# landscene Natural Heritage LAND TRUST

# **Doubling Down on Permanent Protection at Louis' Bluff**



Frank Weinhold, Melanie Sainz Tallmadge, Leigh Richardson, Petie Rudy, and Mariana Weinhold at Louis' Bluff.

onservation easements are a great way to keep rich agricultural land in production and prevent wildlife habitat from being paved over. Natural Heritage Land Trust uses conservation easements to permanently protect 6,000 acres of farmland, streambanks, and wildlife habitat in southcentral Wisconsin. We have set up an endowment at Madison Community Foundation to ensure that we will always have the financial resources to annually visit the easement land and ensure that the land use limits voluntarily placed on the land are always upheld.

But when it comes to taking care of the prairies, savannas, and other wildlife habitat on some of the easements habitat that needs active management to keep it healthy—conservation easements fall short. It is far easier to prevent someone from building a house on easement land (which is what conservation easements are good at) than it is to make a landowner keep invasive plants out of their prairie or woodland.

Thanks to creative thinking and a strong love of the land, landowners Mariana and Frank Weinhold have taken the stewardship of their conservation easement land to the next level at Louis' Bluff north of the Wisconsin **Dells.** A natural landmark on the Wisconsin River, featuring a tall sandstone bluff topped with towering white pines, Louis' Bluff is relatively free from non-native plants thanks to Mariana's vigilance. In 2007 the Weinholds took an important step in permanently protecting Louis' Bluff by granting Natural Heritage Land Trust a perpetual conservation easement over their property. A few years later, as they began the process of transferring Louis' Bluff to their children, they had to reckon with the fact that their children. who have busy lives of their own, might not be able to care for Louis' Bluff as they have.

So last year the Weinholds brought together Natural Resources Foundation and Natural Heritage Land Trust to create a land management endowment for Louis' Bluff. This endowment will provide a steady stream of income to Natural Heritage Land Trust to annually inventory and remove invasive plants. Although the endowment will not be big enough to cover all the land management needs of Louis' Bluff, it offers a partial solution to the question many landowners have about how to maintain the ecological integrity of a cherished property even

# Dells Magic: Wisconsin Dells Fall Tour

e have partnered with the Madison Club to offer a fascinating program of Wisconsin Dells history and Native American lore on **Thursday, October** 13 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Hike Louis' Bluff in Juneau County and enjoy a leisurely Wisconsin River jet bout tour through the Dells narrated by Melanie Tallmadge-Sainz. Melanie is a talented visual and performing artist, educator, member of the Ho-Chunk Nation and founder of the Great Lakes Little Eagle Arts Foundation (LEAF), dedicated to promoting American Indian art by cultivating the entrepreneurial spirit of First Nations artists.

Louis' Bluff owners Frank and Mariana Weinhold have chosen to safeguard this Wisconsin Dells landmark with a conservation easement granted to Natural Heritage Land Trust, to ensure that its stunning scenery and sandstone landforms will remain undeveloped. Registration of \$125 per participant includes deluxe coach transportation from The Madison Club, catered lunch by LEAF at Louis' Bluff, and a river tour with Dells Boat Tours® with stops at the H.H. Bennett Studio and Native Presence fine art gallery. Participation is strictly limited to 25. Sign up for this tour on the Madison Club web site at www.madisonclub.org under Events. Questions may be directed to Karl Gutknecht at (608) 244-2432.

after they no longer own the land. According to Mariana and Frank, "We are very pleased that Natural Heritage Land Trust and Natural Resources Foundation have stepped up to help us ensure that Louis Bluff will have some oversight and management in the future when we no longer have the energy. Our children are very supportive of having the extra pair of eyes and hands, as well as the land management expertise. We hope that other landowners will consider doing similar programs."

### **162 Acres of Prime Farmland Protected in Jefferson County**



n May, Natural Heritage Land Trust helped Jefferson County permanently protect a 162-acre farm with a perpetual conservation easement. The easement will ensure that the farm will never be developed and will continue to contribute to the county's strong agricultural economy.

