



A “happy ending” for a special part of the Wisconsin River

This spring another piece of Wisconsin’s wonderful natural landscape was protected forever when Pat and Ron Paska donated to Groundswell a quarter-acre of land on the Wisconsin River.

The Paskas enjoyed their spot on the Wisconsin River for many years and always planned a conservation future for the property. According to Pat, “Shortly after we purchased the property, we were contacted by the DNR and asked if we were willing to sell. We assured our contact that we would be in touch when that day arrived because we liked the idea of it becoming permanently protected as part of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. Unfortunately, when the day arrived funds were not available and the DNR was not in a position to accept it as a donation. Our realtor and friend, John Holbrook, approached Groundswell Conservancy and arranged for us to donate the property, and I understand that it will, at some point, be offered to the State. A happy ending!” And that is in fact Groundswell’s plan.

The Riverway is one of Wisconsin’s great conservation successes. It is a private–public partnership that protects the scenery, wildlife, and historical and archeological resources along 92 miles of the river from Prairie du Sac to Wyalusing State Park. The donation of the Paska’s land adds another piece to this beautiful landscape. ●

Our 10th year with the Prairie Partners

Each summer Groundswell partners with other local conservation groups to restore wildlife habitat. This year, in collaboration with Madison Audubon Society, Friends of Lakeshore Nature Preserve, Friends of Cherokee Marsh, and Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, we celebrate our 10th consecutive year! From late-May through mid-August, our five undergraduate interns restore habitat at each organization's natural area. Every day of the week is a different day's work for the crew. They get to experience a wide array of habitat types and restoration techniques. On Mondays Groundswell gets help from the crew at Westport Prairie or Patrick Marsh. A typical day includes digging up wild parsnip along a trail, cutting honeysuckle and buckthorn out of an oak savanna, or removing sweet clover from a prairie. Groundswell's participation in this internship program would not be possible without the financial support of this year's crew sponsors: Mary Binkley and Dennis Petzke; David Boutwell; Nancy and Lou Bruch; Nancy and Wes Carter; Doug and Sherry Caves; Nancy Heiden; Susan and Conrad Jostad; Jim and Rumi O'Brien; Cary and Scott Reich; Mark Smith and Dan Rigney; Don and Joanne Tierney; Lorette Wambach; Susan Young Hoffman and Les Hoffman. Throughout the last ten years, the Prairie Partners program has restored countless wildlife habitat acres. Here's to the next ten years! ●

BEN JONES



The intern crew from left to right: Luke DeBiasio, Bill Davis, Kyle Hulbert, Emma Raasch, and Cara Farrow

Groundswell swag is here!

Show your support for local conservation with new Groundswell swag. Check out our t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, mugs, and tote bags available for purchase online at: www.bonfire.com/store/groundswell-conservancy/

Proceeds from all sales benefit Groundswell and protect special places in our community. ●



Next generation of leadership at Groundswell

Our long-time Executive Director Jim Welsh will be retiring next winter. Jim is understandably proud of what Groundswell has accomplished over his 18 years of service. He says he is “looking forward to all the great things that Groundswell will achieve in the next 18 years”. Board member Greg Hyer is leading our work to find our next staff leader. Our goal is to have our new executive director in place by the time Jim departs. We will be sharing details about the hiring process this fall. ●

Join Jim. Create a Legacy.

Include Groundswell Conservancy in your will or estate plans and a donation of \$1,000 will be made to Groundswell in your honor — right now.

Jim Welsh has been leading Groundswell for the past 18 years, but he’s also made a lasting commitment to local conservation by including Groundswell in his will. The Groundswell Legacy Circle Campaign gives you the opportunity to honor Jim and join him in protecting special places. If you take part in this campaign by including Groundswell in your will or estate plans and notifying us of your plans, one of our generous sponsors listed below will donate \$1,000 to Groundswell in your honor ---- right now. And you will be able to choose how that money will be spent.

