



Preserving our land since 1992

OPEN SPACES

2013 IN RETROSPECT

Message From Our President
Land Protection Matters
Spirit of Stewardship
Good Friends



Kate Redmond

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2013 AT A GLANCE

- Increased Protected Land
Total to 5,673 Acres
-
- Achieved Land Trust
Accreditation
-
- Planted 9,000 Trees
-
- Protected Three
New Easements
-
- Welcomed Two New
Members to
Board of Directors

*Cover photo:
Kratzsch Conservancy winter
sunrise, captured by Katie Weber.*

2013 In Retrospect

2013 was a year filled with many highlights for OWLT but it also brought us some sadness. We protected three new properties but lost old friends including Pat Wilmeth and Noel Cutright. Pat was one of our biggest supporters and a founding board member. She was instrumental in helping us protect Highland Woods, the Mequon Nature Preserve and Donges Bay Gorge.

Noel Cutright was an active board member right up to his passing. He was the chair of our Stewardship Committee (the “Stew Crew”) and was instrumental in helping develop the old Squires golf course into the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve .

You can read more about Noel and Pat on page 7.

Our most significant achievement of the year was national accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This a wonderful accomplishment and a true testament to the hard work of our volunteers, staff and Board of Directors.

We have a responsibility to protect our properties and the easements that are entrusted to us. By attaining accreditation, we demonstrate to our donors, members and the public that we are a professional organization that takes this responsibility seriously.

We had another successful year in land protection and restoration – adding three new easements (see related article on page 3) totaling 128 acres.

One easement was done in cooperation with the Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation (CLCF), a sister land trust that focuses on the Cedar Lakes watershed. OWLT and CLCF have always worked well together and an opportunity

developed where both land trusts became co-holders of an easement until 2027. At that time CLCF will take title to the property and OWLT will become the sole holder of the easement. CLCF will be able to develop the property into a publicly accessible nature preserve for passive nature based recreation.

Lastly, I am pleased to report that we added two new board members – Cheryl Brickman and Chris Ford. Cheryl is no stranger to OWLT and already served on our board from 2000 to 2009.


Cheryl is active on both our Land Conservation Committee and our Stew Crew. She is a trained botanist and experienced landscape planner who owns and operates Dragonfly Farm Design LLC.

Cheryl and her husband Mark are OWLT Green Stars for donating an easement on their Mequon property in 2001.

Chris Ford and his wife Jade are recent arrivals to the Town of Saukville, but Chris has quickly made his presence known in the area. He serves on the Ozaukee County Land Preservation Board, the Board of the

Friends of the Cedarburg Bog and the steering committee of the Ozaukee Treasurers Network.

Chris is a retired attorney whose legal career included 15 years as a prosecutor in Milwaukee County and serving as the Executive Director for Centro Legal, a nonprofit legal service provider on Milwaukee’s near south side.

I thank everyone who has contributed to the achievements of OWLT, staff, volunteers, board and committee members, donors and friends of land trusts. We need and appreciate your continued help in perpetuity. 



By Dan Dineen
President of OWLT

Spirit of Stewardship



Mike

By Mike Hoffer
Stewardship Director

“A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.”

- Greek Proverb



Steve Wilkinson (left) and Marjie Tomter (right) shared the 2013 Stewardship Championship. They each volunteered 108 hours of their time preserving and protecting OWLT preserves.

Every year I write my Annual Stewardship Report. And afterwards, I compose a short summary for this publication.

This year as I was putting it together I kept being distracted by other stuff. Yes, we have a bunch of preserves and a lot of acres. We also hold many easements protecting many more acres. It's a worthy cause (and one that we're extremely dedicated to) but I couldn't help but think about other things. Little things. The ancillary benefits we provide to the community that won't show up on a spreadsheet.

So this time I'm going to write more about those things and less about our statistics. (You can still see our highlights in the side bar on this page.)

