



West Wisconsin Land Trust | **2009 Annual Report**



WEST WISCONSIN
LAND TRUST



WEST WISCONSIN LAND TRUST

*Our Mission:
Preserving Western Wisconsin's
Natural Character*

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*Front Cover: Pine Creek Valley in Pierce County
Photo by Bruce Thayer*

*Back Cover: Great River Road in Pepin County
Photo by Bruce Thayer*



*WWLT staff at the Sherman Creek BioBlitz, Left to Right:
Britta Kelly, Edith Kadlec, Michelle Copley, Jeanette
Kelly, Rick Gauger, Rick Remington, Jane Anklam,
and Bill Hogseth.*

Letter from the Executive Director

What is the impact of your giving to West Wisconsin Land Trust? How do you measure success through your membership dollars? Is it simply in the numbers of acres protected? Feet of shoreline preserved? Habitat for threatened and endangered species saved? Or is the impact beyond tangible measure?

Seeing the smiles and excited wonder of children making new nature discoveries, finding better cover and more 9" brook trout in a stream than the year before, looking across the lake and not seeing roof tops right up to the shoreline, knowing that the farm in your valley is going to stay available for agriculture forever. These are just a few examples of your membership gift at work. Your gift doesn't simply change today. It sets things into motion for a lifetime, for good, for the future.

As a member of West Wisconsin Land Trust, you help provide important public benefits – fresh water, clean air, local food, and wild and scenic places to explore and enjoy. For 21 years, you have carried our mission forward "to preserve western Wisconsin's natural character" through private land conservation. You have permanently protected over 26,000 acres. You understand that conservation matters, and that the future of western Wisconsin is being shaped by the decisions you make today. Thank you for your decision to support West Wisconsin Land Trust. Our success is for you and because of you.



Richard E. Gauger
Executive Director



Landowner Marjean Hoeft and WWLT Executive Director Rick Gauger celebrate the permanent conservation of Tucker Lake.

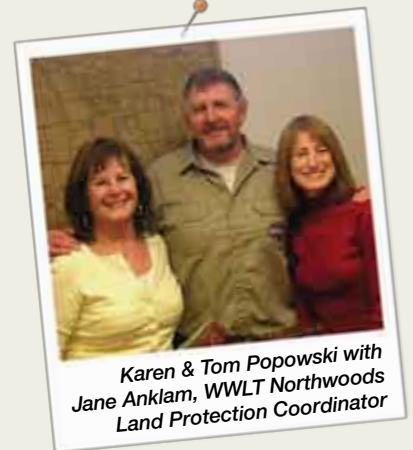
2009 WWLT Conservation Highlights



Tucker Lake, Burnett County



Sigurd Olson Memorial Forest,
Burnett County



Karen & Tom Popowski with
Jane Anklam, WWLT Northwoods
Land Protection Coordinator

Upper Chain Lake, Douglas County

Tom Popowski, and his wife Karen, wanted to see their 39-acre property on Upper Chain Lake go into the Douglas County Forest program. West Wisconsin Land Trust was asked to help facilitate the purchase by arranging a bargain sale, and then transferring the property to the County for management as a Special Use Area. Surrounded by working forests, the wild lake is a haven for diverse wildlife species. Locally noted for its nesting waterfowl habitat, the site is also host to wetland orchids, threatened predaceous beetles and exemplifies a natural community of importance.

Susan Arndt Memorial, Dunn County

The three children of the late Susan Arndt protected this rugged and forested 138-acre property in northern Dunn County in honor of their mother. Born in Wisconsin, but having spent the majority of her life in Alaska, Susan remained connected to her roots and committed to the protection of her Wisconsin land. Her daughter Aasta declared, "We are conserving this land because we all feel strongly it is what our mom would have wanted."

Prairie House, Douglas County

While doing estate planning, Jim Liautaud requested West Wisconsin Land Trust's assistance. He wanted to pass on this 180-acre property, consisting of a large block of northern dry forest, to his children, but he wanted it to stay just as it is today. The prairie house, along with a 1700s authentic trapper cabin, is surrounded by a 20-acre sand prairie of big bluestem, little bluestem and indian grass, and several large spruce-tamarack wetlands. The house and cabin are the only two residences on the property. Indicated as globally rare in Wisconsin, the unique barrens ecosystem and its fragile sandy soils are home to Kirtland's warbler and Sharp-tailed grouse, among numerous other species.