You’ll also be joining Jim, the generous sponsors, and others as Groundswell Legacy Circle members. Legacy gifts ensure that Groundswell protects special places forever. For example, in 2018 we received a bequest from Marie Fraser. Her gift helped us purchase an addition to Ferry Bluff State Natural Area, wetlands along Six-Mile Creek that flow into Lake Mendota, and another piece of the conservation landscape in Black Earth Creek valley. Join Marie and Jim by leaving a legacy of preserved land.

Our goal is to have 20 people make a new legacy commitment through this campaign. Want to take part in or know more about the Legacy Circle Campaign? Contact Heidi Habeger at heidi@groundswellconservancy.org, call (608) 258-9797 or go to groundswellconservancy.org/legacycirclecampaign. If you’ve already included Groundswell in your estate plans, but have not yet notified us, we hope you will share your plans.

Groundswell Legacy Circle Campaign Sponsors

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More funding to protect farmland

Thanks to the leadership of Alison Volk, the Easement Program Manager with American Farm Land Trust, \$7 million in new federal funding is on its way to permanently protect more rich farmland in southern Wisconsin. The grant is coming to a consortium of land trusts and local governments. Groundswell is ready to help get this money spent to protect farmland in the Black Earth Creek, the Town of Dunn, and other important places. Our new partner in

this work is the Town of Dunkirk, located south of Stoughton. Dunkirk is starting a rural preservation program modeled on the very successful one run by the Town of Dunn. According to Dunkirk Town Chair Norm Monsen, “over the last 20 years Dunkirk residents have affirmed many times that preserving the rural character of Dunkirk is of high importance.” ●



Groundswell welcomes four new board members

Alexandria Baker is the Foundation & Grants Manager with Clean Wisconsin and also a member of the board of Community Shares of Wisconsin. She is passionate about protecting our natural spaces and working to make them accessible to everyone. She has always loved spending time outdoors - from kayaking on Lake Superior in the summer, to hiking through the Driftless area, to working on both urban and rural farms near Madison.



Alton Multhaupt is Vice President – Treasury Management at First Business Bank. He enjoys spending time hunting, fishing, kayaking and hiking in new areas across southern Wisconsin. Spending time outdoors has been a very important part of his life and he is excited to be involved with Groundswell which helps to protect natural areas close to home. He lives in Oregon with his wife and daughter.



Rodee Schneider is the Director of Strategic Partnerships Marketing and Communications for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he works to build and nurture relationships between the UW and stakeholders across the state and world. Connecting with nature and getting outside has always been one of the most important parts of his life, and the life of his family. He doesn't think he's ever been on a run, hike or bike ride that he's regretted. His favorite outdoor spots include Peninsula State Park in Door County (he grew up camping there and his folks now live across from it) and Sanibel Island, FL (67% of the island is conservation land!). His favorite local hiking spots are the Cross Plains Ice Age Reserve, Indian Lake, and Wolf Run Trail in Mazomanie. He lives and runs on the near west side of Madison with his wife and two children.



Stacy Rhone is the Director of Budgets at Madison Gas and Electric Company. Growing up on the shores of Lake Michigan in Two Rivers, WI instilled a lasting love of nature in Stacy. Some of her most cherished memories are being with family at Point Beach State Park. Stacy lives in Sun Prairie by Patrick Marsh and enjoys the trails and beauty it offers. To this day she finds peace and comfort in the outdoors whether that be camping, hiking, or exploring the shore lines of this magnificent state. Protecting our natural resources for future generations is something she is passionate about and she's thankful to be joining a group of people who share that same passion.

Improving Access to Westport Prairie and Patrick Marsh

A new parking lot, signage, and trails are coming to the farmstead at Westport Prairie.

Groundswell continues to improve access to Patrick Marsh and Westport Prairie. At Patrick Marsh, we re-graded the trail south from the main parking area. We also mowed a new trail accessing the south side of Patrick Marsh from Schuster Road. This fall we are partnering with a Girl Scout to build a new boardwalk crossing a wet area between the marsh and the kettle pond. A Boy Scout will help us reroute a portion of the trail to the boardwalk. These projects will help them complete their respective Gold Award and Eagle Scout projects.

