

OZAUKEE
WASHINGTON



Land Trust



Preserving Land Since 1992

OPEN SPACES

2014 **ANNUAL**REPORT





2014 - The Start of Something Big

This space is usually reserved for us to tell you about the wonderful accomplishments we had in the past year. While we'll certainly get to that, we can't talk about our past successes without talking about the ambitious capital campaign that we have embarked upon.

The cover of this year's Open Spaces is a scenic shot of Lake 12 in Farmington. It's symbolic of the past year because 2014 was dominated by our quest to preserve land in the Milwaukee River Watershed. You may be thinking "but Lake 12 is a lake, not the Milwaukee River." Remember that the lakes and streams feed the rivers, which in turn feed the largest of them all – Lake Michigan. It's all connected.

Therefore, we are pleased to announce our ambitious "**Great Rivers, Great Lakes**" Campaign. This four year strategic effort will protect 2,000 acres of sensitive lands in the Milwaukee River Watershed and along the shore of Lake Michigan.


OWLT has been working with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and other regional and local partners to identify critical parcels in the watersheds and to fund their preservation. Total investment for the initiative will be about \$12 million. We've identified roughly \$10 million that will come from various government agencies and partners toward the four year goal. The Land Trust Board of Directors has committed the organization to raising \$2 million in matching and acquisition related funds.

The impacts will be far reaching. The project outcomes will improve the quality of water flowing into the Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan through implementing land management practices in the basin that expand wetland buffers, restore wildlife habitat, increase surface water infiltration, and preserve productive farmland. This project will provide area residents with additional opportunities to enjoy nature based recreational activities such as hiking, bird watching, hunting, and fishing, and increase access to and enjoyment of our regional freshwater resources.

There has never been a more exciting time in the 22 years of the Land Trust. That said, we have a lot of work ahead of us to make this a reality. Please help us protect wildlife, restore land, and improve water quality by making a contribution today.

We started the campaign in 2014 by adding several new parcels to our stable of protected lands. The new Mayhew Preserve (September, 71 acres), Lynn Preserve (December, 34 acres), Schoenbeck Woods (December, 72 acres) and the Heimerl addition (December, 10 acres) to our Huiras Lake State Natural Area were all the result of tireless work by our Land Protection Department - Steve Henkel and Katie Weber. We couldn't be more proud. **This brings our protected land total to 5,868 acres!**

In 2014 we played a big role in the protection of two important properties that won't be owned by OWLT - the 330-acre Amsterdam Dunes in Sheboygan County and the 20-acre Ville du Parc in Mequon. In both cases we were asked by local governments and partners to step in and help complete these complicated property deals because of our skill and track record of success. We assisted with these projects for the benefit of all those the live, work, play and raise families in southeast Wisconsin.

To everyone who has contributed to the achievements of OWLT - staff, volunteers, board and committee members, donors and friends of the Land Trust - thank you for all you've done! 



Dan Dineen
President



Shawn Graff
Executive Director



Land Protection Matters



Steve Henkel

Land Protection Director

In 2014 OWLT completed six projects protecting 22 acres, including 14 acres preserved with a conservation easement and 207 acres acquired for nature preserves.

But those are just the numbers. As Paul Harvey used to say, “you know what the news is. In a minute, you’re going to hear the rest of the story.”

The success of every one of these projects required the support of our conservation partners - individuals, corporations, or public entities with the foresight and desire to preserve a piece of our natural heritage to share with future generations.

Ginny Pierson donated a conservation easement preserving a stretch of mature hardwoods along the Milwaukee River, so that it would retain its natural and scenic beauty to benefit the striking Belted Kingfishers as well as the people floating their kayaks down the river.

Ginny and her late husband Hobey recognized the importance of preserving natural landscapes. Although the easement was signed after

Hobey passed away, he departed knowing the land would be protected.


Charlie Mayhew sold us some of his family’s holdings to help preserve the vanishing rural character of his neighborhood. Charlie previously donated a conservation easement on other long-held family lands containing mature upland hardwood forest and undulating glacial topography.

The City of Mequon provided OWLT with funding to purchase land along the Milwaukee River. This land will eventually be owned by the Mequon and incorporated into a conservation project protecting over 200 acres along 2.5 mile stretch of the river.