Ancillary benefits are those little things that are great, but hard to quantify. Sure, you hear all about the animals, hikers, volunteers, water quality, etc...the usual stuff that land trusts are known for. But what about:

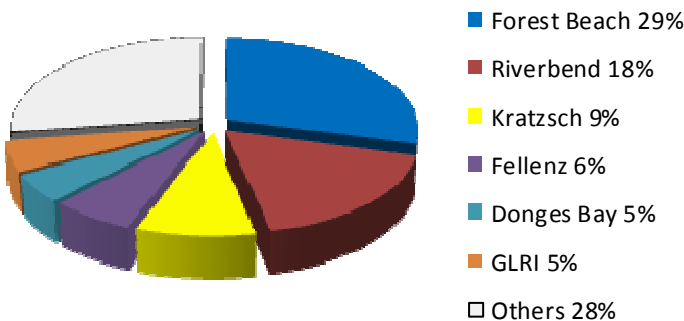
Every summer we hire troubled high school kids to work for us. These are kids with learning disabilities, behavior problems or criminal records. They spend the summer with us learning basic work skills, but more importantly they're around people who care about something other than themselves. They spend time with educated people who work hard. Some of these kids get a lot out of it, but it's hard to quantify.

Ron Schmidt has worked with us for three years. He's 65, rough around the edges with rowdy past and his own vernacular. What would he be doing if not working for us? I suppose he'd be sitting around losing his health a little bit more every day. Instead, he's out in the woods with me, and he loves it. We're his family. That won't show up on any report.

Out at the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve we have a nice meeting facility. Boy Scouts have campouts, small nonprofit groups have meetings there and Port Washington schools go there for field trips. The place is officially for migrating birds, but that sure doesn't stop those folks from appreciating the place too.

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2013 Total Effort Staff & Volunteer Time



Stewardship Highlights

- 🌱 Planted 8,500 trees at Riverbend
- 🌱 Burned 23 acre prairie at Fellenz Woods
- 🌱 Enhanced 5 acre wetland at Kratzsch Conservancy
- 🌱 Began restoration of Hames Preserve
- 🌱 Installed 3 new kestrel boxes
- 🌱 Planted 500 trees and shrubs at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve
- 🌱 Planted 36 acres of prairie at Kratzsch Conservancy
- 🌱 Created a tree nursery with 250 saplings
- 🌱 Opened Zinn Preserve to public access
- 🌱 Completed trail loop at Decorah Woods
- 🌱 Completed "Wendy's Way" trail at Donges Bay Gorge
- 🌱 Started tree thinning project at Cedarburg Environmental Study Area
- 🌱 Prepped area for mini-prairie at Sauk Creek Nature Preserve

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Land Protection Matters



*By Steve Henkel
Land Protection Director*

“To build a road is much simpler than to think of what the country really needs.”

- Aldo Leopold

Setting aside the natural world outside for just a moment to focus on the natural world inside, when is the last time you asked yourself what your inner-country really needs?

For those desk jockeys among us, when was the last time you sat at your work station and took a nice deep breath? Have you checked your pulse lately between scanning your emails, answering the phone, shuffling papers and juggling those looming and/or overdue deadlines?

While at my former job, I experimented a bit with this. Being in my mid-forties and feeling that something was not quite right with the ol' ticker, I strapped one of those heart monitors around my chest and with the accompanying wrist-bound gadgetry tracked my heart rate throughout the day. Not less than 20 minutes into the day I peeked at the watch to see that my heart rate was well into the upper 90s. That's beats per minute!

And I was just sitting at my desk doing those typical things that the average person does during an ordinary work day. Should I chalk it up to my excessive consumption of over-roasted coffee from the break room or is there something more systemically devious going on here? This road I was building, with only brief moments of conscious reflection, where was it taking me? My bride said, "To the ER, most likely. By the way, husband, your life insurance policy is paid up, right?"

Shortly after that conversation, I changed my world and came to OWLT.

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I like to think of Land Protection as Opportunity Protection.

When we protect a parcel of land, we're providing opportunities to let the natural world do what it needs to do more of. We find and protect landscapes that are in pretty good shape and work to improve them and keep them that way. We find landscapes that are degraded and work to restore and protect them. Through protection and stewardship we are providing relief to the land from the constant bombardment that we, in one of our less inspired moments, labeled 'development.'