The project to protect the farm was the third that Natural Heritage Land Trust has completed in partnership with Jefferson County's Farmland Preservation Program. Jefferson County is one of the few municipalities in Wisconsin, like the Town of Dunn, that has set aside funds for buying conservation easements on their rich farmland, which is some of the best in the country. Natural Heritage Land Trust brought its expertise in navigating the complexities of easement transactions to help complete the project.

Funding for the project came from Jefferson County and the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Our thanks also go to the landowner for agreeing to sell the easement at less than its fair market value.



Tony enjoyed a camping trip at Sylvan Lake, Custer State Park, South Dakota in 2014.





hanks to grants from the Madison Community Foundation, the James E. Dutton Foundation, and many Land Trust donors, Tony Abate is our new Conservation Specialist. He brings outdoor experience and critical thinking to his job, plus a large dose of enthusiasm. Tony helps with land protection, monitors easements, coordinates on-the-ground land management, and engages the public with our work. At our preserves his priorities are expanding activities that engage schools and community members, such as education days and field trips, as well as coordinating regular volunteer work parties at Westport Drumlin and Patrick Marsh.

During college Tony combined environmental studies with philosophy to focus on applying ethics to human relationships with the natural world. After graduation from UW-Madison in 2013, he took a summer job with our Prairie Partners crew. That work removing invasive plants and planting prairies led to similar work with Madison Audubon Society. For two years Tony enhanced wildlife habitat at Goose Pond Sanctuary.

Tony's love of the outdoors stems from his years growing up on a farmette near Coloma, Wisconsin. There Tony's father led him and his two siblings on frequent walks to learn about animals, birds, plants, and everything else they saw on outings together. To this day Tony savors the call of whip-poor-wills, which he first heard in his youth. In his free time Tony enjoys backpacking (New Zealand and Thailand were highlights), sleeping in his hammock whenever possible (sometimes with a bug net), and playing acoustic guitar and harmonica.



**Land Trust director Darcy Kind looks for** birds at UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve on our Vera Bauman Bird Walk in May. Wally Bauman Woods, our founding project in 1983, is part of the Preserve. The bird walk was in honor of Wally's wife, Vera Bauman, who passed away on February 22, 2016. We will be forever grateful for the conservation legacy the Bauman family left to Dane County.



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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# Bill Lunney to Receive Harold "Bud" Jordahl Lifetime **Achievement Award**

or over 45 years Bill Lunney has held leadership roles in land conservation across Wisconsin and we've all benefited from the impact of his extraordinary dedication. We are thrilled that he has been selected to receive Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts'" Bud Jordahl Land Conservation Leadership Award" for 2016. We're honored to have played a role in the nomination of Bill for this award. Bill spoke at the first Earth Day in 1970 and was one of the

key players in our inaugural conservation success, Wally Bauman Woods, and the formation of our organization, then known as Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation. He has chaired the Dane County Parks Commission for twenty eight years, was president of Natural Heritage Land Trust, Board Chair of The Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin, and president of the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks. He has served on the board of Gathering Waters and is serving his 15th year on the Natural Resources Foundation board. He traces this all back to his days as a law student where he was influenced by Stuart Udall and became aware of social and environmental issues. Bill Lunney and his wife Judie Pfeifer are truly champions for the environment and local land conservation and we thank everyone who supported Bill's nomination for this distinguished award with a letter of support: Jim Hubing; Howard Mead; R. Waldo Peterson; Gail Shea; Rick Eilertson, Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area; Mary Jean Huston, The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin; Laura Hicklin and Darren Marsh, Dane County Parks; and Camille Zanoni, Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. As a former winner of the same award, Howard Mead said in his nomination of Bill, "in the past 40 years, few in Wisconsin have accomplished more for the environment... he has been an articulate spokesman for the wise use of our natural resources in the tradition of Aldo Leopold and Bud Jordahl."