Bobby and Sandra Lynn, another husband and wife team, sold OWLT their former elk farm to protect the fields, wetlands and springs feeding cool waters to Stony Creek which supports the occasional brook trout – a rare find in this part of the state.

Serigraph, a local corporation with a strong civic commitment, sold us some of its land holdings to preserve a regionally-recognized natural area supporting important forested wetlands and a tributary to the Milwaukee River to help keep the region’s waters flowing clean and clear.

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District through its GreenSeams program acquired and then donated to OWLT a parcel of land adjacent to one of our nature preserves in a natural area of statewide significance – thereby enhancing and better ensuring the future integrity of the preserve.

We’re looking forward to bringing you many new stories in 2015. 



The pristine Stony Creek meanders through your new Lynn Preserve.

IN THIS EDITION

Leadership Message.....	2
Land Protection Matters...	3
2014 By the Numbers.....	4
Expanding Horizons.....	5
A New Era.....	6
A Lasting Legacy.....	7
Preserve Map	8

2014 AT A GLANCE

- Increased protected land total to 5,868 Acres
-
- Purchased 3 new preserves
-
- Expanded Huiras Lake protected area
-
- Protected one new Conservation easement
-
- Welcomed 3 new members to our Board of Directors
-
- Initiated our “Great Rivers, Great Lakes” capital campaign

Cover photo:
A summer day on Lake 12,
captured by Janice Lopez.



2014 By the Numbers

1

One new easement - the pristine, 14-acre Pierson easement located on the Milwaukee River in Saukville.

221

221 new acres preserved forever in Ozaukee and Washington Counties.

2

Two new pedestrian bridges crossing wetlands at the Kratzsch Conservancy in Newburg and the Zinn Preserve in Erin.



500

500 new trees planted at six different preserves - part of our new "Tree Keeper" program.



3

Three new preserves - the 34-acre Lynn Preserve in Boltonville, the 71-acre Mayhew Preserve in Farmington and the 72-acre Schoenbeck Woods in West Bend.

1,959

1,959 total acres protected from aquatic invasive species thanks to the EPA funded, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.



Twenty years of the Sauk Creek Nature Preserve in Port Washington. It was our first preserve and opened for the public in 1994.

5,868

5,868 acres of land preserved in Ozaukee, Washington, Sheboygan and Dodge Counties thanks to our members, volunteers and staff!

40

40 partners participating in our Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to remove aquatic invasive species from southeastern Wisconsin.

7,400

Over 7,400 total volunteer hours contributed to OWLT.



41

41 new acres of native grassland prairie growing at the Kratzsch Conservancy in Newburg and the Hames Preserve in Waubeka.

16,000

Over 16,000 new woodland, wetland and grassland plants at eight different preserves.





Great Lakes Restoration



**Cody
MacDonald**
GLRI Coordinator

In 2012, OWLT was awarded a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. These GLRI grants aim to target the biggest threats to the Great Lakes Ecosystem and accelerate progress toward long-term environmental goals.

In our case, we're protecting over 1,500 acres of wetland and shoreline habitat from wetland invasive species – not just in Ozaukee and Washington Counties, but also in Sheboygan, Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha Counties – all of southeastern Wisconsin!

Of particular concern are phragmites, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed and lyme grass. These plants can rapidly invade Wisconsin's native ecosystems and cause economic,

social and environmental problems. Often these invaders out-compete native fauna and flora and degrade crucial habitat needed for local and migratory wildlife populations.

Entering the last year of the grant, OWLT has already **protected over 1,900 acres of wetland** related habitat. With help from our partners we have **controlled over 450 individual populations** throughout the six counties of southeastern WI.

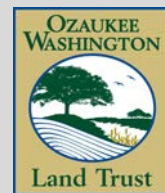
To date, we have **implemented 65 projects**, with some being more complex than others.

