

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM: A GREAT VALUE FOR WISCONSIN



Photo courtesy of Driftless Area Land Conservancy

Argyle youth now have an incredible outdoor laboratory and classroom while the entire community can rest assured that this treasure will always be theirs.

Community Asset, Local Treasure

When landowners Alex and Mary Erickson decided to sell their 220-acre property nestled between the Pecatonica River and the Village of Argyle, the community was deeply concerned. As local resident John Soper described, "This property came up for sale and I thought, uh oh, are we going to have that access to it that we had before?" Luckily, the Ericksons were on the same page. "Seeing this land protected so that it will inspire kids and the Argyle community has always been our dream," Mary explains. And **because of funding from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, their local land trust, Driftless Area Land Conservancy (Driftless) was able to purchase the property – forever protecting the land and access for the public.**

Since the property became a permanent part of the Argyle community, Driftless and the community have worked together to truly make the most of all it has to offer. As Dave Clutter, Executive Director of Driftless, explains, **"The community support for this project has been heartwarming. It is clear that this place has touched the lives of many people already."** The Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin funded a kiosk and boardwalk to facilitate public access to the land, and Driftless has "been working hand-in-hand with the school in developing curriculum and using this property as an outdoor laboratory." Additionally, an anonymous foundation funded the purchase of binoculars, a computer, and a spotting scope for the school's environmental education activities.

And **the students are loving it.** "It's just better to be outside because you get more fresh air and there's just more to do," said high school student, Kaylie Berget. Her friend Taylor Mathys added, "During school it kinda feels cooped up and when we get to get outside, it's like you're free."

This special place will continue to enrich the lives of those around it, forever. Echoing the sentiment of fellow community members, local resident Neale Tollakson says "It's a great comfort to me to know that it's going to continue to be here for future generations."

Stewardship Project Location:
Lafayette County

Land Trust Project Leader:
Driftless Area Land Conservancy



www.driftlessconservancy.org

Why Stewardship Matters:

Locals have always felt this land was a part of their community's identity and now they always will, as they continue to have a place close to home to get outside, explore, and be active year round.

Students benefit from the incorporation of an outdoor laboratory and classroom.

Living near parks and green spaces has been shown to boost mental well-being and reduce stress.

"We couldn't have done this without the Knowles Nelson Stewardship grant. It paid for fifty percent of the appraised value of the property and that was significant. Without the Stewardship funding the deal wouldn't have gone through."
– Dave Clutter,
Executive Director,
Driftless Area Land Conservancy



Photo by Ivan LaBianca

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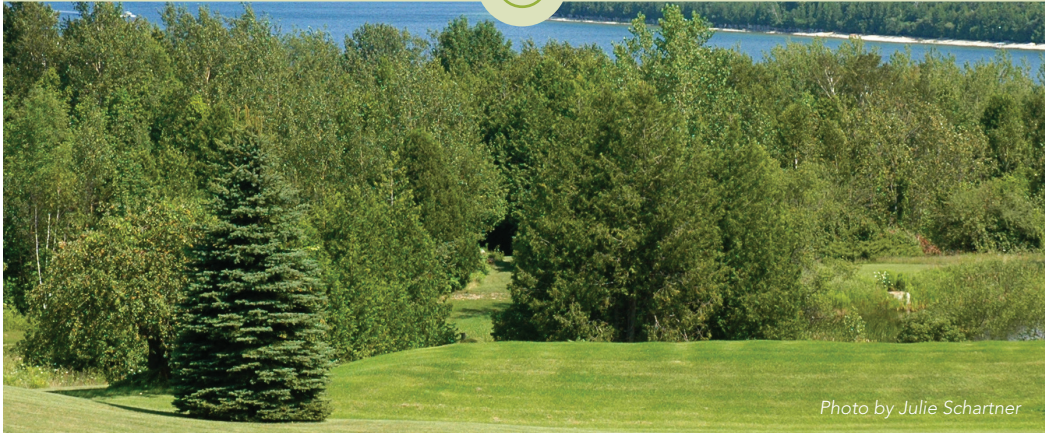


Photo by Julie Schartner

This 16-acre property and its famous view are now permanently protected as the Grand View Scenic Overlook and Park—a place for visitors to picnic, take photos, reflect, and explore.

