



Becky Yang and Cindy Yang of Yang Seasonal Garden sell produce at the Linden Cohousing market supported by Groundswell this summer.

"Pop-up" Market for Hmong Farmers

BEN JONES PHOTOGRAPHY

The abrupt closure of farmers' markets around Madison this spring due to the coronavirus pandemic left some Hmong growers at a disadvantage. As the markets moved to online ordering, growers not proficient in technology or whose primary language isn't English were left behind.

Groundswell helped by sponsoring a market where Hmong growers are selling produce directly to residents of Linden Cohousing and the neighborhood on the east side of Madison. Located in the parking lot of Linden Cohousing on the 2000 block of Winnebago Street, the market runs every Thursday through October 15 from 3:00 - 6:00 pm. Our thanks to the Evjue Foundation and several Groundswell donors for supporting the market.

The market came about thanks to our partnership with Hmong growers at our farm in Waunakee. This summer there are ten growers on the farm, renting plots ranging from one-quarter acre to four acres. Our major improvement at the farm this year is the installation of a well. For years, the growers have relied on favorable precipitation or carried in water to grow their crops.

At our **Pasley's Swan Creek Farm in Fitchburg**, Robert Pierce of Neighborhood Food Solutions is hosting adult and teen programs for the second year. Water for irrigation is an issue at this farm, too. Our short-term solution this summer was to hook up to a city water hydrant. This summer we received a grant from the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program to hire a contractor to prepare a plan that will lead us to certification of the farm as an organic producer.

Our work at these farms comes out of our strategic initiative to provide equitable access to land and nature for everyone in our community. ●

PROTECTED FOREVER



Brian, Norma and Oscar Bjugstad

Rich farmland protected at Evansville

Just days before the “Safer at Home” order went into effect in late March, we permanently protected 106 acres of high-quality farmland on the southeast side of Evansville Wildlife Area in northern Rock County. Meeting the imminent “Safer at Home” deadline put us into high gear. Executive Director Jim Welsh drove to Evansville for a last minute meeting with the landowners and then on to Janesville to record the deed just before the shelter-at-home order went into effect.

The last-minute dash was the culmination of four years of work to meet the conservation vision of landowners Oscar and Norma Bjugstad. As Oscar and Norma put it, “We believe in preserving the farmland for future generations!” That sentiment runs in the family. Their son Brian already protected his adjacent farm with a permanent conservation easement. This new agricultural conservation easement permanently prevents development of Oscar and Norma’s farm, keeping it available for farming. The easement also permanently opens the land to the public for hunting.

A major funder of the conservation easement is the US Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Land Easement program. According to Kristin Westad, NRCS Easement Biologist, “The purpose of the ALE program is to help effective organizations like Groundswell Conservancy protect even more land. Groundswell brought USDA funds together with other contributions to protect soil, water and wildlife habitat. Meeting farm families like the Bjugstads is the highlight of my job.”

Other funding to purchase the easement came from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, the Rock River Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever, and supporters of Groundswell including the estate of Marie Fraser.

Conservation-minded landowners make great things possible. The next time you meet one of them, please thank them for their stewardship of the land. ●

PROTECTED FOREVER

Wetlands Protected at Lower Mud Lake



Groundswell supporters Robby and Bill Sonzogni paddled the Yahara River by Lower Mud Lake during our Spring 2017 field trip down the river.

This spring Groundswell purchased 63 acres of wetlands in the Town of Dunn. Landowners Ken and Eileen Brost stewarded these wetlands for many years. By selling their land to us, they created a lasting legacy of conservation.

The property is adjacent to Lower Mud Lake State Fishery Area south of McFarland along Hwy. 51. It helps fill in the project boundary for Dane County’s Lower Mud Lake Natural Resource Area. Groundswell will manage the property consistent with the adjacent state land to increase public recreation opportunities and provide habitat for ducks and other wildlife.

Funding to purchase the property came from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, Dane County Conservation Fund, Town of Dunn, and supporters of Groundswell. ●



ON THE LAND

To keep our families and communities safe during the coronavirus pandemic, we postponed our field trips for the remainder of 2020: Nature Photography, Gausman Farm Tour, and Land and Labyrinths. We hope you are getting outside to unwind, reflect, and simply breathe fresh air. We look forward to seeing you out on the land next year!

We are grateful to our 2020 Presenting and Community Builder Field Trip sponsors:



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Our second annual **Town of Dunn Food Cart Night** was also postponed until next year. Don and Carole Schmidt were going to host us this summer at their Oak Grove Farm for another evening of food and nature with friends and neighbors. A special thank you to SVA Financial Group for sponsoring this event even though it had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

♦ SVA | Financial Group

Spring Fundraising Winners

Congratulations to Daniel Cottam and Maria Teresa Arenasto. They won a \$500 gift card to Fontana Sports by making a contribution to Groundswell during our 2020 spring fundraising appeal. We are grateful to Pure Sweet Honey for donating the Fontana Sports gift card and to everyone who made a contribution to Groundswell this spring.