At Westport Prairie, we have expanded our prairie nursery. This project helped a Boy Scout earn his Eagle Scout rank. Groundswell also secured funding to improve parking, create better signage, and revamp the tobacco barn. This summer we established two new trails. A half-mile trail through a restored prairie and remnant prairie now links with the existing parking lot at the top of the hill. And a one-mile trail around a crop field will start and end at the new parking area. Expect to see the new parking area, signage, and tobacco barn improvements this fall and winter. Thanks to the James E. Dutton Foundation and Oberweiler Foundation for funding this work. ●

Seeds of partnership grow at Lake View

Four years ago Groundswell and its supporters helped Lake View Elementary School expand their green schoolyard. Green schoolyards are nature-filled outdoor spaces designed for play, exploration, and learning. They help everyone explore and have fun in nature nearby. We continue to support the work of the school's "Green Team". Together we have improved the school garden and are restoring the campus woodland. This fall Groundswell will help the Green Team design an outdoor restorative space. This space will be dedicated to mindfulness and meditation for students and teachers. This project is in partnership with UW-Madison's Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture. ●

Lake View teacher James Kersten accepts the 2020 LEAF School Forest Award which recognizes his leadership at the Lake View school forest.

Groundswell Farm News

Strawberries were among the fruits and vegetables sold at the Linden Cohousing Farmers Market this summer. This year was another challenging year for strawberry production as frost was still hitting local farms in mid-May. None the less, some survived to produce this luscious fruit. Thank you to our 2021 market sponsor, TASC.



Neighborhood Food Solutions, Groundswell staff, and friends helped build a high tunnel at Pasley's Swan Creek Farm. The high tunnel will extend the growing season for the crops grown by participants in the Neighborhood Food Solutions youth and adult programs.

BEN JONES



"I want to thank you, Groundswell, funders, and all supporters who made the Lifting Hearts Therapy Garden possible for us elders. Therapy Garden programming day is the day I look forward to on a weekly basis. We have been showered with love, care, and kindness." -Yee Vang.

On the first day of the Lifting Hearts Therapy Garden program at Westport Farm, the elders eagerly sowed heirloom seeds they had been saving every year since their arrival in the U.S. and transplanted seedlings they started at home on their windowsills. What started as freshly prepared, bare soil is now lush and green with vegetables bathing in the sun, then soaking up the rain and dancing with the wind as their life takes form. Thank you to Madison Community Foundation for funding transportation for the elders to attend weekly programming.



Kids lead the way on our half-mile Wander Walk at Westport Prairie, jumping like insects, learning animal facts, and bonding with local families. The Wander Walks signs will be up at Westport Prairie all summer and fall. Bring your kids and check them out together.

This June Groundswell partnered with Hike It Baby, a national nonprofit organization that connects families with babies and young kids to the outdoors, to host a Wander Walks hike at Westport Prairie. The Wander Walks program is a new initiative that engages young families outside in early childhood development and nature-based play. The hikes feature signs where Wox the Wander Walk Fox shares movement-based activities, stories about native species and indigenous people, opportunities to practice mindfulness, and fun nature facts. Signs are in Spanish and English and include adaptations for those with different abilities. ●



Nature photography workshop

Seasoned professional photographer Mario Quintana led a nature photography workshop for Groundswell supporters on a beautiful July evening. We hiked the drumlin at Westport Prairie and sharpened our photography skills while learning about light, composition, and subject matter. ●

Thank you to our sponsors:



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Places worth knowing

In-person field trips are back! Join Groundswell on the land you help protect. Space is limited, so be sure to register at groundswellconservancy.org/events soon.



Botany with BJ

Tuesday, September 21
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Join Groundswell's plant ID expert BJ Byers on a late summer hike at Westport Prairie. You'll learn tips and tricks for identifying different plant species and remembering their names.

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Black Hawk Ridge Trail Run

Can you volunteer at our trail run in October?

The annual Black Hawk Ridge Trail Run will take place on Sunday, October 24th. The 8K and 16K courses near Sauk City take runners through restored prairie, hardwood forest, and a pine plantation above the Wisconsin River valley. Proceeds help Groundswell protect the special places you love. If you would like to help with parking, registration, or water stations, please contact Liz at (608) 258-9797 or liz@groundswellconservancy.org.