Sense of Identity & Source of Revenue

Terrie Cooper, a lifelong resident of Door County, considered the view from the top of the bluff in the town of Liberty Grove, saying, “I grew up in Ellison Bay. This is my home. The Grand View property was an iconic view that we had all known and loved. It identified our community. I don’t think anybody ever realized that could change.”

From this Door County high point, one can see the sparkling waters of Green Bay, islands in the distance, and sheer bluffs topped by hardwood forests. Residents and visitors alike have enjoyed the scenic overlook for many years, often pulling over to the side of the road to snap photos or take in the majestic view. Only when construction of a 44-unit condominium development began on the property did people realize that this signature view could disappear.

Beyond the community concern, an economic threat also loomed. **Door County draws over two million visitors every year, most of whom come to enjoy the scenery and outdoor activities. Tourism accounts for almost \$300 million in annual revenue in Door County.** Though privately owned, the Grand View property was a de facto tourist attraction that drew thousands of visitors each year.

Concerned citizens approached Door County Land Trust to help find a solution. The land trust responded, marshaling its resources for what would be a five-year-long commitment to forge a path to preservation of the popular and iconic view. Their expertise in conservation and real estate led to successful grant-writing, private fundraising, and land purchase negotiations. They also partnered with the Town of Liberty Grove, which agreed to take eventual ownership of the land and manage it as a public park.

Through persistence and dedication, **the land trust was able to secure funding for the overlook property through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program** and the National Scenic Byway Program. The 16-acre property and its famous view are now permanently protected as the Grand View Scenic Overlook and Park—a place for visitors to picnic, take photos, reflect, and explore. Door County, known for its beautiful landscape, can rest assured that this destination spot will always remain.

Stewardship Project Location:
Ellison Bay

Land Trust Project Leader:
Door County Land Trust



www.doorcountylandtrust.org

Why Stewardship Matters:

Tourism accounts for almost \$300 million in annual revenue in Door County. Most folks come to enjoy the scenery and outdoor activities.

Money from tourism in Door County supports over 3000 jobs and \$64 million in labor income.

Visitor spending generated over \$33 million in state and local taxes in 2013.

“My wife Vonnie and I drive into Ellison Bay every day and always slow down to marvel at the remarkable view. This very special place has been naively taken for granted until the past few years when the potential for development became real.”

– Dave Callsen,
community member



Photo by Door County Community Foundation



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Camp Nawakwa will continue to shape the lives of Girl Scouts while the community gained a new source of revenue, place to explore, and destination spot!

Enriching Lives, Providing Livelihoods

Camp Nawakwa, in Chippewa County, is a summer camp that has been run by the Girl Scouts for many years. Located on a glacial lake and surrounded by hardwood forest, the camp **offers kids a place to experience the outdoors, to connect with nature** through activities like fishing, swimming, or hiking, and learn invaluable skills; all while building lifelong friendships. It has **shaped the lives of many.**

Sherry Jasper has been a part of the Girl Scouts for decades, starting as a young camper and later serving on the Board of Directors of a large Wisconsin Girl Scout council. "I grew up in Girl Scouting and the out-of-doors program, so taking care of the land and providing opportunities for others to learn from the land is a very strong value that I carry to this day," she says. So when a portion of Camp Nawakwa needed to be sold to support other programs and properties, Sherry and the Girl Scout leadership approached the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA) for help.