Through the above actions we're providing opportunities to do things that most of us wish we could do more of, those things we know we really need to do more of, and relief from those other things we would prefer (and need) to do less of. Our preserves provide opportunities to walk or jog or paddle or saunter... at whatever pace you like... from sunrise to sunset...in fields and forests...along rivers and lakes... to sit whenever the mood strikes you...to see and hear and experience things you can't when surrounded by walls and urban noise.

"Civilization has so cluttered this elemental man-earth relationship with gadgets and middlemen that awareness of it is growing dim."


- Aldo Leopold

Through our work, we hope to provide important opportunities to unclutter, reconnect and rekindle your awareness. To quietly consider what the land and the people really need. It's one of those elusive win-win scenarios that marketing reps dream about. And, through your support, that's what we do. Thanks for helping us do it again in 2013.

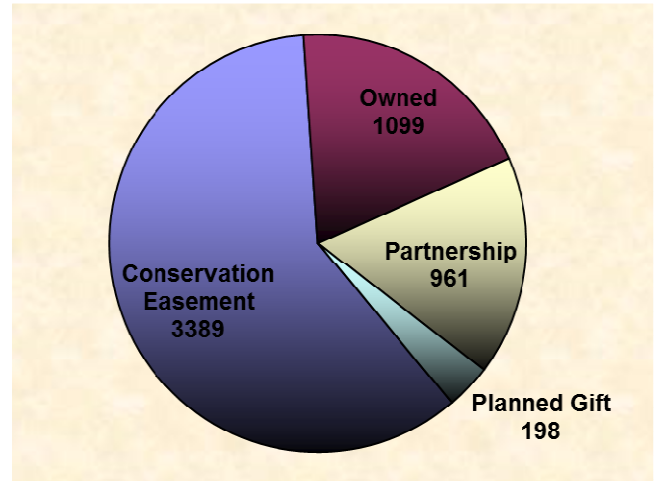
Running the Numbers

Last year we protected another 127 acres of working lands and natural areas through conservation easements. These latest easements raise our total of protected lands to 5,673 acres.

What was particularly encouraging was that two of the easements were from repeat donors; Ritger Woods and Farm LLC, and Dick and Lois Finch. These two families donated conservation easements in years past and felt compelled to further their conservation goals by committing additional acreages for perpetual protection by OWLT.

We were also awarded grant funding to acquire approximately 350 acres for future nature preserves. So 2014 looks to be a busy year for the land protection and stewardship staff. 

How We Protect



The 26 acre Stony Creek easement, donated by Richard and Lois Finch, protects 22 acres of pristine woodlands, 4 acres of restored grassland and 2,000' of the lovely Stony Creek - part of the Milwaukee River Watershed.

Leave a Lasting Legacy - Be a Green Star

Planned givers are recognized by OWLT through our Green Star program. The Green Star program is a very special group of donors and supporters that have made a lasting commitment through a variety of land preservation and estate planning tools. Individuals that have donated land or conservation easements are Green Stars. In addition, anyone that contributes to our stewardship fund or makes a planned gift is a Green Star.

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

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



2013

We spent one day per week all winter restoring the electric and PA systems at the Forest Beach clubhouse.



January



The best time to install wood duck boxes is when the ponds are frozen over.

Salamander monitoring starts in March or April every year. This little guy was found at the Kratzsch Conservancy.



February



Our latest man-made pond filled up when the snow melted at Forest Beach. The ducks and turtles acted like it had been there forever.

Over 85 different volunteers (including these Girl Scouts) donated over 860 hours to help us plant 8,500 trees at Riverbend.



March



Our first volunteer work day of the year was in April with students and staff from UWWC.

We burned 23 acres of prairie at Fellenz Woods in May. This AmeriCorps volunteer is taking a break after a long day.



April



Steve Wilkinson drove the tractor for 11 hours straight while we planted our 8,500 trees at Riverbend.

