



**WEST WISCONSIN LAND TRUST  
STRATEGIC DIRECTION: 2011**

Adopted by the Board of Directors: August 18, 2011

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*In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous. Aristotle*

*When we see land as a community to which we belong,  
we may begin to use it with love and respect. Aldo Leopold*

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**OUR MISSION**

To preserve the natural character of western Wisconsin.

We achieve our mission by permanently protecting important conservation lands through conservation easements and other land protection tools, by managing and monitoring our protected lands, by assisting others in developing and advancing land protection strategies and by promoting the preservation of Wisconsin's unique natural resources.

**OUR VISION**

As we look to the future of western Wisconsin, we see a landscape with wild and scenic places sufficiently protected for wildlife and people for generations to come.

As we look to the future of West Wisconsin Land Trust, we see a respected organization working creatively and cooperatively with diverse partners in these conservation efforts while providing exemplary stewardship for the land in our care.

As we look to the future of our State, we see a network of well-funded and sustainable programs, organizations and agencies working together with private landowners, and engaged citizens to preserve the natural and scenic heritage of the Wisconsin we all love.

## OUR VALUES

The Board of Directors and staff of West Wisconsin Land Trust are committed to the following core values to guide all aspects of our work:

### INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The trust and confidence of our landowners, donors, partners and the public are fundamental to our success. We honor that trust by being open, honest and fair and by adhering to the highest ethical and professional standards in all that we do. We hold ourselves accountable to our mission, to ourselves and to all on whose support we depend.

### RESPECT

We respect the natural environment, our supporters and partners and ourselves.

### EXCELLENCE

Our conservation work is complex and demands the highest level of professional expertise. We expect excellence, innovation and continuous improvement—for board and staff alike.

### LONG-LASTING RESULTS

Our land protection work is forever and we are committed to the ongoing care of our lands and conservation easements in perpetuity. We must balance our passion for protecting land with the fiscal responsibility and discipline needed for a sustained commitment if we are to have a long-lasting impact on preserving our natural heritage.

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Based upon this mission, this vision and these values, the Board of Directors of the West Wisconsin Land Trust has adopted the following strategic direction for the organization which consists of the following components:

- **BACKGROUND: OUR HISTORY OF SUCCESS** Page 3
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## BACKGROUND: OUR HISTORY OF SUCCESS

*6 nature preserves*

*175 conservation easements*

*20,000 acres of land*

West Wisconsin Land Trust has a long history of helping preserve land in western Wisconsin.

Since the late 1980's, WWLT has been working with landowners, government agencies and local communities to protect those lands that make western Wisconsin unique—from its expansive woodlands and forests in the north to its majestic blufflands and rugged valleys in the south.

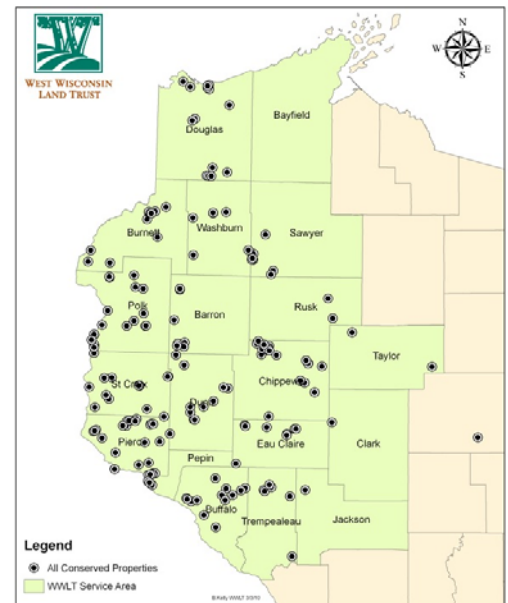
With its roots anchored in a desire to preserve Wisconsin's long history of family farming, WWLT has tackled concerns about conversion of agricultural and forestland by acquiring a number of conservation easements on working farms and forests. Dozens of additional projects have helped protect fragile shorelines from ill-planned development and to restore degraded wetlands to ecological health.

To date, WWLT has protected more than *30,000 acres of land* distributed over 20 western Wisconsin counties—currently owning 6 nature preserves and holding 175 conservation easements. Our projects, noted here on the map, are more fully described in the Appendix.

WWLT has also embarked upon ambitious education programs—introducing hundreds of school children and families to the beauty and importance of Wisconsin's natural habitats and species.

WWLT is proud of these accomplishments. Our successes have made a difference. But we have also learned that our future requires more focused attention if we wish to continue to play an important role in preserving western Wisconsin's natural character.

Resource constraints with related organizational challenges are likely to continue in the near term. In conjunction with the ongoing demand for WWLT's unique skills, this will require a more directed conservation and programmatic approach if WWLT is to meet its current conservation easement and land management responsibilities *and* tackle new conservation projects in a responsible and sustainable manner.



## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2011: OUR MAP FOR THE FUTURE

*Places that provide relatively natural habit, terrestrial and aquatic, for western Wisconsin's wildlife, fish and plants.*

*Places that capture the natural beauty of our State and the imaginations of its people.*

Throughout the summer of 2011, the Board of Directors and staff of WWLT met to evaluate its current situation and establish a future direction for the organization. The process relied heavily on a previous comprehensive organizational assessment completed in 2010 and the advice of experts working in this field, particularly Gathering Waters Conservancy.

Through this analysis, WWLT concluded:

- First and foremost, there is an absolute need for ongoing organizational sustainability for any land trust that holds perpetual conservation easements and manages land for its long-term conservation values.
- It is abundantly clear that there is an unmet need for additional conservation work in the western regions of Wisconsin. Threats to critical wildlife habitat and Wisconsin's treasured natural lands remain and there is limited capacity in others to address them.
- Financial resources to support this work will remain stretched for some time to come.

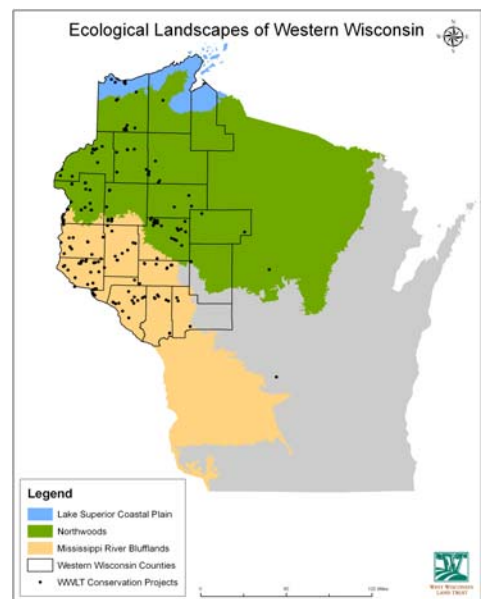
Therefore, WWLT has determined that to be effective in the long run it must focus its efforts in coming months and years.