The IATA is a land trust whose mission is to create, support, and protect the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, a thousand-mile footpath that winds through the state. The trail provides access to some of the state's most beautiful natural areas, including privately-owned land near Camp Nawakwa. It also **helps feed Wisconsin's tourism industry, strengthening local economies.**

The IATA did not disappoint. They understood the vision and led the way to make it possible. They collaborated with Chippewa County to **secure funding through the state's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, which provided half the purchase price of the land and made this deal possible**, and with the Girl Scouts, who placed an easement on the land to ensure its permanent protection.

Because of this project, the camp will remain and have access to an extensive trail improved and maintained by the IATA. And that's not all. Because of this deal, the land is now managed as a public working forest, **supplying the county with jobs and a new source of revenue that also offers 110 magnificent acres of public recreational opportunities** like fishing, hiking, skiing, and much more.

Stewardship Project Location:
Chippewa County

Land Trust Project Leader:
Ice Age Trail Alliance



www.iceagetrail.org

Why Stewardship Matters:

Girl Scouts will continue to be involved in a program that has already shaped and enriched the lives of many.

It improves the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, which attracts an estimated 1.2 million visitors every year. Users contribute approximately \$113 million annually to Wisconsin's economy.

In 2014, Stewardship properties contributed 20% of Chippewa County Forest's \$680,000 income.

Locals now have a place close to home to get outside and be active year round.

"Thankfully, the Stewardship Program was available. Without this state funding, the Camp Nawakwa property would not have come under County ownership or become open to the public."

– Mike Dahlby, Chippewa County Forest Administrator



Photo by Davé Caliebe



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Photo by Brant Erickson

This Stewardship project protects a Wisconsin legacy while providing locals and visitors with a destination spot where they can explore, recreate and more.

A Legacy and Gift

John Muir, the nineteenth century naturalist, writer and advocate of wilderness preservation, is most often associated with California. He did, after all, spend much of his later life there, working tirelessly to protect its forests and mountains. But his early years were spent in Wisconsin, on his family's farm near Portage. It was there, amongst woods, prairies, wetlands and glacial lakes that he developed his lifelong passion for the natural world, which became a national legacy and inspiration.

Born in Scotland, Muir came with his family to the United States as a young boy. His parents settled in Marquette County in central Wisconsin and started farming. He later described his feelings at first seeing his new home: "This sudden splash into pure wilderness – baptism in Nature's warm heart – how utterly happy it made us!" and "Oh, that glorious Wisconsin wilderness!"

About a century later, Bessie McGwin Eggleston and her husband owned a farm in Marquette County that included 38 acres of what had once been part of Muir's family farm. Bessie felt a strong personal connection to her land and to nature, writing: "I think we have to help our children learn to appreciate and to enjoy the beauties of nature. If we can develop the appreciation for the loveliness which has been given us, we will also develop the desire to preserve these precious gifts for the heritage of future generations."

Bessie wished to have her entire 198 acre property permanently protected, to benefit future generations. Although she didn't live to see it, her wish was granted when her family sold the land to Natural Heritage Land Trust. While a number of organizations and donors chipped in, **the fulfillment of this dream wouldn't have been possible without funding from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.**

Now, a portion of the land will become part of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail while another will be added to the Fox River National Wildlife Refuge. **And all of it will be open to the public for hiking, hunting, cross-country skiing, fishing, trapping, and bird-watching;** a fitting tribute to both John Muir and Bessie McGwin Eggleston.

Stewardship Project Location:
Marquette County

Land Trust Project Leader:
Natural Heritage Land Trust



www.nhlt.org

Why Stewardship Matters:

It improves the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, which attracts an estimated 1.2 million visitors every year. Users contribute approximately \$113 million annually to Wisconsin's economy.

It supports Wisconsin's \$12 billion outdoor recreation industry, including our \$4 billion hunting and fishing industries.

This property bridges the Fox River National Wildlife Reserve and Muir Memorial County Park, providing locals and visitors the opportunity to experience 1400 acres of the land that shaped Muir.