Tucker Lake, Burnett County

As one of the few remaining wild lakes in Burnett County, Tucker Lake and its surrounding 208 acres of riparian upland and wetlands will remain wild forever. Its shallow placid waters, and a diverse assemblage of plants make this 50-acre lake an ideal home for nesting osprey, bald eagle and common loons. "It feels like walking on a dense, wet sponge, bouncing as you walk atop a sphagnum bog full of life," said property owner Marjean Hoeft. "Pitcher plants, wild cranberry and other plants are hidden among hummocks of peat." Located within the Yellow River Land Legacy Place, the wildlife habitat and water quality benefits of this project are important on a local and regional scale.

Apple River, Polk County

Cool, forested springs feed the Apple River from the most recent addition to the Sandin Family legacy. The 143-acre property protects 4,500 feet along the Apple River, and completes the 43-acre effort begun in 2003 by father and daughter, Raymond and Elaine. In addition to providing habitat for the whip-poor-will and snapping turtle, the Sandins have preserved a spectacular viewshed along this popular river.

Cedar Creek Wetlands, Chippewa County

A vast 720-acre wetland complex between Chain Lake and Long Lake occupies the site of stagnant ice, left during the waning days of the Wisconsin glaciation. The Cedar Creek wetlands, in Chippewa County, are home to numerous waterfowl, short-eared owls, spawning musky, walleye and northern pike, and diverse populations of reptiles and amphibians. This acquisition was made possible through the assistance of local, County, State and Federal conservation organizations. WWLT intends to transfer the protected property to the Wisconsin DNR.

Camp Jackpine, Douglas County

Camp Jackpine lies on the shores of crystal clear Bond Lake in southern Douglas County. Once a boys camp, the 2,000 feet of shoreline and 79 acres of riparian upland is now protected from improper residential lakeshore development through the wishes of Jim Liautaud. Bond Lake is considered an Outstanding Resource Water by the State of Wisconsin, and is home to nesting teal and mallards. The upland habitat serves the needs of the red crossbill, Blanding's turtle and prairie skink.

Trout Creek, Buffalo County

Thanks to the generosity of Barry and Carol Johnson, a coalition of committed partners has initiated the first phase of restoration on Trout Creek, north of Alma. The Johnsons donated a stream bank easement to West Wisconsin Land Trust, enabling restoration of the creek and permitting fishing access for the public. The small brook trout stream drains into the Buffalo River. Maintaining clean and cold water is essential for trout survival, and ensures lasting benefits downstream. Partners include Alma Rod and Gun Club, Nelson Rod and Gun Club, Buffalo County, Trout Unlimited, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Birchwood Lakes, Sawyer County

The Birchwood Lakes region of southwest Sawyer County holds a treasure trove of forested hills, kettle lakes, bogs and wetlands. Rick and Roberta Freitag were well aware of the significance of their property when they signed their second conservation agreement to protect this significant natural resource. The 158-acre property contains six wild lakes, and borders additional conserved land as well as Sawyer County Forest land. Large forested blocks like the Freitag property are crucial to the survival of species such as the Red-shouldered Hawk and Golden-winged Warbler.

Sigurd Olson Memorial Forest, Burnett County

With nearly a mile of Love Lake shoreline frontage, this 183-acre forested property is a spectacular example of the landscape cherished by the renowned writer and environmentalist, Sigurd Olson. Conveyed by Northland College to West Wisconsin Land Trust, the property comes with an endowment fund managed by The Nature Conservancy. The property was donated to provide a sanctuary for wildlife and outdoor educational activities. WWLT will partner with Northland College, the Love Lake Association, and The Nature Conservancy to fulfill the wishes of the James Otis family.