*First*, WWLT must give priority to managing its existing portfolio of lands and conservation easements.

*Second*, WWLT will more selectively direct its future land protection project and program activities. Land conservation will continue to be focused on the *three ecological landscapes of western Wisconsin*:

- Lake Superior Coastal Plain
- Northwoods
- Mississippi River Blufflands

These ecological landscapes and their importance to Wisconsin are discussed below.



However, within these landscapes, WWLT will further select *specific conservation areas or sites* on which to focus its activities. These will be places with important natural values:

- *Places that provide relatively natural habitat, terrestrial and aquatic, for western Wisconsin's wildlife, fish and plants.*
- *Places that capture the natural beauty of our State and the imaginations of its people.*

These will be sites where—working in partnership with government agencies, other conservation organizations and community members—WWLT believes it has the opportunity and unique ability to provide long-term protection for identified natural resources. Many will be areas where WWLT has historically had a presence. Others areas will be selected because of the new opportunities they represent.

While natural habitats and scenic beauty of western Wisconsin will be a focus of WWLT conservation activity, selected land protection projects will also take into account the ability to meet other conservation goals such as protecting water quality or providing recreational opportunities.

It is anticipated that most specific land protection projects and conservation activities pursued by WWLT will be directed at these selected areas. But it is not anticipated that this will preclude pursuing an unusually important opportunity that does not fit squarely within these parameters.

Some of these sites have already been identified. In other instances there is additional conservation planning to be done. This process will draw heavily from planning work that has already been completed in Wisconsin, particularly the *Wisconsin Land Legacy Report: an inventory of places to meet Wisconsin's future conservation and recreation needs*, prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in 2006 and *Wildlife Action Plan: Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need*, prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in 2005.

Site selection is also discussed in more detail below.

For now, new land protection projects will be directly pursued and completed by WWLT on a very limited basis. WWLT will continue to provide advice, assistance and support to others on land protection projects and will be an advocate for those programs and policies which directly impact the protection of natural and scenic places in western Wisconsin. However, WWLT will pursue new projects itself only when it has the organizational structure and financial resources to do so.

*Finally*, West Wisconsin Land Trust must build the organizational and financial structure needed to *efficiently, effectively and permanently* protect and manage any land and conservation easements in its care.

WWLT has played, and we believe will continue to play, a significant leadership role in protecting the lands we love in western Wisconsin. To do so, it must insure its own long term organizational stability and sustainability. Focusing our programs while building organizational capacity will do just that. In doing so, we acknowledge that we will not now pursue some projects, such as farmland preservation easements, or some programs, such as environmental education, that we have engaged in before. We are nevertheless committed to a course of action that we believe will benefit West Wisconsin Land Trust and western Wisconsin.

We also recognize the importance of periodically revisiting the strategic direction laid out here. We anticipate that we will do so routinely as a part of our annual planning process and more extensively as circumstances change, particularly in the near future.

### OUR CONSERVATION FOCUS

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*CONSERVATION  
FOCUS:*

*Protecting selected sites in ecological regions of western Wisconsin to preserve their natural and scenic features.*

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Wisconsin's natural landscape is a unique mosaic of forests, grasslands and water molded in large part by the periodic advancement and melting of massive continental glaciers over the past 2.5 million years. These glaciers scoured away vegetation, planed down mountains and left behind a rolling plain covered by fertile and productive soils. As they melted, these glaciers fed powerful rivers that carved broad channels and deposited ton after ton of sand and gravel.

Human activities have since altered Wisconsin's natural habitats. For example, nearly all of Wisconsin's northern forests were cut between 1860 and 1910 to supply timber for rapidly expanding cities. In the absence of periodic fires which historically impacted much of the state, fire-dependent plant communities—such as barrens, savannas and oak woodlands—gradually filled in with shrubs and trees. Demand for agricultural products lead to the conversion of prairies, savannas and southern woodlands into agricultural areas.

Today, fragmentation of Wisconsin's natural lands continues—fueled in great part by the desire of many to live “close to nature,” particularly along the shorelines of our lakes and rivers that provide some of our most important wildlife habitat and play a critical role in protecting water quality.

Wisconsin's landscape has also been shaped by the strong stewardship ethic of generations of private landowners, conservation organizations and public agencies. Hundreds of thousands of acres have been protected for future generations.

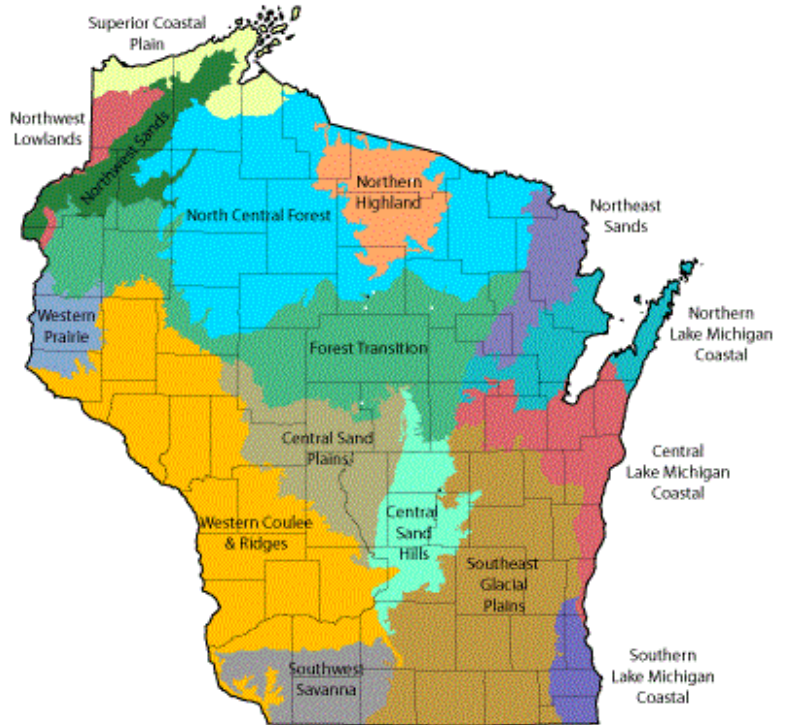
In order to better describe and understand Wisconsin's natural world, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has delineated and mapped 16 ecological regions of the State, each of which share unique combinations of physical and biological characteristics.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES:  
ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES OF WISCONSIN

This ecological framework has been an important tool in numerous conservation planning efforts.

Now, West Wisconsin Land Trust is also using this framework as a basis for guiding and describing its own conservation work.