"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."
– John Muir

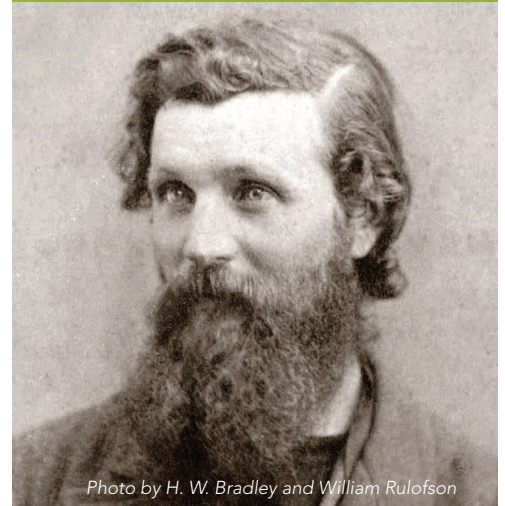
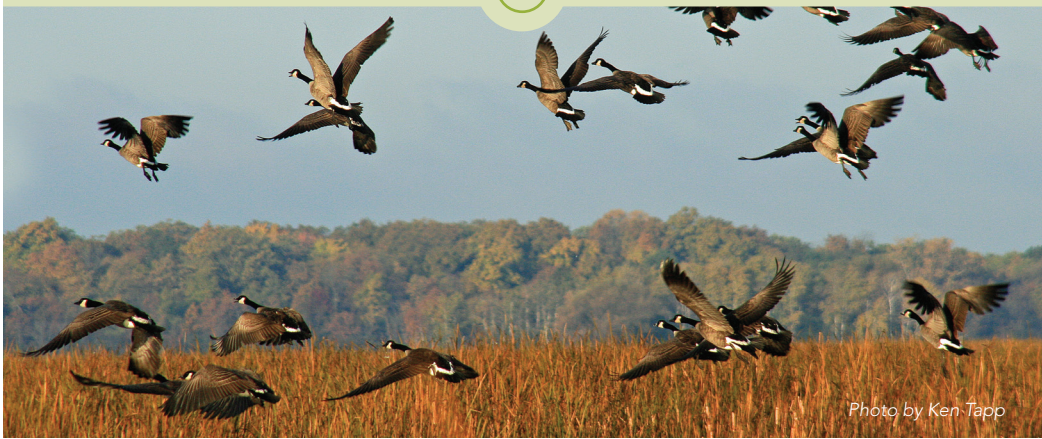


Photo by H. W. Bradley and William Rulofson



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This is a dream-come-true for the late Dr. Cutright and for over 200 species of migratory birds. It's good for the economy, water conservation and is truly a special place for all to enjoy.

Conserving Water, Benefitting Birds and Business

For many years, Dr. Noel Cutright envisioned the creation of a bird observatory along Lake Michigan. As a renowned birder and ornithologist, he knew that the western shore was a significant stopover point for birds on their migratory journeys, being part of a major flyway stretching from South America to Alaska. So when a golf course in the town of Belgium went on the market, he saw an opportunity.

Dr. Cutright encouraged the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWLT) to buy the golf course property, which included frontage on the Lake Michigan shoreline, and transform it into a migratory bird preserve. Skeptical about siting a nature preserve on such a manicured landscape, OWLT did their research while experts devised a plan to create several habitat types favorable to migrating birds. Ultimately, they were convinced of the ecological significance of the land and the viability of Dr. Cutright's vision and began fundraising for the project.

OWLT secured funding for half of the purchase price through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, making this incredible undertaking possible.

Then, collaborating with local birding groups, many local contractors, and people at every level of government, ten years of land restoration was accomplished in only eighteen months of intensive work.

Today, this special place is known as the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve. In addition to **providing 150 acres of safe cover for birds to rest and feed**, it offers a trail system that winds through the property, and is home to the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, another of Dr. Cutright's visions. It also **uses 10-20 million fewer gallons of water per year** than its predecessor. The nearby town of Belgium was planning to dig a new well and build a water tower to meet municipal demand, but since the Preserve was created, the town found it no longer needed more water production.

