors.

During negotiations we request that the donor contribute an endowment towards the long term stewardship of the land. If the donor is not financially able to provide a contribution for long term monitoring and the DCNHF still wishes to accept the easement, then funds must be raised for this purpose. This fund is necessary to ensure permanent protection.

Land-saving Tools in Action - Fall '93

The following are some examples of the land-saving tools we have used this fall to protect natural areas for the public benefit.

DCNHF Accepts 40 Acre Conservation Easement. A donor, who wished to remain anonymous recently gave DCNHF a conservation easement on 40 acres in southern Dane County. This easement will protect water quality by preserving several springs, adjacent wetlands, and a large oak woodland. We are grateful for the stewardship endowment provided by this landowner.

DCNHF Benefits From Tradeland Gift. Gene Mueller thought of DCNHF this summer when considering a land donation. She donated a small parcel of land on the condition that it be resold to further DCNHF's conservation projects.

Public/Private Fundraising Partnership. Currently DCNHF is seeking grant funds from the DNR through the Habitat Restoration Area for project in the Town of Vienna. These grant funds, matched by a generous private donation, would enable us to protect water quality, restore open habitat for grassland birds, and provide open space in a rapidly developing area.

First Token Creek Streambank Easement



Bob & Faith Thomas with DCNHF president, Jean Meanwell

Bob & Faith Thomas have placed a streambank easement on their land along Token Creek. The goal of the easement is to protect water quality by maintaining a vegetative buffer strip on each streambank to filter run-off. Grazing, row-cropping and chemical use is prohibited in the easement area. The easement width is a minimum of 66 feet out from the bank, but would be larger in a wetland.

The easement runs with the land which stays in private hands. Landowners are reimbursed for the value of the easement through state and county grant programs. The Streambank Protection Program is supported by the Madison Community Foundation.

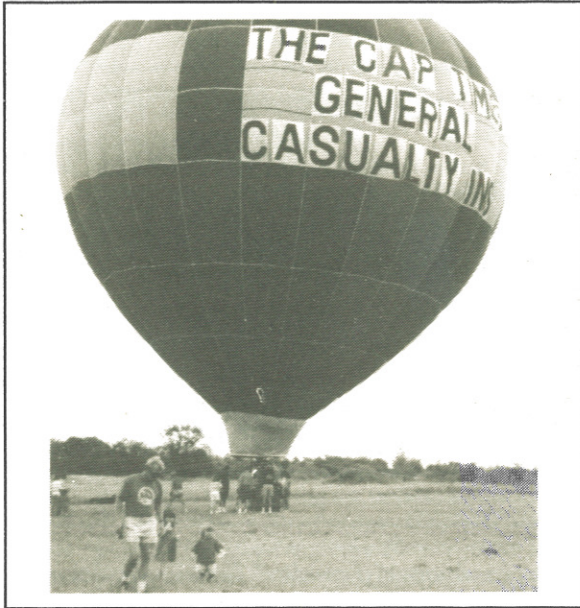
Landowners interested in participating in the easement program can contact DCNHF at 258-9797.

Token Creek Reflections

Token Creek Watershed Festival

August 28, 1993

Over 400 people attended the community watershed festival to learn about watersheds, groundwater, aquatic animals and wetlands.



The BALLOON!

Photo by Jan Krieger

Thank you again ...

Dane County Parks Department
The Capital Times
General Casualty Insurance Companies
Tri-North Builders
Speedy Sign* A* Rama
Steep and Brew
Ovens of Brittany
Sun Porch
Oscar Mayer Foods Corporation
Madison Community Foundation
... and all the volunteers!



Photo by Dennis Yockers

Jim Lorman and Dennis Yockers explored "creek critters" with kids by dip-net sampling of aquatic insects.



Photo by Jan Krieger

Jane & Wes Licht and Rick Kalvelage organized the interpretive haywagon ride.



Aquatic life mural drawn by festival-goers.

Photo by Jan Krieger



DCNHF T-Shirts Available
Order for holiday gifts!