2009 WWLT Land Conservation Projects

Fee Simple Acquisition or Donation

Property	Acres	County	Resource
Cedar Creek Wetlands	720	Chippewa	Wetlands
Upper Chain Lake	39	Douglas	Wild Lake
Sigurd Olson Memorial Forest	183	Burnett	Forest on Love Lake
Southwoods	133	Douglas	Forest/Wetlands

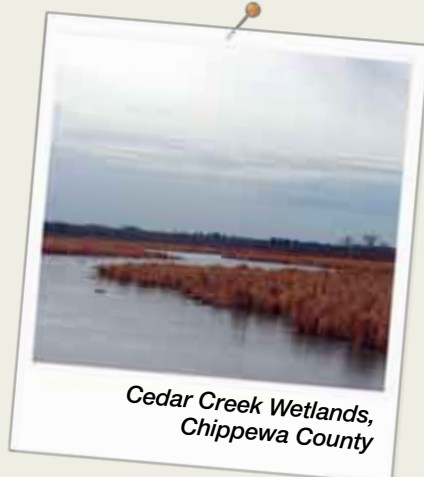
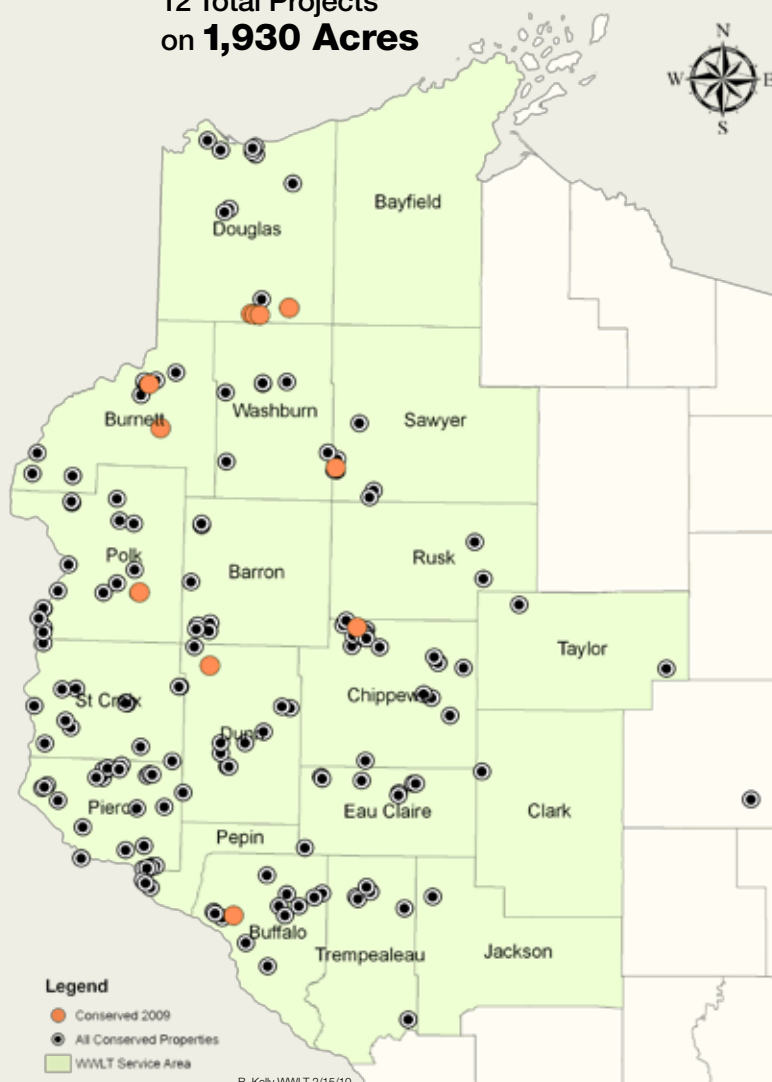
Conservation Easements

Property	Acres	County	Resource
Roberta Freitag	158	Sawyer	6 Wild Lakes
Susan Arndt Living Trust	138	Dunn	Forest
James and Grazina Liautaud	4.5	Douglas	Bond Lake Lots
Prairie House by Gabriel Inc.	174	Douglas	Forest/Prairie/Creek
Camp Jackpine by Gabriel Inc.	74	Douglas	Forest on Bond Lake
Marjean Hoeft	208	Burnett	Wild Lake - Tucker Lake
Elaine and Raymond Sandin	100	Polk	Apple River Frontage

Stream Bank Easement

Property	Feet	County	Resource
Barry and Carol Johnson	3,700	Buffalo	Trout Creek

12 Total Projects
on **1,930 Acres**



"West Wisconsin Land Trust preserves natural land for all of us to appreciate. We are proud stewards of our conserved land, continuing the family legacy and beliefs of my parents. We hope others in the area will stand up for the rights of the land. Once it is gone, there are only regrets."