Stewardship Project Location:
Ozaukee County

Land Trust Project Leader:
Ozaukee Washington Land Trust



www.owlt.org

Why Stewardship Matters:

An additional 10-20 million gallons of water are now available for municipal use. In fact, the town of Belgium was planning to build a new water tower and no longer has to.

More than 47 million people in the US spend nearly \$41 billion on birding annually—generating around 666,000 jobs and \$13 billion in local, state, and federal tax revenue. 33% of these birders are Wisconsinites.

Birds help protect our food supply through pollination, seed dispersal, and by feeding on many of the insects that are a threat to agricultural crops.

One of Dr. Cutright's favorite quotes was this one by Rachel Carson:

"There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of birds. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature — the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter."



THE BENEFITS OF WISCONSIN'S LAND TRUSTS



Photo by Michael Anderson

This Stewardship project supports an economically viable forest, which creates jobs while ensuring access to outdoor recreation.

Keeping Forests Accessible for Timber & Recreation

Wisconsin is a leader in the forest products industry and our timberlands directly support the state's economy. **Funding from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program protects this valuable asset by limiting the subdivision of large forest properties** and complementing the active management of adjacent public forestlands.

Since the 1990s, Wisconsin has lost more than a quarter of a million acres of industrial forestland—much of which is now in small, parcelized ownerships. The smaller the parcel, the less chance timber will be managed to support local mills. Hunters also lose out as “no trespassing” signs typically follow changing ownership.

Fortunately, through the leadership of land trusts, the Stewardship Program has been instrumental in slowing forest land parcelization. **Funding from the program allows land trusts and land owners to find business solutions, ensuring our forests remain accessible for recreation and timber harvest.**

In fact, as a nationally recognized leader among land trusts, The Conservation Fund has become a champion of Wisconsin's northern working forests. Its most recent victory for the state was the permanent protection of the 13,732-acre Twin Lakes Legacy Forest in Iron County.

This Legacy Forest has been a top priority for supporters of working forests because **its resources and outdoor recreation opportunities are major drivers of the regional economy.** An important aspect of this land deal is **providing permanent public access** for recreation, including vehicle access on over 10 miles of private-woods roads that **enable hunters to continue accessing the interior of the property.**

It will also now continue to **support jobs and provide a sustainable supply of forest products in perpetuity, ensure and enhance access to outdoor recreation, and protect habitat** for important game and non-game species.

Stewardship Project Location:
Iron County

Land Trust Project Leader:
The Conservation Fund



www.conservationfund.org

Why Stewardship Matters:

It supports Wisconsin's \$20 billion forestry industry, including jobs.

It provides a sustainable supply of forest products.

It ensures that our forests remain and are accessible for recreation, timber, and sport—major drivers of the regional economy.

It protects important habitat for game and non-game species.

“These investments in our future are made possible by the Knowles-Nelson State Stewardship Program, helping communities safeguard the state's habitats and inhabitants.”

– Tom Duffus,
Vice President – Midwest for
The Conservation Fund

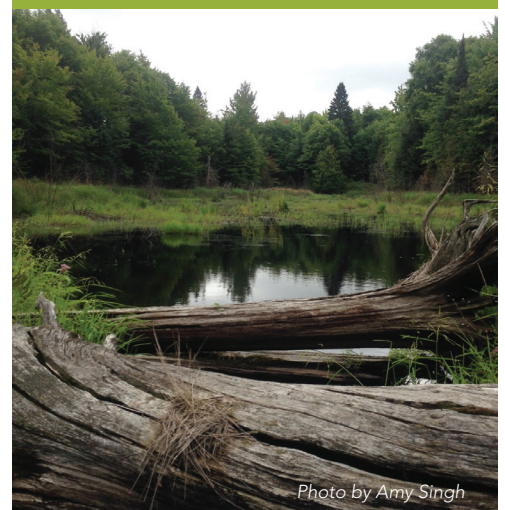


Photo by Amy Singh



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