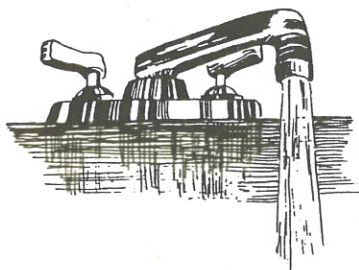
DANE COUNTY
NATURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Token Creek

Colors: Raspberry or Jade, 100% cotton
Sizes: L - XL

\$10.00 if you pick them up
\$12.00 mailed to your door
Call DCNHF 258-9797

Drinking Water Test Results Some Good News . . . and a Word of Caution



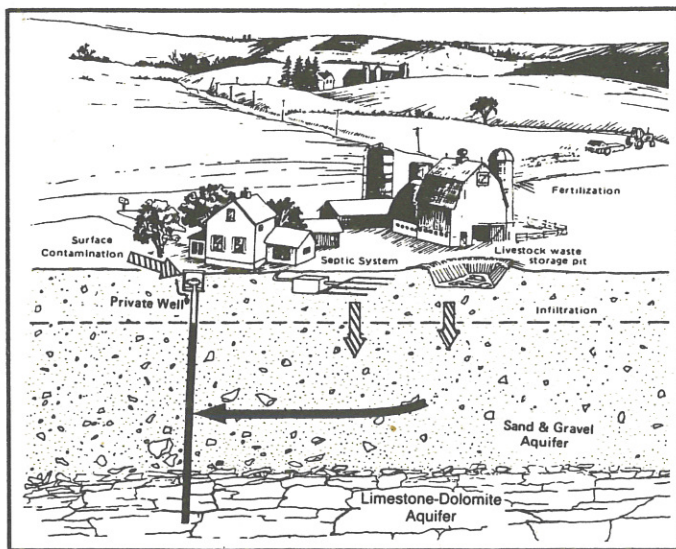
Sample bottles and instructions for sampling private well water were available at the Token Creek Watershed Festival thanks to Dane County Extension.

by Mindy Habecker, Dane County Ag/Natural Resource Agent

A drinking water educational program for Token Creek Watershed residents was held this October. Participants had an opportunity to learn about the quality of their well water and how natural factors and land use affect groundwater in the watershed. As part of the program 28 private wells were tested by a University of Wisconsin laboratory for bacteria, nitrate, iron, pH, hardness and several other indicators of water quality. No one test tells everything about the safety of a water supply. Here are some of the results.

Coliform bacteria. Ten of the 28 samples tested positive for coliform bacteria. Coliform bacteria occur in soils and in the feces of humans and animals. In areas of fractured bedrock aquifers, coliform bacteria may contaminate groundwater. More often, they are an indication of well construction and maintenance faults.

Nitrate. Manure storage areas, septic systems and fertilized cropland and lawns are common sources of nitrate-nitrogen to groundwater. Nitrate is an important nutrient for plant growth; however, nitrate is very soluble. When there is more nitrate in the soil than plants can use, it can seep down into the groundwater.



Well water contaminants usually come from nearby sources, as shown in the illustration. Some practices encouraged by the watershed project—such as improved handling of livestock waste and careful nutrient and pesticide management—can help protect everyone's drinking water.

At high levels of nitrate (above 10 ppm), infants under six months of age are susceptible to methemoglobinemia, a disease which interferes with oxygen transport in the blood. New evidence indicates that pregnant women should not consume water with high nitrate levels as several studies show a link with increased risk of birth defects. The presence of high nitrate levels also indicates that other contaminants may be present. Two of our samples exceeded 10 ppm. The average value for the 18 samples was 6 ppm.



Photo by Jan Krieger

Ron Hennings demonstrates groundwater model at the festival.

Hardness. Water hardness is a result of dissolved calcium and magnesium. Both of these elements are beneficial to human health, but bad for plumbing and water heaters because of the scale deposits left by hard water. Water above 250 milligrams per liter (mg/L) is considered very hard. The average value in the water tested was 298 mg/L. Limestone and dolomite bedrock in our area are responsible for the hard water.

pH. This measures the hydrogen ion (acidity) concentration in water. A pH of 7.0 is neutral, values above 7 are alkaline or basic and those below 7 are acidic. A change of one pH unit is a ten-fold change in acid level. Acidic water is often corrosive. The average of the Token Creek samples was 7.8.