May

Turtle monitoring season is mid summer. This beauty was found in the Milwaukee River.



June

The 82 acre Ritger Woods easement was finalized in May.

2014S

FEBRUARY

Saturday, Feb 22, 8am-noon

WINTER BIRD HIKE

Join Bill Mueller for a birding tour of the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, Huiras Lake State Natural Area and sites in between.

Forest Beach Migratory Preserve

MARCH

Thursday, March 19, 6-9pm

OZAUKEE TREASURES NETWORK

All are welcome to attend this meeting of like-minded people dedicated to smart development and preserving quality of life in Ozaukee County.

Riveredge Nature Center

Tuesday, March 25, 7-9pm

VOLUNTEER MEETING

Join the stewardship staff and key volunteers for our season kick off meeting. Say hello to your fellow volunteers and learn about OWLT.

Cedarburg Community Room

MARCH

Saturday, March 29, 10am-1pm

VOLUNTEER MEETING

Join the stewardship staff and key volunteers for our season kick off meeting. Say hello to your fellow volunteers and learn about OWLT.

West Bend Depot

APRIL

Saturday, April 5, 3:30-6:30pm

FOR THE BIRDS

Join us for our first annual bird-centric event. Door prizes, food, entertainment and birdhouse contest.

Forest Beach Migratory Preserve

Saturday, April 12, 10am-2pm

FIRST VOLUNTEER WORK DAY

Mark your calendar for the first volunteer work day of the 2014 stewardship season.

Location TBD

Achieving Land Trust Alliance accreditation is a source of great pride for the organization. We got the good news in August.



Dan Dineen presents Jay Johnson with the Volunteer of the Year award at our annual dinner in August.



Artist Don Rambart poses in front of the new Forest Beach Migratory Preserve entrance sign.



Noel Cutright received a lifetime achievement award, presented by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



The 20 acre Mulberry Farm and 26 acre Stony Creek easements were finalized in December.

July

August

September

October

November

December

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We hosted another AmeriCorps volunteer team in May and June.



This turtle tried to escape from the Treasures of OZ celebration, but the little boy caught him!



Joe Pospichal took on a forest of phragmites as part of our GLRI funded aquatic invasive species removal project.



Volunteers Brandon and Andrea Ackley got married at Forest Beach. They loved it!



The last volunteer work day was held at Zinn Preserve in early December. A fire is nice when it's 5° outside!

APRIL

Wednesday, April 23, noon-6pm
VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION BBQ

Join us for an all-day open house and BBQ. Stop by for lunch or dinner on us, so we can say thanks in person.
West Bend Depot

MAY

Saturday, May 10, 12pm-6pm
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Join OWLT and the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory as we celebrate migratory birds of all shapes and sizes. The day will include guided hikes, informational sessions and lots of bird watching.
Forest Beach Migratory Preserve

JUNE

Saturday, June 14, 9am-4pm
TREASURES OF OZ

Visit eight hidden treasures in Ozaukee County (Including the Cedarburg Environmental Study Area and the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve.)
Multiple Venues in Ozaukee County

AUGUST

Wednesday, August 6
BIRD WALK & PICNIC

Join Bill Mueller for a birding tour and picnic.
Forest Beach Migratory Preserve

Saturday, August 23, 4-10pm
ANNUAL DINNER

Help us celebrate 22 years of protecting the land and waters of Ozaukee and Washington Counties. Cuisine by Shully's of Theinsville.
Forest Beach Migratory Preserve

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 6, 4-10pm
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Join us for an evening of food, drinks and holiday cheer.
West Bend Depot

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Goodbye Dear Friends



*By Shawn Graff
Executive Director*

I have been very fortunate in my life to work with some of the greatest people in the Wisconsin conservation movement. Two of them were Pat Wilmeth and Noel Cutright.

Pat Wilmeth was one of our founding members; she served on the Board of Directors of the Ozaukee Land Trust in the 1990s and returned to the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust board in 2007. She was our biggest supporter with major donations for Highland Woods, the Mequon Nature Preserve, Fairy Chasm and Donges Bay Gorge.