Western Wisconsin consists of all or portions of seven of these WDNR delineated ecological landscapes—Superior Coastal Plain, Northwest Lowlands, Northwest Sands, North Central Forest, Forest Transition, Western Prairie and Western Coulee and Ridges landscapes.



WWLT is using these ecological boundaries—combining several of the areas into three ecological landscapes described below and renaming them accordingly—to help better describe its own, unique role in conservation in this part of the State. WWLT will build its conservation programs around the ecological needs and conservation opportunities of each landscape.

The ecological landscape descriptions which will be used by WWLT are:

- Lake Superior Coastal Plain
- Northwoods
- Mississippi River Blufflands

Each of these landscapes is further discussed below.



As noted above, WWLT does not intend to expand its programs to work throughout each of these landscapes in their entirety. Rather, it will continue to focus primarily on the western and northwestern portions of this part of the State where it has historically concentrated its efforts. Moreover, it will identify specific conservation areas or sites within each landscape to further target its programs and project activity.

#### LAKE SUPERIOR COASTAL PLAIN:

The Lake Superior Coastal Plain hugs the south shore of Lake Superior. Unlike the rest of western Wisconsin, the many small rivers and streams that dissect the low, lake plains flow *north* into Lake Superior, the headwaters of the Great Lakes. Many of these rivers and streams provide excellent fishing opportunities and are popular paddling waters.

The climate here is strongly influenced by Lake Superior, resulting in cooler summers, warmer winters and greater precipitation compared to more inland locations. This coastal area is subject to significant disturbance from windstorms, waves, ice, currents, and periodic water level fluctuations which play a significant role in determining both the landform and vegetation characteristics of the shoreline ecosystems.

Most of this landscape remains forested, in various stages of regeneration. Spruce, fir, white pine and associated hardwoods still exist in remnant boreal forests. Extensive, high quality wetlands and estuaries which form a “string of pearls” along the shoreline provide critical habitat for neotropical migratory songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds and fish.

The beauty of the area and its abundant recreational activities make it attractive for seasonal, second home development, which can pose a threat. Fragmentation and improper forest management continue to pose concerns for remaining large forest tracts.

WWLT’s presence in this landscape dates back to 2003 with the acceptance of several conservation easements on the Amnicon River near Lake Superior. More recent accomplishments include participation in protecting 4,000 acres along the Nemadji River.

Currently, WWLT maintains one nature preserve on Bluff Creek, near the City of Superior.

In general, conservation interest and opportunities remain high on the Lake Superior Coastal Plain, particularly on the south shore streams. While there is a significant amount of publicly-owned land here, there are also numerous in-holdings limiting management of these large blocks of forest land. Likewise, a patchwork of small, but important, conservation projects remain to be completed on noteworthy sites like the Brule River, where significant private and public efforts have already been initiated.

In this ecological landscape, WWLT will focus its conservation activity on the following sites:

- The shoreline of Lake Superior
- South shore streams such as the Nemadji, Brule, and White Rivers.

## NORTHWOODS:



Wild lakes, bogs and wetlands dot this vast forested area of the State that encompasses four ecological areas—the Northwest Lowlands, Northwest Sands, North Central Forest and Forest Transition ecological landscapes.

While this forested landscape extends far to the east, the western portion includes the headwaters and much of the watershed of the St. Croix River, a nationally designated wild and scenic river. Many of the State's other major rivers also originate in this landscape, extending into adjacent landscapes. These river systems along with smaller streams and springs, kettle lakes, conifer swamps and other wetlands that are characteristic of the landscape are important conservation targets. Loons, eagles, ospreys and wolves can be found throughout the region. Nationally significant pine-oak barrens can be found in the sandy soils that traverse the landscape.

The hardwood forests of the area also support pulp and saw log production while the abundant lakes have experienced tremendous growth in second home development. Agriculture is the predominant use in the southern part of the landscape, and continues to cause concerns as sensitive areas continue to be converted for agricultural use.

Nearly half of WWLT's permanent land protection work has been completed in this ecological landscape. Protection of privately-owned forestland, fragile lakeshore and popular recreational opportunities including segments of Ice Age Trail highlight some of WWLT's past conservation accomplishments here. A significant nature preserve system is currently owned by WWLT protecting the shores and wetlands of Love Lake.

However, continued development pressure on lakeshores, along with fragmentation of large commercial and private forest tracts present a need for additional conservation work. As long-held family recreational properties transition to new ownership, there is a desire and one-time opportunity to preserve these lands in their relatively pristine state. Public agencies are looking for assistance with their conservation projects as well.

Here, WWLT will focus its conservation activity on the region's wild lakes and streams and its major rivers, such as the following:

- St Croix / Namekagon River Watersheds
- Upper Chippewa River
- Chippewa Moraine Glacial Lakes
- Birchwood Moraine Glacial Lakes

Pine barrens sites will also be identified.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER BLUFFLANDS

This is the area of Wisconsin untouched by the glaciers.

Combining the Western Coulees and Ridges ecological landscape with the Western Prairie landscape, this is a rugged forested landscape with scattered prairies and savannas. Agricultural practices still cover about one-third of the area.

The stunning bluffs rising dramatically from the Mississippi River, the deep ravines and valleys, and the bluff top and hillside prairies are often the natural features most commonly connected to this ecological landscape. This spectacular scenery is a consistent draw for tourists.



However, this landscape covers far more than these well-known Mississippi River bluffs. It includes a number of large, meandering rivers with broad forested floodplains and associated wetlands and uplands including the St. Croix, Chippewa and Black rivers. These riverine systems contain some of the largest remaining floodplain forests in the upper midwest. While the size of these forests alone is of importance, they are also home to a rich assemblage of reptiles and amphibians and provide habitat for resident and migratory birds.

Farm fields now replace much of the historic natural vegetation on ridge tops and in valley bottoms while oak-dominated forests now claim the steep slopes between valley bottoms and ridge tops unsuitable for raising crops after the ubiquitous presettlement wildfires were suppressed.

Numerous coldwater streams and springs can also be found in the landscape, providing important recreational opportunities. However, serious water quality threats impact their integrity.

WWLT has been actively working in the Blufflands for decades in conjunction with participation in the Blufflands Alliance, a collaboration of several land trusts working in this region. Approximately half of WWLT's conservation activity has been directed to this ecological landscape, including both restoration and permanent land protection. Significant land acquisitions include Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area and the Pine Creek Fishery Area, important natural areas now in State of Wisconsin ownership.

Additionally, WWLT plays a unique role in the Eau Claire area, serving as trustee of the Mary E. Fitz Memorial Park Trust, a nonprofit trust which owns and manages an 80 acre natural area known as the Mary E. Fitz Memorial Park.