- Myrna Buri, member since 2000



Menomonie High School students clearing trails at the Keil Birch Creek Nature Preserve on Earth Day



Child discovering what's inside Owl Offal at WWLT fall BioBlitz



Boys hunting insects in Sherman Creek at WWLT fall BioBlitz

2009 WWLT Stewardship and Education Highlights

Pine Creek

Our collaborative conservation efforts resulted in national recognition by a federal initiative. In 2009, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan listed Pine Creek as one of their "10 Waters to Watch." Pine Creek was the only Wisconsin waterway named to the list. Restored stream banks are enhancing the creek's population of Eastern Brook Trout.

Maiden Rock Bluff

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has helped accelerate restoration of the Maiden Rock Bluff oak savanna. Significant progress was made on the steep, south-facing hillsides, removing red cedars that had invaded the bluff prairies 150 years ago. This namesake bluff is beginning to transform to its former glory as it graces the Great River Road with its spectacular cliff line and majestic burr oaks. Oak savanna restoration will continue throughout 2010.

Keil Birch Creek Nature Preserve

The Friends of Birch Creek continue to have a strong presence in protecting and improving this natural oasis along the Red Cedar River.

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Nearly 1,000 acres have been placed under State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement agreements in Eau Claire and Jackson Counties with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The acreage will be planted to short grass prairie with a strong wild lupine component to attract the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly. Beginning in 2010, West Wisconsin Land Trust will work with UW-Eau Claire to monitor the effectiveness of the plantings, and the success of Karner blue butterfly colonization.

Red Cedar Cut-off

A 2009 Earth Day event with Menomonie High School students, Xcel Energy volunteers and West Wisconsin Land Trust members and staff made a positive impact on this riparian preserve. Participants planted trees, cleared hiking trails, constructed birdhouses, and assisted Xcel Energy in erecting a 70-foot tall osprey nesting platform.

Dog Island Lake

This wild and wooded property was conveyed to Chippewa County in 2009 for management and stewardship. The Friends of Hickory Ridge installed an additional 13 kilometers of new groomed ski trails.

Martell Rush River Park

This sweet roadside park was conveyed to the Town of Martell for future management. The park will continue to offer easy access to exceptional trout fishing on the Rush River, and provide families with an ideal place to picnic and enjoy nature.



Boys search for aquatic bugs in Sherman Creek at WWLT fall BioBlitz

Seedlings in the Outdoors

Nature is good for children! Just ask any of the 1,590 participants who enjoyed West Wisconsin Land Trust's Outdoor Education programs in 2009. Kids love dirt! They had fun digging for snails and bugs, chasing butterflies along the creek, and examining feathers, bones and stones under microscopes during a fall BioBlitz. Who knew that the small park next to their Eau Claire elementary school would reveal 261 different plant and animal species? Exploration activities with leaves, birds, frogs, fish and flowers allowed children to make their own nature discoveries. Dissecting owl pellets was a big hit!

WWLT also engaged local high school and college students in conservation issues through volunteer opportunities for restoration at four of our Nature Preserves. Activities ranged from clearing trails and removing invasive species to protecting wildlife habitat and erecting an osprey platform. Our future land stewards like being outside!

Devil's Punchbowl

The prairie planting of 2008 was kept mowed throughout the summer of 2009. Watch for prairie plants and native grasses to emerge in 2010!

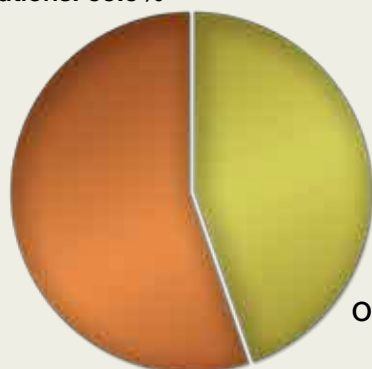
Easement Monitoring

Our hardworking Stewardship staff coordinated volunteers in an effort that resulted in 100% compliance of our conservation easement monitoring program. Staff and volunteers monitored over 175 properties in 2009.