Noel Cutright went to the great bird preserve in the sky in November. The list of his achievements is legendary in Wisconsin. It's no exaggeration to say that he was the leading ornithologist in the state.

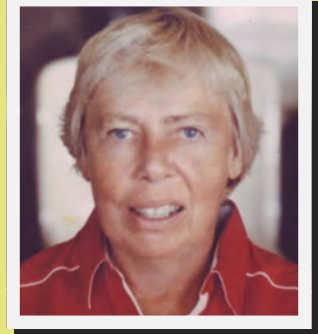
What struck me about Noel was how at peace he was throughout his illness. He faced the great unknown head on - planning his own funeral, parting message and green burial. We spent many days last year working together to ensure that two of his passions would thrive in the future - the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve - and upon resting these projects in good hands, I believe he was ready for his next journey.

Let's all pray that we don't have to write any obituaries in 2014.

Shawn



Pat Wilmeth



Pat Wilmeth chaired the OWLT advisory board and took the challenge of setting up friend raising meetings.

To quote OWLT past president, Ginny Bolger:

"How very sad to lose such a remarkable woman and dear friend. Many of OWLT's successes were due to her efforts and generosity. She will not be forgotten!"

Wish List

**Do you have any of these items around the house?
They'd sure come in handy for us!**

For our Forest Beach living quarters

- Games, books, puzzles, movies and general entertainment items for our AmeriCorps teams, interns and other guests
- A television
- A stereo
- A VCR/DVD player
- Pillows and covers

For our preserves

- Fence posts
- Chicken wire
- Tree tubes
- Trail cameras
- Leaf blower
- A small shed



All
contributions are
tax deductible.
Please contact Marilyn
at 262-338-1794
to discuss a
donation.

Noel Cutright composed the following farewell message. We didn't change a word.

Dear Friends,

I've been fortunate to have enjoyed and experienced many things. From growing up with my loving parents, Mabel and Harvey Cutright, to my 40+ years with my wife, Kate Redmond, to being a parent of our three children, Robyn, Seth and Laurel.

From a bird perspective, I have many wonderful recollections:

- **Learning birds as a youth** on Fort Hill State Memorial in southwestern Ohio;
- **Being a teaching assistant** to Cornell's Peter Paul Kellogg during two summer ornithology courses;
- **Founding the Riveredge Bird Club** and, more recently, the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory;
- **Successfully completing my Quad 30 Campaign;**
- **Working on Wisconsin's first breeding bird Atlas** and co-writing the Atlas book with Bettie Harriman and Bob Howe;
- **Watching the growth of a robust Bird City Wisconsin** program guided by Carl Schwartz;
- **My decade-plus association with Wisconsin Public Radio** and Larry Meiller doing call-in shows with Bill Volkert;
- **Associating with many other bird lovers through the decades.**

I urge each of you to show passion by doing something good for bird conservation. If everyone took positive action, we would leave a better future for our natural heritage and help conserve our rich biodiversity.

- Noel

Noel Cutright



Easement Donors

Connie Squier



One of Connie Squier's great passions was her beautiful 170 acre property in the Town of Trenton in Washington County.

Her personal paradise included pristine kettle moraine forest, wetlands and prairie.

In 2001 she knew she needed to do something to make sure this special property was protected. She turned to OWLT and donated a conservation easement on the property to make sure it would forever stay natural.

Connie passed away in November 2013.

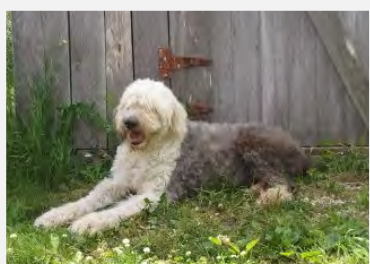
In 2005 **Anthony Ritger** and his wife Lillian donated a 69 acre conservation easement on their farm and surrounding woodlands in Allenton. In 2013 they were planning another 82 acre easement on adjacent land when Anthony passed away in May.