WWLT has already identified and mapped a number of important conservation sites in the landscape including the following:

- Mississippi River Bluffs and Prairies
- Lower Black River
- Lower Buffalo River
- Rush River
- Lower Chippewa River, wetlands and uplands (including Mary E. Fitz Memorial Park)
- Lower St. Croix River Bluffs
- Western Prairie
- Otter Creek Oak Barrens
- Hillside Prairie Area

These areas will continue to be a focus of future work.

## **OUR PROGRAM GOALS AND DIRECTION**

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*West Wisconsin Land Trust will continue to work to preserve the natural character of western Wisconsin by concentrating its efforts first on managing and monitoring the land it owns and the conservation easements it holds and then on protecting other identified lands in the three ecological landscapes of the region as resources allow.*

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The following describes the general direction West Wisconsin Land Trust will follow in its conservation programs in coming years. This will guide WWLT's annual planning and budgeting which will include specific goals and detail not included here.

We anticipate periodically reviewing and adjusting our programs as necessary, especially over the next few years as WWLT adapts its programs to its new conservation direction and its financial realities.

### **CONSERVATION EASEMENT STEWARDSHIP**

West Wisconsin Land Trust currently holds 175 conservation easements and will continue to meet all of its responsibilities with respect to these easements. WWLT will:

- Annually monitor 100% of the properties protected by conservation easements held by WWLT.

- Respond to all landowner requests regarding their easements in a timely and professional manner.
- Address and resolve as needed any suspected easement problems or violations.
- Create new materials for easement landowners to help them understand their conservation easements and the process for working with WWLT.
- Review current easement portfolio to identify any easements that might best be managed by other conservation organizations or entities.
- Ensure that WWLT's overall conservation easement stewardship program meets land trust industry standards, including creating and implementing appropriate policies and procedures.
- Expand the use of volunteers in WWLT's monitoring program, creating and implementing new appropriate changes.
- Maintain appropriate files and records to support monitoring and management activities.

#### FEE LAND STEWARDSHIP

West Wisconsin Land Trust currently owns six nature preserves and will manage these lands to protect their conservation values while continuing to explore the best long-term use and ownership of each preserve. WWLT will:

- Create and implement management plans for all land owned in fee by WWLT, identifying the costs associated with WWLT's land ownership and management.
- Evaluate and pursue any potential alternative ownership for the land WWLT currently owns in fee.

#### FEE LAND STEWARDSHIP: MARY E. FITZ MEMORIAL PARK

As the court appointed trustee of the Mary E. Fitz Memorial Park Trust, West Wisconsin Land Trust has a unique relationship and set of responsibilities with respect to the Mary E. Fitz Memorial Park property. WWLT will:

- With input and involvement from community leaders and natural resource professionals, prepare and implement a comprehensive plan for the use and management of the Mary E. Fitz Memorial Park.
- Continue routine maintenance at the property during planning.
- Prepare appropriate budgets to cover the costs of managing the property.

### NEW LAND PROTECTION ACTIVITY

West Wisconsin Land Trusts intends to continue to support, assist and participate in land conservation work in western Wisconsin as resources allow, anticipating that its own new land protection project activity at this time will be limited. Working in partnership with government agencies, other conservation organizations and community members, WWLT will:

- Identify specific conservation areas or sites within the Lake Superior Coastal Plain, Northwoods and Mississippi River Blufflands ecological landscapes of western Wisconsin at which WWLT will focus its land protection work. Map and create plans for the selected sites.
- Undertake new conservation easement projects to preserve important identified natural and scenic values where WWLT believes it has the opportunity, the resources and unique ability to provide long-term protection for selected sites.
- Consider opportunities to participate in cooperative fee acquisition projects as they arise if WWLT is in a unique position to assist in a given project.
- Provide information, advice and support on land conservation opportunities to interested landowners, community groups and government agencies. Continue participation in critical ongoing collaborative activities such as Blufflands Alliance, St. Croix Conservation Collaborative, St. Croix Basin Team, St. Louis Alliance Habitat Committee, Lake Superior Basin Team, Friends of the Bad River, and Brule River friends groups.
- Ensure that WWLT's overall land conservation program meets land trust industry standards, including creating and implementing appropriate policies and procedures before undertaking new land protection projects.

NOTE: WWLT does not intend to acquire new nature preserves or pursue long-term fee ownership of natural lands at this time.

### PUBLIC POLICY SUPPORT

West Wisconsin Land Trust recognizes that preserving Wisconsin's unique natural lands requires a suite of public policies and programs that benefit and encourage private land conservation. WWLT will:

- Create policies that will guide any WWLT public policy advocacy activities and allow WWLT to add its voice in support of appropriate land conservation issues at the local, state and federal level.
- Provide information to public officials and agencies as requested on land conservation issues where WWLT has unique knowledge or experience.

## OUR ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND DIRECTION

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*West Wisconsin Land Trust will continue to work to preserve the natural character of western Wisconsin by building the organizational structure and securing the financial resources needed to efficiently, effectively and permanently protect and manage the land and conservation easements in its care.*

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The following describes the operational initiatives that West Wisconsin Land Trust will implement to meet its current responsibilities and support its new conservation program direction.

Finding the needed financial resources is critical to WWLT's short-term and long-term success. It is the most pressing current need. Adjustment to our programs and operations will be made based upon funding actually secured.

### FUNDRAISING:

West Wisconsin Land Trust is committed to expanding and diversifying its funding to achieve long-term financial stability and sustainability. This is of primary importance. WWLT will:

- Build an annual membership/giving program as a base of on-going operating support, with an emphasis on increasing individual major gifts.
- Create a plan to build a dedicated stewardship fund to support the long-term management and care of the land and conservation easements in its care.
- Analyze the existing database, DonorPerfect, and make necessary corrections in how data is collected, stored and used to maximize effectiveness and efficiency in use of the database.
- Create and implement appropriate fundraising policies focusing on donor relations.

### ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Only with a strong organizational structure aligned with its programmatic direction will West Wisconsin Land Trust be able to fulfill its mission and goals. This includes adhering to all *Land Trust Alliance* Land Trust Standards and Practices and participating fully with others in the land trust community. WWLT will:

- Organizational connections: Continue membership in the Gathering Waters Conservancy and the Land Trust Alliance and collaborate with others to insure that WWLT has access to the best information and practices in the land trust community and supports the work of others aligned with its mission.
- Organizational operations: Complete implementation of the recommendations contained in the comprehensive *Organizational Assessment* completed by Mayes Wilson and Associates in June 2010, including revising existing policies and implementing new policies and procedures, with a goal of coming into compliance with Land Trust Standards and Practices and completing a compliance audit in 2012.
- Corporate compliance: Continue to meet all corporate compliance requirements in a timely manner, including reviewing existing Articles of Incorporation and bylaws to ensure that they are aligned with current plans and programs.
- Board of Directors: Maintain a strong and diverse board of directors to *govern and support* the organization with a committee structure, meeting schedule, written board member responsibilities and board recruitment, orientation and evaluation strategies that encourage engagement and support of WWLT's strategic plan.
- Staffing: Maintain an energetic staff with the skills and abilities needed to *lead, manage and implement* WWLT's programs and operations. This includes evaluating the executive director position along with all other current staff positions. Review, revise and document existing personnel policies and procedures as needed.
- Office operations: Ensure that WWLT has an office and/or presence in a location(s) best suited to carry out its programs and operations with the materials and systems needed to professionally and competently support its work.
- Evaluation and planning: Create and implement annual plans consistent with this strategic plan, while continually evaluating WWLT's ability to ethically and responsibly achieve its goals. Prepare contingency plans for the care of WWLT's land and conservation easements. Review this overall strategic direction annually or as circumstances require with an extensive review anticipated in 3-5 years.

## MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

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*Success is more permanent when you achieve it without destroying your principles.*  
Walter Cronkite

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*Success isn't final.  
Failure isn't fatal.  
Change is inevitable.*  
Wisconsin Farmland Conservancy Board Member quoting Coach Don Schula in 1993.

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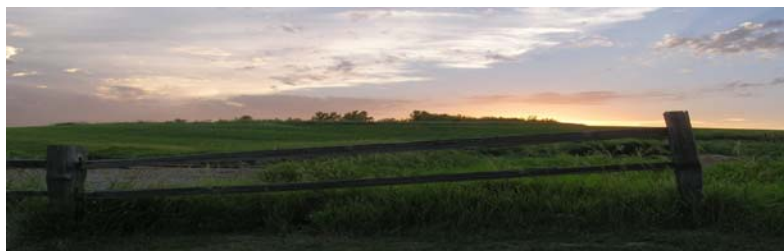
As West Wisconsin Land Trust moves forward, its success will be measured in the short term largely by its continued existence.

However, long-term success must be measured in terms of the continued existence of the conservation values on the lands WWLT has protected. Indicators of this ultimate conservation success might include:

- Cumulative acres of land protected as a measure of the scale of our conservation impact.
- Percent of conservation easements monitored annually and number of easement violations successfully resolved as measures of our sustained commitment to provide stewardship of the land.
- Amount of funding available to WWLT programs and operations as a measure of our ability to work at the scale needed to protect the lands of western Wisconsin.

While these metrics are indirect measures of conservation success, they are good proxies that will enable us to mark our progress towards a new future.

And as we move forward, WWLT will refine these measures to better reflect WWLT's sustainability and the impact of its activities and programs.



**APPENDIX**  
**WEST WISCONSIN LAND TRUST CONSERVATION PROJECTS**

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**LAKE SUPERIOR COASTAL PLAIN**

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

***Hanson-Helske, Douglas County***

Four conservation easements protect 878 acres of surrogate grassland, shrub-carr wetland and boreal forest on the Amnicon River near Lake Superior.

NATURE PRESERVES

***Bluff Creek, Douglas County***

Two acquisitions protect 95 acres of wetland and boreal forest on Bluff Creek. Open for low-impact public use including hunting, trapping, hiking and skiing. On-going water quality sampling

TRANSFERRED PROPERTIES

***Makela, Douglas County***

3.5-acre wetland and forest property transferred to School District of Superior for use as an education site.

**NORTHWOODS**

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

***Aldrian, Sawyer County***

320 acres of mature forest and wild lakes highlight this project in the Birchwood Moraine Lakes Conservation Opportunity Area, and was executed by the Aldrian family through three separate conservation easements.

***Axhandle Lake, Chippewa County***

Over 4,000 feet of protected frontage on Axhandle Lake graces this 47-acre forested property. An unnamed wild lake on the property contains an additional 4,000 feet.

***Brill-Scott, Douglas County***

A wild bog lake and mixed northern hardwoods occupy this 127-acre property near the Amnicon River.

***Buckman, Washburn County***

Over 1,600 feet of frontage on Gull Lake is protected by this 37-acre forested and wetland property.

***Camp Jackpine, Douglas County***

Formerly a boy's camp, this 74-acre property and an adjacent 5-acre property now functions as a corporate retreat and conserves 2,000 feet of frontage on Bond Lake, a Wisconsin Outstanding Resource Water.

***Clark, Polk County***

First of three projects on Alabama Lake protecting 32 acres and 1,700 feet of forested lake frontage.

***County Line Lake, Sawyer County***

This 27-acre property protects 2,600 feet of shoreline on County Line Lake, and is the second project within the Birchwood Canoe Area.

***Dalleska, Polk County***

The protection of this 80-acre red oak and sugar maple forest created a forest block over 300 acres in size and contains the springs and headwaters of the Trade River.

***Deer Lake, Sawyer County***

This 155-acre forested and wetland project protects over one mile of frontage on Deer Lake. The McMillin and Stockman families protected the two properties through two separate conservation easements of 80 and 75 acres, respectively.

***Dickinson, Polk County***

This 240-acre property contains an impressive mixed northern hardwood stand as well as tamarack-black spruce bog and open meadow. Half of the shoreline of Big (Pogo) Lake, a wild lake, is located within the project boundaries.

***Donohue, Taylor County***

360 acres of mixed coniferous and deciduous forest dominate this property, which contains 3/4 mile of Levitt Creek.

***Freitag, Sawyer County***

This 158-acre forested property contains several small wild lakes, and borders over 300 additional conservation easement acres in the Birchwood Moraine Lakes Conservation Opportunity Area.

***Forest Trust, Clark County***

This project protects 80 acres of southern dry-mesic forest, a northern occurrence of this ecological community type.

***Gaier, Rusk County***

Conserved as a working forest, this 360-acre property is adjacent to Josie Creek County Park, near the Flambeau River.

***Gillette, Washburn County***

This 120-acre forested property is located on Loyhead Lake, and is part of the Washburn County Forest – Birchwood Canoe Area.

***Griggs, Douglas County***

This 37 acre property contains over 1,500 feet of frontage on Whitefish Lake, a Wisconsin Outstanding Resource Water.

***Hoeft, Burnett County***

45-acre Tucker Lake is the centerpiece of this 208-acre forested and wetland property.

***Holmbeck, Barren County***

80-acre forested property on Cranberry Lake, considered a “wild lake” for the absence of shoreland development.

***Indian Point, Chippewa County***

Two separate conservation easements with the Mills and Kelly families protect over 5,800 feet of frontage on this narrow peninsula on Long Lake.