2009 WWLT Financial Report

2009 Income

Contributions: 55.5%



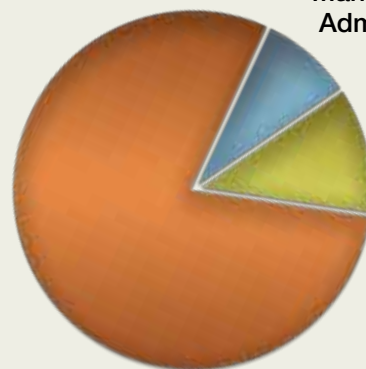
Other Income: 44.5%

Contributions.....	\$371,530
Other Income*.....	\$310,200
Total Income.....	\$681,730

**Includes investment income and other sources of income.*

2009 Expenses

Management & Administration: 8%



Fundraising: 11%

Program Services: 81%

Program Services.....	\$623,568
Management & Administration.....	\$ 65,910
Fundraising.....	\$ 85,430
Total Expenses.....	\$774,908

West Wisconsin Land Trust's fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31. These represent unaudited figures. Please contact us if you would like to receive a copy of our audited financial statements for 2009. WWLT's federal tax returns (990s) are available on Guidestar, which provides information on nonprofit organizations (www.guidestar.org).

2009 Board of Directors

President

John Goetz

President Emeritus

Curt Rohland

Vice President

Robert Cropp

Treasurer

Joe Kingman

Secretary

Bill Lamb

At Large

Linda Keefe

Laura Kracum

Other Members

Edward (Ned) Bixby

Larry Jost

Tish Keahna

Peter Vaughan

Jacob Wert

2009 Staff

Executive Director

Richard E. Gauger

Associate Director

Edith M. Kadlec

Land Program Coordinator

Rick Remington

Northwoods Land Protection Coordinator

Jane Anklam

Stewardship Manager

Bill Hogseth

Conservation Coordinator

Britta Kelly

Interim Outdoor Education Coordinator

Jeanette Kelly

Executive Assistant

Michelle Copley

Land Stewards

Bruce Moss

Dave Linderud

John Cole



West Wisconsin Land Trust has been awarded the Charities Review Council "Meets Standards" seal, indicating that WWLT has met all sixteen of the Council's Accountability Standards in Public Disclosure, Governance, Financial Activity and Fundraising.

View our report at www.smartgivers.org.

What is Your Legacy?

It began with birds. Great Blue Herons, to be exact. Greg and Barbara Miller got involved with West Wisconsin Land Trust five years ago when an eleven-acre property on their quiet lake in Burnett County went up for sale – with potential building sites. The Millers were instrumental in raising the funds to assist with the bargain sale purchase by West Wisconsin Land Trust. The land was permanently conserved, and the herons are no longer at risk of losing their nesting sites to houses and human impact.

“We are strong believers in doing all we can to assist with land preservation,” said Greg, President of Interstate Partners. “I am a commercial real estate developer, and I think it’s critical to balance these projects with maintaining natural land for future generations as well as our own. Barb and I love being at our cabin on Lake 26. It’s a beautiful part of western Wisconsin.”



Greg and Barbara Miller

“We’re looking forward to the herons’ return in the spring,” said Barb. “We know that someday, the heron colonies may disappear, but the land will remain because it’s preserved forever. Greg and I are passionate about preserving land. Our decision to support West Wisconsin Land Trust through a planned gift seemed like a natural choice that flowed from our values.”