Iron. High iron levels in water do not present a health risk but can be a nuisance. Water with iron levels above 0.3 mg/L stains sinks and clothes, makes coffee and tea taste bad, and leaves deposits in pipes and tanks. Only 2 wells had levels of 0.3 mg/L or greater.

Summary. While the results of these samples give an indication of some local water quality parameters, you should not assume that your well will show similar results. Each well is unique, and its water quality depends on its depth, location relative to pollution sources, and construction.

Most private wells should be tested annually for coliform bacteria and nitrate, two common contaminants in rural wells. For more information about well water testing or groundwater quality, contact Mindy Habecker, Dane County UW-Extension at 266-4106.

The Empire Prairie Remnant Complex

A priority protection project of
the Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts

Brian Pruks

you are looking for an escape just minutes from downtown Madison, where you can let your eyes wander over a hillslope of seven-foot tall Big Bluestem grass with Prairie Gentians speckled beneath your feet, then read on. You are going to want to visit the Empire Prairie remnants in Westport Township just north of Lake Mendota. This is an area with four prairie remnants clustered within a mile of each other. It has a rich diversity of plant species and some scenic views, thanks to the sculpting of the last glacier. It's also an area that is rapidly growing and, without protection, will undoubtedly become a suburban landscape. That's why I and several other Prairie Enthusiasts are working to protect it.

My first visit to the Westport prairies was in July of 1992. White Rattlesnake Master blossoms were abundant on Koltes Prairie (one of the four high-quality remnants) in striking contrast to the many purple leadplants in blossom beneath them. I was excited--here was a mesic prairie! (Usually prairie remnants are found on soils so shallow to bedrock that only dry prairie species are found). I came back again in September with a plant identification class I was teaching and encountered Prairie Gentians so thick that I was afraid to take a step for fear of trampling so many beautiful flowers with just one stride! By then I had decided that I wanted to help protect this area.

I started contacting other Prairie Enthusiasts and soon learned from Rich Henderson that the robustness of the prairie flora at Koltes Prairie was due to a prescribed burning program initiated by the Prairie Enthusiasts. The Prairie Enthusiasts began a cooperative project with Butch Koltes to initiate the removal of invasive shrubs and non-native species, and to reintroduce fire to stimulate native vegetation growth. According to Rich, where once there were only a handful of Rattlesnake blossoms, now we see hundreds.

One of the main reasons that this area is a Prairie Enthusiast priority project area is that there are several small remnant prairie clustered within a mile of each other, four of which are very high-quality. Such a dense concentration of remnants is unusual.

The largest of four high-quality remnants, the 14 acre Westport Drumlins Prairie is already owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural resources and is permanently preserved as a State Natural Area. Thousands of hours of prairie management have taken place here over the past 15 years. You really should see it.

There are also very few houses within this area. Thus a much larger prairie landscape can be protected. This would be a treeless landscape just as most of the pre-settlement northeast Dane County was. Wouldn't it be great if we had a large, inspiring, natural prairie right in Madison's own backyard?

This possibility can become a reality with the help of many people, especially the landowners in the area, as well as interested prairie advocates like ourselves. Should the owners of prairies and nearby

surrounding lands be interested, lands connecting and surrounding the prairie remnants could either be restored using seeds from the remnants. Alternatively, these lands could be kept in pasture to mimic the treeless structure needed by prairie animals for survival. Pasture is not as good as restored prairie, but it's much better than trees or houses and the owners could still mow or lightly graze the pastures to generate income.

This area would seem to fit in perfectly with the Dane County Greenspace Plan. It's located between Madison and DeForest and would serve as an excellent separation zone between the two communities. The remnant prairies are rare plant communities that merit public preservation. And the area is just plain beautiful, a place where people could hike and explore and escape the pressures of urban life.

If I haven't convinced you by now to come out on one of the prairie walks I and other Prairie Enthusiasts will be leading out at the Empire prairie remnants next spring, well consider the following enticements. Perhaps you are interested in prairie insects? --come help out on an inventory of grasshoppers or butterflies. Looking for an alternative to exercising inside? -- come to a work party to uproot non-native white sweet clover. Got film to burn? -- photo opportunities abound. Watch this newsletter for future news on upcoming activities at the Empire Prairie remnants. See you on the prairie.