***Johnson-Hemshrot, Washburn County***

Packed with diversity, this 150-acre property contains a prairie, wild rice beds, a forested esker and a small lake.

***Karl, Polk County***

Second of three projects on Alabama Lake protecting 21 acres and 2,575 feet of forested lake frontage.

***Kracum (Herde Lake), Chippewa County***

Five conservation easements totaling 280 acres protect over 10,000 feet of frontage on Herde Lake. The forested properties are located within the Chippewa Moraine Lakes Conservation Opportunity Area.

***Kristo, Chippewa County***

215-acre property protects shoreline of Long Lake and old growth red oak forest. A portion of the property is further protected and managed as part of the North of North Shattuck State Natural Area.

***Lake Deborah, Douglas County***

This is the second project on Whitefish Lake. The 15-acre property contains 1,000 feet of frontage on Whitefish Lake and over 3,000 feet of frontage on Lake Deborah, a wild lake.

***Larrabee Lake, Chippewa County***

25 acres and 1/4 mile of frontage on Larrabee Lake make this unique property the cornerstone of a larger project that protects nearly the entire lake. This property contains a carry-in access to Larrabee Lake.

***Lewis, Chippewa County***

240 acres of Prime agricultural soils, small lakes and ponds located at the headwaters of the McCann Creek State Fishery Area

***Little Sissebagama, Sawyer County***

The 30-acre Frank Stout Wilderness Preserve (Island) is the crown jewel of Little Sissebagama Lake. The old-growth sugar maple forest on the island is a candidate for dedication as a state natural area.

***Lundberg, Polk County***

258-acre property along the South Fork of the Little Trade River contains a mosaic of upland and wetland communities and hosts a segment of the Ice Age Trail.

***Makela, Douglas County***

The headwaters of Blueberry Creek and Lake Nebagamon are located on this 130-acre forested property.

***Michaels, Burnett County***

This 250-acre property in the Oakland jack pine – oak barrens area contains 600 feet of frontage on Gull Lake.

***Moersfelder, Polk County***

A large emergent wetland, planted prairie and remnant oak savanna are protected by this 101-acre project.

***Moon, Marathon County***

This property gift to West Wisconsin Land Trust was protected by conservation easement and later conveyed to a private party. The 38.5-acre property contains a mosaic of small wetlands and woodlots and is located in the Village of Moon.

***Olson, Burnett County***

This 80-acre property consists of oak and jack pine barrens and sedge meadow wetlands sandwiched between Burnett County Forest and the Fish Lake Wildlife Management Area.

***Olson, Sawyer County***

Completed in cooperation with the landowner and The Nature Conservancy, this 2-acre project protects 300 feet of shoreline on Whitefish Lake.

***One Buck Lake, Douglas County***

The namesake lake for this 80-acre project is a wild bog lake amidst an adjacent sphagnum wetland complex and mixed deciduous forest.

***Place in the Woods, Washburn County***

This 167-acre property contains half the shoreline of frontage of Deer Lake (over one mile), and is the saving grace for the lake.

***Plochman, Chippewa County***

A 1.5-acre island accompanies this 4-acre project on Pine Lake. All total, the small project protects over 2,000 feet of lake frontage.

***Radke, Washburn County***

Executed through two conservation easements, this 145-acre forested property contains two wild lakes, the largest of which is 20 acres.

***Ravenholt, Polk County***

320 acres of heavily forested uplands, wetlands and wild lakes on the property are indicative of glacial moraine topography.

***Richey, Polk County***

Lying on the edge of the Western Prairie, this 282-acre property contains several pothole lakes important for waterfowl and shorebirds.

***Sandin, Polk County***

Executed through two conservation easements, this project protects 143 acres and over 4,500 feet of frontage on the Apple River.

***Snake Lake, Chippewa County***

Several small wild lakes are located entirely within this 155-acre forested property within the Chippewa Moraine Lakes Conservation Opportunity Area.

***Southwoods and Prairie House, Douglas County***

Over 300 acres of oak and pine barrens are protected by two conservation easements in the watershed of Bond Lake.

***Stauner-Roloff, Barren County***

This 56-acre property consists of agricultural and forested land and protects the viewshed of the Cattail State Trail.

***Swedberg, Burnett County***

A 15-acre wild lake highlights this 116-acre forested property in the barrens of northern Burnett County.

***Thaler Barron Easements, Barron County***

Three properties in the Forest Transition Ecological Landscape total 241 acres. Habitats range from dense sugar maple forest conifer to reclaimed agricultural land.

***Thaler Chippewa Easements, Chippewa County***

Nine properties located in the North Central Forest Ecological Landscape total 1,182 acres. Habitat includes mixed deciduous forest, reclaimed agricultural fields, river frontage and diverse wetlands.

***Thaler Rusk Easements, Rusk County***

Two projects totaling 220 acres protect shrub-carr and tamarack wetland, planted pines and small woodlots.

***Thaler, Taylor County***

Mink Creek meanders through 121 acres of hardwood forest and groves of relict eastern hemlock.

***Toscano, Barron County***

This 85-acre project protects the remainder of Cranberry Lake. The property also includes open meadow, diverse wetlands and forest.

***Triple Lakes, Chippewa County***

Contrary to the name, this 672-acre forested property protects all or part of no less than ten lakes including Henneman, the Triple Lakes, and several wild lakes. The project contains several reserved home sites and is WWLT's largest single conservation easement.

***Upper Chain Lake, Douglas County***

This 39-acre wild lake and sphagnum bog complex was transferred to Douglas County as an addition to the county forest system.

***Wausau Genesis, Burnett County***

Oak barrens occupy the majority of this 80-acre property overlooking the Wood River.

***Wayward Beaver Lodge, Chippewa County***

Complex conservation development protects the shoreline of Long Lake. The 317-acre project also includes old growth red oak forest, numerous wild lakes, a state historical site, and a segment of the Ice Age Trail.

***Williamson, Polk County***

Nesting trumpeter swans grace a large prominent wetland on this 200-acre forested property which drains to the Apple River.

**NATURE PRESERVES**

***Bass Lake, Burnett County***

Ralph Waldo Emerson once owned this 28-acre forested property on Bass Lake. A wetland riparian area and forested ephemeral wetlands are home to a diverse amphibian assemblage.

***Lake 26 Heron Rookery, Burnett County***

This 9-acre preserve protects an active great blue heron rookery and the sensitive shoreline of Lake 26 Springs. The project was a cooperative endeavor with the citizens of Lake 26.

***Love Lake, Burnett County***

Four projects totaling 303 acres and over 2 miles of frontage on Love and Falk Lakes. The preserve includes the Sigurd Olson Memorial Forest, a cooperative project with The Nature Conservancy. The properties contain a mosaic of diverse lacustrine wetlands and mixed deciduous uplands.