For example:

- One DOT project may act as a benchmark for future roadside management collaborations. An initiative to target, treat and control phragmites along the frontage roads of the I-94 corridor in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties was completed in September.
- We're controlling lyme grass on over 90 Lake Michigan shoreline properties. Not only will this reinforce the integrity of Lake Michigan's native shoreline ecosystem, but it is also an educational opportunity. Each homeowner will be equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to successfully carry on with future management after our grant is complete.
- We're targeting pioneer phragmites infestations spread throughout a delicate 1,100 acre wetland in Pleasant Prairie. In an area constantly under development pressure, this wetland system is critical for local wildlife and migratory bird populations.



OWLT summer interns work with our many partners to control phragmites and other problematic invasive species.



The Ozaukee Washington
Land Trust, Inc.
PO Box 917
200 Wisconsin Street
West Bend, WI 53095
(262) 338-1794

www.OWLT.org
info@OWLT.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Shawn Graff

LAND PROTECTION
Steve Henkel
Katie Weber


STEWARDSHIP
Mike Hoffer
Cody Mac Donald
Bill Kaap
Joe Munch

OPERATIONS
Marilyn Schlotfeldt
Louise Plaskey

ACCOUNTING
Elaine Gauthier

"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."

~ Aldo Leopold

Of course **these projects wouldn't be possible without the 40 partnering organizations** and consulting firms OWLT is working with - which speaks to the larger value of this project. We're using our skills and knowledge to help our surrounding communities become better environmental stewards. The benefits of this three-year project will be evident for years to come. 



A New Era



Mike

Mike Hoffer
Stewardship Director

2014 was the year that our Stewardship Department matured. The Stewardship Corps was large, active and experienced. It complemented our Volunteer Stewardship Corps perfectly.

With so many properties to manage (we own 25 preserves and manage two more on a contract basis) and large grants to administer (the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, DNR Urban Forestry, etc...) it's not surprising that our stewardship staff has grown. Fortunately we have a great partner in the Wisconsin Workforce Development Centers of Ozaukee and Washington Counties.

We're able to place young (ages 16-22) and mature (ages 55+) workers with our experienced staff to create a robust crew. The Workforce Development Centers fund their wages and we provide on-the-job training.

Our preserves are managed with care, our workers learn new skills and our volunteers have the help they need. Everybody wins!

2014 Stewardship Staff

- Director - 1
- Invasive Plant Coordinator - 1
- AmeriCorps Crew - 1
- Year-round field crew - 3
- Summer interns - 4
- Workforce Development interns - 7
- Volunteers - 100s

As we acquire more preserves, I have experienced a personal shift in philosophy. Working with managers from small nature centers (<200 acres) and talking with managers of large preserves (>3,000 acres) has opened my eyes. We can't micromanage our preserves like the nature centers, but our preserves don't have to experience the benign neglect of large holdings either.

We have to find the middle ground, accept our limitations, work with our strengths and act accordingly.

I've come to believe that we should focus on our great places (the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, Kratzsch Conservancy, Donges Bay Gorge, Fellenz Woods, our state natural areas...) and keep them that way. After that, when there is time, we should move to our other projects. I don't mean to imply that we'll neglect preserves, just that we need to prioritize.

With that in mind, I did not worry about spending too much time in certain places. If a project had value, we committed ourselves to seeing it through. We spent a great deal of our effort at the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve and Kratzsch Conservancy (52% of the total) because they are significant restoration projects and we were determined to be successful there.



Our Summer Youth Stewardship Corps is growing. Participants learn valuable lessons about teamwork, responsibility, environmental action and life in general.

Continued on next page...



Our major achievements of 2014 included:

1. **Kratzsch Conservancy.** We followed our management plan objectives by enhancing grasslands and wetlands, planting trees, shrubs and grassland plugs, adding to the public access amenities, mowing our new prairie and continuing to remove woody invasive plants from the woodland edges.
2. **Forest Beach Migratory Preserve.** We caged every young tree on the preserve, planted new trees and over five thousand wetland plants. We planted 100s of new trees and shrubs to replace those that didn't survive. We cleaned cattail and reed canary grass from the wetlands and continued to make improvements to the trails, signage and clubhouse.
3. **Tree Keeper Program.** This program encourages volunteers to take care of newly planted trees. The goal is to create a habit of introducing new trees and shrubs at preserves every year, but in small enough doses that one or two volunteers can take care of them.

