

landscene

Spring 2014

Natural Heritage
LAND TRUST

One of the beautiful views from Cave Bluff.

Prominent Wisconsin River Bluff Preserved Forever

PERMANENTLY
PROTECTED

Boaters on the Wisconsin River near Merrimac have long enjoyed the scenic bluffs that rise from the shore like the humps of green whales. In this area of heavy development along the river, these bluffs often make prized homes sites. But, thanks to the generosity of Tim and Terri Escher, the prominent bluff overlooking Okee Bay, with views of the Baraboo Hills, will be preserved forever by Natural Heritage Land Trust. In December, Tim and Terri donated a conservation easement over the land that prevents any future development.

The Escher family, along with Tim's parents Bill and Barb, bought Cave Bluff over 20 years ago to keep it from being developed. "I had hiked on the property as a kid, and explored the caves that exist on its slopes," said Tim. "I also remember hearing the whippoorwills on the hill from my grandparents' house nearby."

In pre-settlement times many of these bluffs were covered with prairie instead of the forests seen today. On Tim and Terri's 47 acres, there are two remnant prairies that harbor about 40 native plant species. Tim and Terri are investing in the restoration of the property and are working on clearing trees like red cedar that often take over prairies in the absence of regular fires.

When asked why they decided to permanently protect their land, Tim responded, **"The beautiful and diverse area around the Wisconsin River is under constant development pressure, so this was our opportunity to slow it down just a little. Partnering with Natural Heritage Land Trust was a way to make our dreams permanent. Unfortunately I haven't heard a whippoorwill in years, but maybe as we restore the prairies and open the woodland a bit they will return."**

This is the ninth project Natural Heritage Land Trust has completed along the Wisconsin River, totaling over 1,100 acres of permanent land conservation in the last 10 years, including places like Louis' Bluff, Wildcat Bluff, and Kingsley Bend. Thanks to landowners like Tim and Terri, we are able to preserve these cherished places for future generations. ■

*"Oh, that glorious
Wisconsin wilderness!"*

-- John Muir



We are excited to announce that we are working with a conservation-minded landowner family to permanently protect part of the original John Muir family farm seven

miles south of Montello in Marquette County. This acquisition includes 38 acres of the land settled by John's father Daniel in the spring of 1849 when Daniel brought his son John and daughter Sarah to Wisconsin from Scotland. The rest of the family followed that fall. It was in the beautiful landscape around Ennis Lake (called Fountain Lake by the Muirs) that a young John Muir, the future father of our National Park System, explored the natural world, learning to love the abundance and beauty of wilderness, and eventually becoming a vital voice in the movement to protect it.

The present landowner family has deep roots in Marquette County and a heritage that goes back to the earliest settlers in this area, among them, the Muirs and other Scotch, Irish and Yankee families. The family's love of the land and strong commitment to conservation is what will make this conservation success possible. We hope to complete the purchase by the end of the summer in partnership with the landowner, Wisconsin Friends of John Muir, Ice Age Trail Alliance, Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club. Stay tuned for details about this wonderful acquisition and events celebrating it. ■

Spring Field Trips

All field trips are free of charge but pre-registration is required. **Reserve your spot today** at www.nhlt.org or call Heidi at 258-9797.



Historic Indian Agency House Tour & Walk

Sunday, April 27, 2014 / 1:00 – 3:30 pm

This spring, in partnership with The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Wisconsin, Ice Age Trail Alliance, and Natural Heritage Land Trust, the landscape around the Historic Indian Agency House in Portage will be permanently protected. Natural Heritage Land Trust will hold a conservation easement over 164 acres of land around the House. The Ice Age Trail Alliance will own 45 acres on the southeast side of the Portage Canal. Don't miss this opportunity to tour one of the oldest houses in Wisconsin, built in 1832, and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. You'll also be able to walk a nature trail or a portion of the Ice Age Trail. ■

Thank You to our Historic Indian Agency House Exclusive Sponsor



MARIO QUINTANA

Martha Lound Spring Bird Walk—UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Saturday, May 17, 2014 / 7:00 – 9:00 am

Natural Heritage Land Trust was founded 31 years ago to permanently protect Wally Bauman Woods, now part of the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve, which is a premiere birding spot in Madison during spring migration. John Feith, a local ornithologist, will lead this easy morning walk along the Lake Mendota shoreline, where we might see spectacular warbler "fallouts" if we're lucky. This field trip is in memory of Natural Heritage Land Trust member Martha Lound, a champion for the cause of bird conservation. We will have loaner binoculars, provided by Madison Audubon Society, for anyone who needs them. ■

Thank You to our Bird Walk Sponsors



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MARIO QUINTANA

Sugar River Paddle to Belleville

Saturday, May 31, 2014 / Noon to 4:00 pm

Natural Heritage Land Trust board President Willi Van Haren will lead an enjoyable paddle on this section of the river that is twisty and narrow in places. The put-in is stream-side with no docks. Some paddling skills and the ability to get in and out of a canoe or kayak are required to participate in this trip. The rain date is Sunday, June 1st. **You must bring your own canoe or kayak, paddles, and life preservers.** ■

Thank You to our Sugar River Paddle Sponsors: Glenn Reinl & Sara Krebsbach



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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 region.