**TRANSFERRED PROPERTIES**

***Cedar Creek Wetlands, Chippewa County***

Cedar Creek flows through this 720-acre forested and wetland property into Chain Lake, a Wisconsin Outstanding Resource Water. The property was conveyed to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

***Dog Island Lake, Chippewa County***

This 120-acre acquisition was a cooperative project with Chippewa County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Glacial moraine features highlight the property, which includes challenging cross-country ski trails and a warming house. The property is managed by Chippewa County.

***Hildur Lake, Bayfield County***

This 270-acre forested property on Hildur Lake was transferred to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and is an addition to the Inch Lake State Natural Area.

***Larrabee Lake Wetlands, Chippewa County***

Originally part of the Kristo conservation easement, this 126-acre property was donated to WWLT and eventually conveyed to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and is managed as part of the North of North Shattuck State Natural Area.

***Otter Point (Alabama Lake), Polk County***

Third project on Alabama Lake protecting 12 acres and 2,100 feet of shoreline. Property conveyed to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER BLUFFLANDS

### CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

***Anderson, Pepin County***

Towering over the Village of Stockholm and the Mississippi River, this 52-acre oak savanna and prairie property contains a diverse prairie flora and understory.

***Arndt, St. Croix County***

Prime agricultural soils and a pothole wetland are preserved on this 60-acre property in the Lower St Croix Uplands Conservation Opportunity Area.

***Atlee, Pierce County***

The first of four easements in the Pine Creek headwaters, this 81-acre transaction paved the way for the ultimate acquisition, protection and restoration of Pine Creek.

***Bechard, Eau Claire County***

Sherman Creek flows through this 99-acre agricultural property on the outskirts of Eau Claire. The property adjoins Sherman Creek Park.

***Bengston, Pierce County***

Forested hills and agricultural fields provide views of the Mississippi River pastoral countryside.

***Bergman, St. Croix County***

The 30-acre forested property provides valuable habitat in the rapidly vanishing countryside near Hudson.

***Bibby, Trempealeau County***

Rock outcrops, oak savanna and small dry prairie remnants on this 80-acre property tower over the lower Black River valley.

***Bixby, Pierce County***

700 feet of Pine Creek and scenic views along the Wisconsin Rustic Road are protected by this 20-acre project.

***Brown, Dunn County***

The corridor and floodplain of Gilbert Creek are protected in this 47-acre project.

***Brown, Polk County***

Exposed basalt bedrock creates forest glades and their unique associated plant community on this 135-acre property.

***Charlesworth, Buffalo County***

Overlooking Deer Creek valley, this 70-acre property protects dry prairie and oak savanna.

***Christenson, Pierce County***

Wetland and forest along the headwaters of Goose Creek are protected by this 40-acre project.

***Damro, Dunn County***

Floodplain forest and 4,000 feet of frontage on the Red Cedar River are protected by this 105-acre property.

***David Hansen Memorial Landing, Jackson County***

This 1-acre project provides parking and canoe access to the Black River and was completed in partnership with the Friends of the Black River.

***Eagle Peak, Buffalo County***

Two conservation easements protect 536 acres of the Eagle Peak bluff complex. Towering over the Buffalo River valley, the project consists of open fields, small bluff prairies, rolling forestland and steep bluffs.

***Eau Claire Rod & Gun Club, Eau Claire County***

A premier oak barrens restoration is home to Karner blue butterflies and is actively underway on this 85-acre property.

***Farmington Easements, Polk County***

Seven properties total nearly 300 acres bordering federal land and Standing Cedars Land Conservancy. Habitat consists of prairie, forest and small agricultural fields.

***Fernholz, Pepin County***

Acquired to protect the Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area from development pressure along its boundary, this 272-acre easement also protects Prime agricultural soils and Mississippi River bluffs.

***Flory, Pierce County***

An unusual plant community exists on this 120-acre forest and farm property near the site of the Rock Elm Disturbance (meteor crater).

***Freiberg, St. Croix County***

Unique caves are protected within this 95-acre property along Cady Creek. The project also provides public fishing access.

***Gove, Polk County***

This easement further protects this 23-acre property in the viewshed of the St Croix River.

***Hale, Pierce County***

Little Trimble Creek flows through this 120-acre property for over 1/2 mile. Steep bluffs tower over a scenic forested valley.

***Hedin, Pepin County***

A majestic forested bluff overlooking the Mississippi River was protected by this 56-acre project adjacent to the Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area.

***Henke, Eau Claire County***

An agreement with the Beaver Creek Reserve allows education use and citizen science on this 240-acre property conserved with two conservation easements.

***Hines, Pierce County***

The Rush River winds through this 270-acre forested property for 3/4 mile to its confluence with Cave Creek.

***Indigo Ponds, St Croix County***

This 23-acre conservation development set-aside project protects two forested ponds adjacent to a federal Waterfowl Production Area.

***Jahr, St. Croix County***

Protection of 30 acres of forest and field while allowing limited development were the goals of this 40-acre project.

***Johnson, Buffalo County***

A 25-year stream easement on Trout Creek allows for public access and restoration.

***Johnston, Pepin County***

The forested flanks of Lima Bluff are protected by this 75-acre project which includes a planted prairie.

***Jost, Buffalo County***

The forested bluffs and agricultural fields of War Eagle Hollow are conserved in this 377-acre project on the headwaters of Mill Creek.

***Kral, Pierce County***

This 38-acre forested project is highly visible to passersby on Highway 29, and drains to the Rush River.

***Krohn, Pierce County***

This 49-acre forested property along the Pine Creek valley Wisconsin Rustic Road consists of steep rock outcrops and white pine relicts.

***Kuehl, Dunn County***

A picturesque 100-acre ridge-top farm is protected on this property overlooking the Eau Galle River valley.

***Lausted, Dunn County***

Coveted sandstone hills are protected in this 200-acre farm and forest property near the Hoffman Hills Recreation Area.

***Mittag, Eau Claire County***

One-quarter mile of frontage on a wild segment of the Eau Claire River is protected by this 92-acre forested property.

***Nelson (Gilman), Pierce County***

A sugar maple and red oak forest dominate this 100-acre property, part of complex of conservation easements which total nearly 400 acres.

***Nelson (Salem), Pierce County***

Steep forested hills flank the side of Morgan Coulee on this 90-acre property.

***O'Connor, Buffalo County***

A keystone prairie restoration highlights this 427-acre property overlooking the Waumandee Creek valley.

***Olson, Pierce County***

A picturesque 200-acre Century Farm conserved by three siblings.

***Pesek-Herriges, Barron County***

The headwaters of Jones Creek, a Class I trout stream, are protected by this 80-acre forested property.