If you are interested in more information on this area, or the Prairie Enthusiasts contact Brian Pruks, 255-6763.

New Members

Yahara Lakes Association
Capitol Indemnity Corporation
EarthWorks
Lunar Corporation
Susan Thompson
Elizabeth Aime



Thank you to Farmer's Market Volunteers!

Bruce Kittle & Jan Krieger
Bill Lunney & Judie Pfeifer
Jean Meanwell
Harriet Riley
Gail Shea
Jerry Smith

cut and return

Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation

Membership Categories:

- ☐ \$20.00 Individual
- ☐ \$30.00 Household
- ☐ \$50.00 Sustaining
- ☐ \$100.00 Donor
- ☐ \$_____ Stewardship Endowment Fund

Please send me information on:

- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Token Creek Streambank Program
- ☐ How to make a gift through my will
- ☐ How to make a gift of real estate

Send to:

Dane County Natural Heritage
Foundation
333 W Mifflin, Suite 106
Madison, WI 53703-2557
608-258-9797

Name _____
Address _____
City / Zip _____

Contributions are tax-deductible as provided by law.
Please make checks payable to Dane County Natural
Heritage Foundation. Thank you!



David Mebane

Business Reception November 17

All current and potential Business Members of the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation are invited to a reception for them on Wednesday, November 17 from 5:00-6:00 p.m. The event is being hosted by Marshall Erdman

& Associates. The reception will be held at the Erdman corporate offices at 5117 University Avenue just west of the Whitney Way intersection. **David Mebane**, president of Madison Gas & Electric Company will speak briefly on "Environmental Initiatives in the Corporate World". MG&E is a long-time business member of DCNHF.

Please remember the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation when doing your estate planning. We accept gifts of real estate as well as financial gifts. We would be happy to work with you and your financial planner to help you fulfill your longterm charitable and financial goals.



In memory - Joe Hickey

Joe Hickey died on Tuesday, August 31. He was instrumental in founding the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation and served on its board of directors. He received a Stewardship Award from the Foundation in 1991 for his lifelong contributions to preserving the natural heritage of Dane County.

As a professor of wildlife ecology at the University of Wisconsin, Joe and his students did research on the possible effects of DDT on raptors, particularly the peregrine falcon. As a result of these studies DDT was banned in the United States. Joe was naturalist, scholar, author and friend. We will miss him, but his contributions live on through the conservation groups he guided during his life.

Gifts in his memory have been received from:

Joseph & Lois Benton
Emily Earley
Jeanne & Lloyd Gray
Emily McKay
Jean & Walter Meanwell
William P. O'Connor
Sam & Shirley Robbins

C.H. & Jeanette Ruedisili
Louise Rusch
Marjorie Shepherd
J. Wesley & Helen
Thompson
Margaret Van Alstyne

Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation

333 West Mifflin, Suite 106
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
608-258-9797

Address correction requested

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John B. Hutchinson, *Vice President - Token Creek*
Carl E. Schultz, *Treasurer*
Jan Zimmermann, *Secretary*

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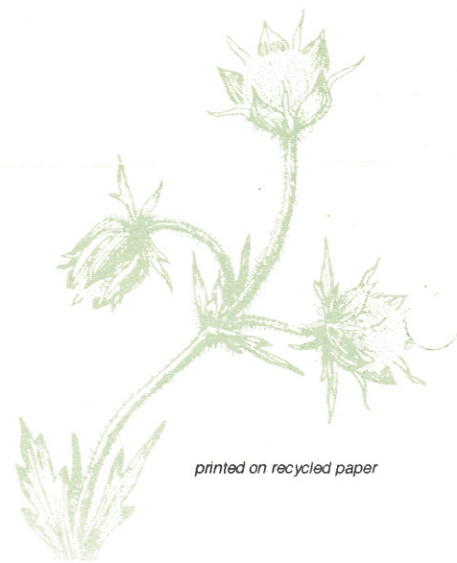
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