# **Prairie Partners Working Hard at Westport Drumlin**

"A conservationist is one who is humbly aware that with each stroke [of the axe] he is writing his signature on the face of the land." - Aldo Leopold

ignatures of farming, development, conservation, and neglect chronicle a dynamic history at Natural Heritage Land Trust's Westport Drumlin Preserve. Less than 200 years ago, this 227-acre preserve —which includes Westport Drumlin State Natural Area—was part of the 150,000-acre Empire Prairie, which stretched across northern Dane and southern Columbia Counties. Today, only scattered remnants remain—the largest collection of which are protected at our preserve.

Each Tuesday from mid-May to mid-August, rain or shine, our Prairie Partners intern crew laced up their boots and erased some of the signatures that have left their marks on the prairie landscape. This year they spent much of their time removing invasive herbaceous plants such as wild parsnip and sweet clover and also began the

early restoration phase on a hillside prairie remnant at the newly acquired Koltes farmstead. This year the crew also spent an additional four days improving wildlife habitat at Patrick Marsh.

The 2016 Prairie Partners intern crew joins us from UW-Stevens Point (Kurt Bennett, Allison Earl, and Adelyn Hanchette), UW-Madison (Gina Lehner), and UW-Eau Claire (Allison Ban-Herr). Their hard work builds on a successful program that has shaped the Westport Drumlin landscape for the fifth consecutive summer.

Thanks to our 2016 Prairie Partners sponsors for making this program possible at Westport Drumlin: Mary Binkley & Dennis Petzke, Nancy & Lou Bruch, Doug & Sherry Caves, Nancy & Jack Heiden, Les & Susan Hoffman, Mark & Sarah McGuire, Jim & Rumi O'Brien, Cary & Scott Reich, and Susan and Conrad Jostad.



Including Natural Heritage Land Trust in your will or estate plan is one of the simplest ways to make a gift for the future. If you would like to learn more about including us in your plans, please reach out to Heidi Habeger at (608) 258-9797 or heidi@nhlt.org.



Land Trust supporters joined us for a picnic at Highland Spring Farm in the Town of Dunn catered by Chef Dave of Charlie's on Main in early August. Our thanks to Kevin and Keely Oppermann for hosting the field trip on their farm, Wisconsin Brewing Company for donating the beer, and Ed Minihan for sharing the history of land protection in the Town of **Dunn. Thanks to our sponsors:** 

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**GUIDESTAR** 

# **Places Worth Knowing**

oin Natural Heritage Land Trust on one of our field trips and get to know the places you have helped to protect. Our outings are led by landowners or expert naturalists, offering you unique opportunities to enjoy and learn about our wonderful landscape while meeting others who share your commitment to *conservation where you live*.





#### **Hefty Creek Tour**

Tuesday, September 20, 2016 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Meet landowners Bob and Nan Rudd for a hike on their Green County farm that boasts upland prairie, oak savanna, and a portion of Hefty Creek. We will enjoy refreshments on their porch and learn about the conservation easement they donated to the Land Trust that permanently protects their property.

Thanks to our sponsors: Marv Beatty





ROBERTA HERSCHLEE

#### Black Hawk Ridge Trail Run Sunday, October 23, 2016 – 8k and 16k

Natural Heritage Land Trust will once again be the major beneficiary of the Black Hawk Ridge Trail Run. Near Sauk City, the 8K and 16K courses take runners through a restored prairie, hardwood forest, and pine plantation with views of the Wisconsin River valley. Registration will start in early September (at wisconsintrailruns.com) and is limited to 300 runners. This is a great event that would not be possible without the help of many volunteers who share in the fun, food, and giveaways. We are looking for volunteers to help with parking, course direction, and water stations. Please contact Sara at (608) 258-9797 or sara@nhlt.org if you'd like to volunteer.