***Peterson, Pierce County***

This 65-acre forest and prairie property is managed as Silkesnas, a nature preserve and leadership center.

***Peterson, St. Croix County***

Conserved via two conservation easements, this 80-acre forest and farm property provides hands-on learning and nature education for school children.

***Pierce County Priority Farmland, Pierce County***

Four conservation easements purchased with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture protect Prime agricultural soils on 777 acres, including a sesquicentennial farm and the headwaters of the Big River.

***Pine Lake, St Croix County***

Three conservation easements by three landowners protect 42 acres and 3,400 feet of frontage on Pine Lake.

***Powers, St. Croix County***

This 40-acre property contains a restored prairie and vegetative buffer along Tenmile Creek and provides habitat adjacent to a federal Waterfowl Production Area.

***Preston Trust, Chippewa County***

Agricultural fields and a restored wetland on this 80-acre property provide habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl, as well as connectivity to the nearby Hallie Marsh Wildlife Area.

***Salwey-White, Buffalo County***

Agricultural fields, oak savanna and dry prairie overlook the Waumandee Creek valley on this 142-acre property.

***Scharr, Buffalo County***

An active timber rattlesnake den occupies the rock outcrops on this 40-acre oak savanna property.

***Sherman Creek Park, Eau Claire County***

The Town of Union protected this 30-acre forested park on the outskirts of Eau Claire. Heavily used by neighbors and school children, the park offers a picnic area and trails along Sherman Creek.

***Siler, Dunn County***

WWLT's first conservation easement project intended to keep this rolling 140-acre farm in agricultural use.

***Smith, Adams County***

Located in the Wisconsin River watershed, this 160-acre farm property contains scenic country views near the Wisconsin Dells.

***Starr Wood, St. Croix County***

A conservation development set aside this forested 28-acre property on the banks of the St Croix River.

***Swenson, Pierce County***

Two conservations protect 120 acres of rolling farm fields and deciduous woodlots.

***Trenton Island, Pierce County***

Three transactions completed in partnership with the Minnesota Land Trust and the City of Red Wing protects 36 acres of shoreland habitat and the scenic view of this Mississippi River island.

***Twin Bluffs, Buffalo County***

Two prominent rock faces tower over the Mississippi River backwaters on this 177-acre project. Bluff prairie and oak savanna are home to timber rattlesnakes.

***Thaler Buffalo Easements, Buffalo County***

Rugged Mississippi bluffs landscape is conserved through five conservation easements totaling 863 acres. Habitat consists of steep forested hills, dry prairie and reclaimed agricultural fields.

***Thaler, Dunn County***

Planted pines and deciduous forest occupy this 75 acre property near the Red Cedar River.

***Thaler, Eau Claire***

Steep forested bluffs and reclaimed agricultural fields on this 167-acre property protect the headwaters of Hoyts Creek.

***Thaler, Jackson County***

This 130-acre property consists of a scenic forested and wetland valley highly visible from Interstate 94.

***Thaler Trempealeau Easements, Trempealeau County***

Six properties total 1,168 acres of rolling forestland, scenic open meadow and reclaimed agricultural fields.

***Thielke-Mastey, Dunn County***

Three siblings preserved this rugged 138-acre forested property in honor of their mother, who cherished wild and natural places.

***Timmerman, Pierce County***

This mixed deciduous 40-acre forested property provides habitat and open space.

***Timmerman, St. Croix County***

Scenic 30-acre forested property near the developing Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

***Trenton Island, Pierce County***

Three transactions completed in partnership with the Minnesota Land Trust and the City of Red Wing protects 36 acres of shoreland habitat and the scenic view of this Mississippi River island.

***Turner, Pierce County***

This project provides restoration rights and public fishing access to the Eau Galle River, which flows through this 420-acre forested and agricultural property for over one mile.

***Twin Bluffs, Buffalo County***

Two prominent rock faces tower over the Mississippi River backwaters on this 177-acre project. Bluff prairie and oak savanna are home to timber rattlesnakes.

***Walker/Keefe, Pierce County***

A scenic vineyard occupies this 40-acre property in the Pine Creek valley.

***Wilcox, Pierce County***

A restored prairie, deciduous forest and wetland flood control project protect habitat on this 84-acre property in the Trimbelle River watershed.

***Wise, Eau Claire County***

Eau Claire River and Rush Creek frontage are protected by this 60-acre forested property adjacent to the Eau Claire County Forest.

**NATURE PRESERVES**

***Devil's Punchbowl, Dunn County***

Interesting rock formations and a waterfall attract visitors year-round to this Menomonie landmark. The 3-acre property also contains a short trail, stairway and a small, planted prairie.

***Mary E. Fitz Memorial Park, Eau Claire County***

This 80-acre preserve on the outskirts of the City of Eau Claire was made possible due to the generosity of the late Mary Fitz. WWLT's trusteeship and present custodial responsibility for the property includes maintaining the buildings and property and planning for future public use. The property consists of open former agricultural land, pine plantation, deciduous forest and the West Creek riparian area.

***Rush River Preserve, Pierce County***

One-quarter mile of frontage on the Rush River provides habitat for trout and access for trout fishermen on this 15-acre property.

**TRANSFERRED PROPERTIES**

***Keil Birch Creek Nature Preserve, Dunn County***

A local coalition of neighbors and concerned citizens brought this important 28-acre forested property to the forefront. Located along one-quarter mile of the Red Cedar River, the site contains the outlet of Birch Creek. The site is managed as part of the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area.

***Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area, Pepin County***

Key bluff landmark overlooking the Mississippi River is the home to nesting peregrine falcons, timber rattlesnakes, and threatened plant species. The 248-acre property contains the namesake promontory and legendary site of a lovesick Native American woman who plunged to her death. The property is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

***Martell Rush River Park, Pierce County***

Small 2-acre community park was conveyed to the Town of Martell and provides important access to the Rush River.

***Pine Creek Fishery Area, Pierce County***

Executed via two separate acquisitions, this 233-acre property was conveyed to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The restoration this Class I brook trout stream has received considerable attention over the years and made the National Fish Habitat Action Plan “Top 10 Waters to Watch” list in 2009.

***Red Cedar Cut-Off, Dunn County***

A strong coalition of local conservation organizations made the acquisition of this 150-acre property possible. The forested floodplain and wetland complex contains several miles of frontage on the Red Cedar River and provides important access for ice fishing and waterfowl hunting. The property is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

***Simon Prairie, St. Croix County***

This 5-acre tallgrass prairie remnant is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as part of the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area.

***Wert Family Nature Preserve, Polk County***

Located within the Upper St Croix River Conservation Opportunity Area, this 450-acre forested bluff was conveyed to the City of St Croix Falls and contains a segment of the Ice Age Trail.