Other significant projects included:

1. We installed a three-vehicle parking area at the Huiras Lake State Natural Area.
2. Two AmeriCorps projects improved our Holy Hill Woods preserves:
 1. We nearly completed a 350' boardwalk and floating pier on Beck Lake at the Zinn Preserve.
 2. We removed a dilapidated, hazardous building at the Pavcek Preserve.
3. Two Eagle Scout projects greatly improved public access at the Kratzsch Conservancy:
 1. Ryan Boehler's team completed a 120' boardwalk across a cattail marsh.
 2. Ben Gamedinger's team built a handicap accessible hunting stand.
4. We celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Sauk Creek Nature Preserve by planting a garden prairie, installing new signs and planting woodland flowers and plants.
5. We trained new burn team members, acquired more equipment and had six successful prairie burns.

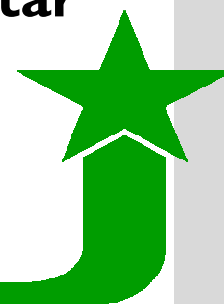
All in all, it was a great year and we're proud of our accomplishments. Bring on 2015! 

Leave a Lasting Legacy - Be a Green Star

Green Stars are a very special group of donors and supporters that have made a lasting commitment through a variety of land preservation and estate planning methods. Those that donated land or conservation easements, who contributed to our stewardship fund or made a planned gift become Green Stars.

Most bequests to OWLT are exempt from federal estate taxes. For more information about how to become a Green Star please contact the OWLT office at (262) 338-1794.

Some gifts last a lifetime, but some gifts last forever.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Daniel Dineem
President

John Torinus, Jr.
Vice President

Karen A. Sidders
Treasurer

Marjie Tomter
Secretary

Brenda J. Bowers, PhD
Cheryl Brickman
Shannon Buending
John Capelle
Chris Ford
Donald P. Gallo
Manish Gupta
Frank Volpintesta
Anthony Warren
Charles Williams

ACTIVE EMERITUS

Virginia K. Bolger
Gary S. Casper, PhD
Allen Curtes
Kim Engel
Barbara Gilmore
Ronald Gritt, MD
Andrew J. Gumm
Jill Hepburn
Gaytha Hillman
Joanne Kline
Mary LaVelle
Raymond Lipman
Charles C. Mayhew, III
David Meissner
Janet Montgomery
Mark Murphy
William S. Niehaus
Chester I. Nielsen, III
Alan Paul Price, PhD
James A. Reinartz, PhD
George E. Row
William F. Schanen, III
Steven C. Tews
Kine Icks Torinus
Greg Wray

ADVISORY BOARD

John R. Dedrick
H. Robert Fuller
Martha Watts

LEGAL COUNSEL
John H. Lhost
Quarles & Brady, LLP

OWLT Preserves & Easements

OWLT owns 25 preserves totaling 1,306 acres of wonderful open space.

This includes 18 sites developed for hiking, cross country skiing, bird watching, hunting or fishing.

We also protect another 4,562 acres through conservation easements, partnerships and planned gifts. That's 5,868 acres of land in Ozaukee and Washington Counties being preserved by the efforts of OWLT.

- 1 Bratt Woods
- 2 Cedarburg Environmental Study Area (CESA)
- 3 Decorah Woods
- 4 Donges Bay Gorge
- 5 Fairy Chasm State Natural Area*
- 6 Fellenz Woods
- 7 Forest Beach Migratory Preserve
- 8 Hames Preserve
- 9 Hepburn Woods
- 10 Huiras Lake State Natural Area
- 11 Kratzsch Conservancy
- 12 Kurtz Woods State Natural Area

- 13 Lake Twelve
- 14 Lynn Preserve*
- 15 MacLaurin Preserve*
- 16 Mauer Preserve*
- 17 Mayhew Preserve*
- 18 Pavcek Preserve
- 19 Riverbend
- 20 Sauk Creek Nature Preserve
- 21 Schoenbeck Woods*
- 22 Shannon Preserve
- 23 Wendt Preserve*
- 24 West Bend Train Depot
- 25 Zinn Preserve