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Students divided into home room groups to spread prairie seed at Patrick Marsh in November.

Patrick Marsh Prairie Planting

It only took an hour and a half for 260 Patrick Marsh Middle School students to “get an astounding amount of work done”, was the conclusion of Natural Heritage Land Trust Executive Director Jim Welsh on Thursday, November 14th after the students scattered seed across 18 acres on a beautiful fall afternoon at Patrick Marsh. The students spread bags of locally-grown seed, including 66 species of prairie grasses and flowers, across a former farm field owned by Natural Heritage Land Trust on the southwest side of the marsh. The planting fills in a gap in the natural habitat at Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Area, a 320-acre landscape on the eastern door step of Sun Prairie that is owned in part by WDNR, Dane County, and Natural Heritage Land Trust. The planting was a success thanks to the combined efforts of Madison Audubon Society, Patrick Marsh Middle School, Operation Fresh Start, Patrick Marsh Conservancy, and Natural Heritage Land Trust. Our special thanks to Mark Martin and Mark Smith for their leadership and hard work.

Funding for the prairie planting was provided by the Dane County Environmental Council, Patrick Marsh Conservancy, Patrick Marsh Middle School Discovery Club, and Natural Heritage Land Trust members. ■

189-acre ‘Century Farm’ Permanently Preserved in Jefferson County

Another piece of Wisconsin’s agricultural heritage is permanently protected thanks to Jefferson County’s Farmland Conservation Easement program and Natural Heritage Land Trust. Dale Neupert granted the permanent conservation easement to Jefferson County in December. The easement prohibits non-agricultural uses of the land and will ensure the farmland remains forever.

Dale’s picturesque working farm just south of Waterloo has been in the Neupert family since 1893 and was given the Century Farm award by the Wisconsin State Fair in 1998. The Century Farm award program began on the centennial of Wisconsin’s statehood in 1948 to celebrate and honor Wisconsin’s family farming history.

This is the second farm Natural Heritage Land Trust has helped permanently protect under Jefferson County’s program. Funding for the easement was provided by the USDA’s Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program and Jefferson County. Thanks go to Dale for generously selling the conservation easement at less than its fair market value. ■

Local Conservation. Local Leaders.

Thank you to our 2013-14 President’s Circle members who provide the strong and steady support that Natural Heritage Land Trust needs to carry out its mission.

“It is important for me to see that Natural Heritage Land Trust succeeds. In order for us to ensure natural systems are sustained for future generations of humans and other species, we must band together to thoughtfully protect our lands, waters and the natural cycles of life they support. Natural Heritage Land Trust provides us with a forum to work together to achieve these goals. Not only does the environment benefit when we engage in this work, but it is good for our spirits as well. If Natural Heritage Land Trust is successful, then more people will have participated in this spirit enhancing work—a good thing indeed.”

—Lloyd Eagan, President’s Circle member since 2005

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What's Inside

- Landowners protect Wisconsin River bluff
- Century Farm protected in Jefferson County
- Bird walk at Lakeshore Nature Preserve, Sugar River paddle, Historic Indian Agency House tour



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Conservation where you live

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Final Piece of Land Secured to Complete Black Earth Creek Trail Segment



Steve Schmitt hands the deed for the latest part of the Black Earth Trail corridor to Natural Heritage Land Trust's Caleb Pourchot.

A scenic hiking and biking trail along Black Earth Creek between Mazomanie and Wisconsin Heights Middle and High School is closer to reality now that Natural Heritage Land Trust secured the last piece of the trail corridor in December. The land was donated to Natural Heritage Land Trust by Steve Schmitt, owner of the Shoe Box in Black Earth. Steve has been a big supporter of Wisconsin Heights and said, "I'm excited to help with this trail project. I think it will be great for kids at Wisconsin Heights, and great for our community." Natural Heritage Land Trust will donate the property to the Town of Mazomanie.

Much of the nearly 2-mile trail corridor has been beautifully restored thanks to the efforts of a number of partners, including Wolf Run Association, Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, Dane County, Wisconsin DNR, and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Approximately half of the crushed limestone hike and bike trail has been constructed, beginning at the south end of Crescent Street in Mazomanie with a lovely new bridge across the creek. Wolf Run Association plans to complete the remainder of the trail this year. Make a trip to

Mazomanie for a pleasant one to two-mile out-and-back hike. For a map of the trailhead, please visit goo.gl/c2Vk58.

Our deepest appreciation goes out to Steve for donating the property to us. We also wish to thank a number of Natural Heritage Land Trust members and supporters who made special gifts to help us complete this project: Anonymous, Electronic Theatre Controls, Steve Born, Charlie and Barb Saeman, Bob and Christie Selk, and Lee and Jacqui Swanson. ■



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