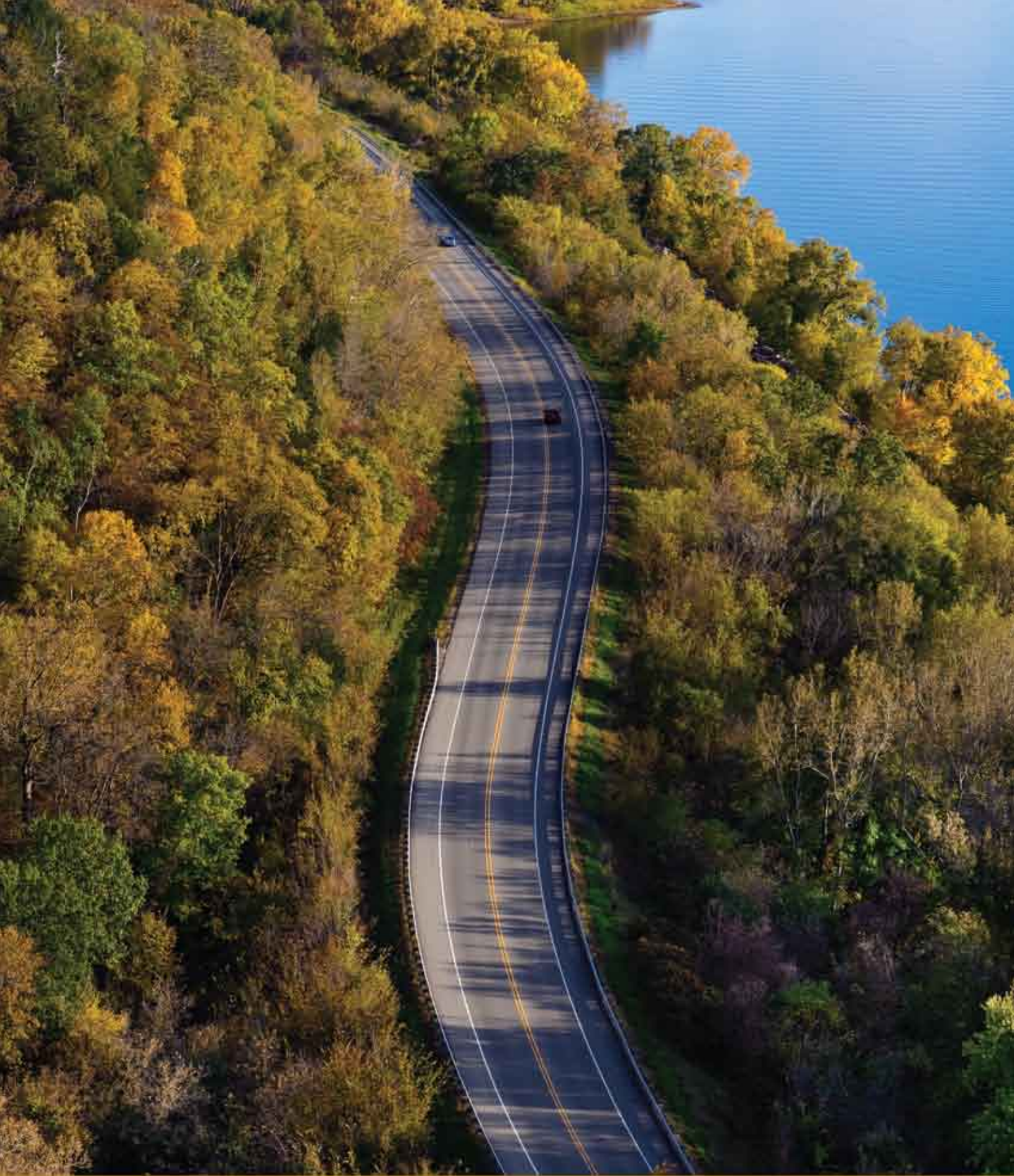
A Charitable Lead Trust allows the Millers to support West Wisconsin Land Trust for a period of years, and then pass the assets on to their heirs with little or no estate and gift taxes. “I think it’s a win-win situation for us and the Land Trust,” said Barb.

West Wisconsin Land Trust Executive Director Rick Gauger agrees. “The Millers’ planned gift is a significant addition to our operating support, and gives us the ability to meet the challenges and opportunities that the future brings.”

“We didn’t do this to be recognized,” Greg added. “We made a planned gift because land conservation is something we believe in.”

While bequests continue to be one of the most popular planned giving options, there are many ways to give to West Wisconsin Land Trust – on an annual or long-term basis, and each one has its distinct advantages. Your family’s financial situation is unique, and it’s important that you check with your financial and legal advisors to discuss the gift arrangement that’s right for you.

For more information on making a planned gift, please visit our website at wwlt.org or contact the WWLT office at **715-235-8850**.



**WEST WISCONSIN
LAND TRUST**

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