Symbols



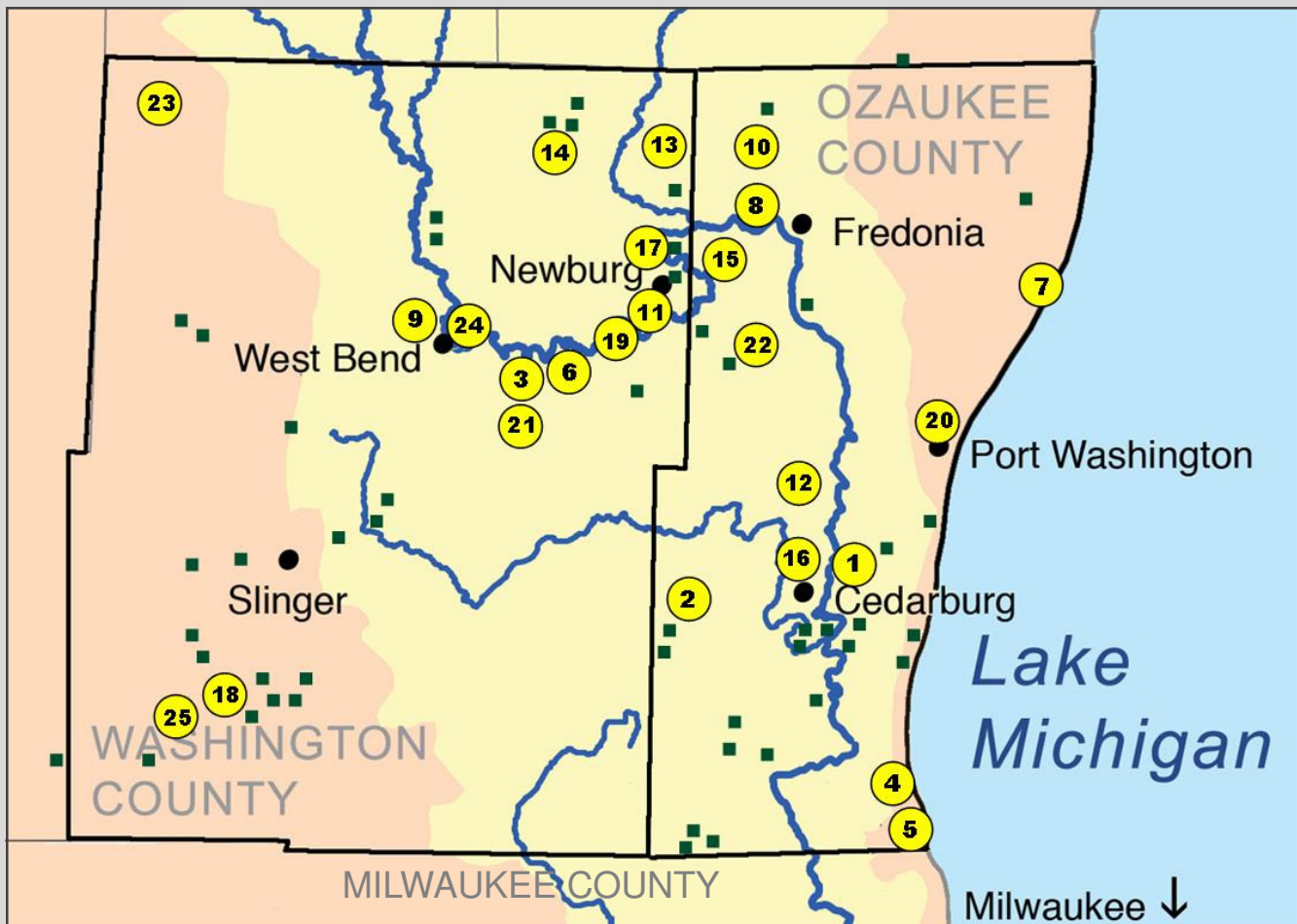
Preserve



Easement



* Limited public access at this time



The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, Inc.

PO Box 917
200 Wisconsin Street
West Bend, WI 53095



(262) 338-1794
www.OWLT.org
info@OWLT.org