Remembering Norman Anderson

March 11, 1928 - June 27, 2020

We are deeply indebted to Norm Anderson for co-founding the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation (Groundswell's original name) and for his leadership as our first president, serving from 1983-1988. Under Norm's tenure and without any paid staff, our successes included protecting several acres of woods near Eagle Heights on Lake Mendota, purchasing Schmidt's Orchard which is now an important segment in the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way and the Capital City State Trail, and our first big project in the Town of Dunn, protecting hundreds of acres of farmland, woods, and wetland near Waubesa Wetlands. During Norm's service, we established a membership program which continues today to provide the main source of operations funding for Groundswell.

In Norm's honor several of his colleagues from the early days have established the **Norman Anderson**

Conservation Opportunities Fund to help us capture conservation opportunities that are beyond our annual budget, allowing us to take swift action to preserve cherished places and provide equitable access to land and water. You can continue Norm's legacy by giving a memorial gift to this fund. Please send your donation to Groundswell at 303 S. Paterson Street, #6, Madison, WI 53703 or give online at groundswellwisconsin.org/donate. Please indicate that your gift is for Norm's fund.

You can read Norm's obituary at <http://ow.ly/pJhH50AJf5d>. To read remembrances of Norm from his wife Peggy Anderson and some of his colleagues on the board (Bill Lunney, Jean Meanwell, and Bill O'Connor) please visit our website at groundswellwisconsin.org/normanderson. ●



What will your legacy be?

Opportunities to do things that last forever are few and far between. By including Groundswell Conservancy in your will, estate plans, or beneficiary designations, you'll protect special places, forever. Imagine the difference your support will make. To learn more contact Heidi Habeger at heidi@groundswellwisconsin.org or (608) 258-9797.



We protect special places forever.

We want everyone to live in a world filled with green places where communities thrive. We believe that land is essential for people's physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness. If we don't protect land now, it may be lost forever.

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Patrick Marsh Improvements

We have been hard at work improving the experience for everyone seeking relief from the coronavirus pandemic at Sun Prairie's Patrick Marsh. Hikers' feet will stay drier thanks to a new culvert on the main trail at Derby Drive. This partnership project was engineered by volunteer Bill Dunlop, constructed by the City of Sun Prairie, and topsoiled and planted by our own Prairie Partners internship crew. It was made possible by the Natural Resources Foundation's Norma and Stanley Deboer Quiet Trails Fund, James E. Dutton Foundation, and Groundswell Conservancy supporters.

Heavy rains eroded gravel and created potholes in the parking lot and along the main trail at the north side of the marsh. Groundswell received funding from the Alliant Energy Foundation and the James E. Dutton Foundation to re-grade and gravel the parking lot and the trail to the wildlife viewing platform. The work was completed in early July. We are excited to improve access for everyone at the marsh. ●

CARES Act tax law changes for 2020

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. How could this change your 2020 tax year?

1. Under the CARES Act, taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions will be able to claim a charitable deduction of up to \$300 for cash donations made in 2020.

2. If you made a large cash gift in 2019, you could deduct it only to the extent of 60% of your adjusted gross income. This year, the CARES Act allows you to deduct it to the extent of your entire adjusted gross income.

3. Individuals who turned 70 ½ in 2019 or earlier, or who turned 72 in 2020 or later, can still donate up to \$100,000 to a qualified charity directly from their IRA without taking the distribution into taxable income. With the passage of the CARES Act, individuals are not required to take their Required Minimum Distribution from their IRA in 2020. (If you are over 59½, you may be eligible for a charitable gift from your IRA with the passage of the CARES Act.)

4. The contribution limit for corporations has been 10% of taxable income. For 2020, that limit has been raised to 25% for cash contributions.

For more information about these topics, please view a video on our website at <http://ow.ly/QSgd50AyrwY> and consult your tax advisor about the provisions of the CARES act. ●



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MARIO QUINTANA



Prairie Partners Internship Returns!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead

It's that time of year when Groundswell joins with fellow Prairie Partners to resume our summer internship program that gives undergraduate students hands-on experience restoring prairies and savannas. This year the partnership includes Groundswell, Madison Audubon Society, Pheasant Branch Conservancy, and our newest partner, the Friends of Cherokee Marsh. From May to August, the interns work at each partner's site where they learn a variety of land management techniques.

The Prairie Partners intern crew spends every Monday and Tuesday with our Conservationist, BJ Byers, restoring wildlife habitat at Patrick Marsh and Westport Prairie. Their tasks range from pulling garlic mustard, wild parsnip, and giant ragweed, to cutting honeysuckle, buckthorn, and boxelders that are encroaching into our prairies and savannas. They also collect and clean prairie seed that we will use for future plantings.

The 2020 Prairie Partners intern crew joins us from UW-Madison (Ella Langer), UW-Stevens Point (Josie Crass, Balin Magee, and Isabel Krueger) and UW-Platteville at Baraboo (Caleb Lang).

This internship program would not be possible without the financial support of this year's crew sponsors: Mary Binkley & Dennis Petzke, David Boutwell, Nancy & Lou Bruch, Nancy & Wes Carter, Doug & Sherry Caves, Nancy Heiden, Les & Susan Hoffman, Susan & Conrad Jostad, Mark & Sarah McGuire, Jim & Rumi O'Brien, Cary & Scott Reich, Mark Smith & Dan Rigney, Don & Joanne Tierney, Lorette Wambach, and Lynda and Dick Wright. ●

Thanks to a donation from Norm and Carol Aulabaugh, the crew got some new tools this summer, including loppers and a brush cutter.