The family was committed to the protection of the property and the easement was finalized in December.

Ned and Mabel Friend donated a 40 acre conservation easement on their property near the Ice Age Trail in 1998. Ned passed away in January 2013.

Mary Lee and Kenneth Jacobs donated a 130 acre conservation easement on their property in the Holy Hill Woods area of Washington county in 2005. Mary Lee passed away in May 2013.

Buckthorn



Buckthorn the sheepdog belonged to no man...but Stewardship Director Mike Hoffer gave him a ride to work everyday.

Buck was a perfect stewardship assistant...he never chased the animals, he never wandered off the trail and he always let the volunteers say hello. Unfortunately, his back legs just couldn't pick him up anymore and he went to

Continued from page 3

My son works with me every Saturday during the volunteer season. I pay him out of my own pocket. He's ten and has had a part time job for three years now. I can't imagine him as a first-time employee at 15 if he wasn't gaining this experience.

NOVA Services brings a group of kids out once a week who owe community service hours. They come to us with little skill or ambition, but working with them is our way of giving back. After spending the rest of the week cleaning toilets and doing menial tasks for other organizations, they help us mulch trees, cut clover and repair trails. At first they don't want to be here, but they are paired up with a few good volunteers and interns who do. Does it rub off on them? Absolutely.

I've been here for three years now, and I've managed nine different interns. Every one has started a successful life since then. What other summer jobs were available to them?

Last year a young lady applied to be a hunter and she came out a few times in the summer to help out. She said that she really wanted to get a buck, so I set her up with a spot at Donges Bay Gorge with one of our most experienced hunters who gave her some bow hunting instruction. She got herself a nice eight-pointer and was thrilled. It was much later when I found out that her father died unexpectedly and that he was teaching her to hunt. She wanted the buck as a memorial to her dad.

Then of course there are the two older ladies who work in our office through the Experience Works program, the guy who used volunteering as a way to get back in shape (it worked), the farmer whose cattle grazed on our preserve during the drought of 2012, the guy who removes dead trees for us and uses them to heat his home...the list goes on.

I think about these things every day. I head off to work with goals in mind (plant trees, finish my budget, plan our work week) but along the way all of this cool stuff happens.

OWL is like Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*. We just can't stop ourselves from doing good things as we go along. 🌿



Our new tree nursery is the starting point for saplings. After a year or two being watered and protected, they can then be transferred to our preserves. We hope to plant up to 200 trees every year and keep rotating new saplings through the nursery.



We planted 9,000 trees on 5 preserves. Pictured are AmeriCorps volunteers at Riverbend.





Sam Shields (left) and Joe Ingrassia (right) install another American Kestrel house. That makes 8 total on 4 preserves: Forest Beach, Riverbend, Kratzsch & Fellenz Woods.

OWLT PRESERVES & EASEMENTS

The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust owns 22 preserves totaling 1,126 acres of land. This includes 16 sites developed for hiking, cross country skiing, bird watching, fishing or hunting. We also protect another 4,547 acres through conservation easements, partnerships and planned gifts.

That's 5,673 acres of land in Ozaukee and Washington Counties being preserved and protected forever.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Bratt Woods | 12 Kurtz Woods State Natural Area |
| 2 Cedarburg Environmental Study Area (CESA) | 13 Lake Twelve |
| 3 Decorah Woods Preserve | 14 MacLaurin Preserve* |
| 4 Donges Bay Gorge | 15 Maurer Preserve* |
| 5 Fairy Chasm State Natural Area* | 16 Pavcek Preserve |
| 6 Fellenz Woods | 17 Riverbend Conservancy |
| 7 Forest Beach Migratory Preserve | 18 Sauk Creek Nature Preserve |
| 8 Hames Preserve | 19 Shannon Preserve |
| 9 Hepburn Woods | 20 Wendt Preserve* |
| 10 Huiras Lake State Natural Area | 21 West Bend Train Depot |
| 11 Kratzsch Conservancy | 22 Zinn Preserve |

Symbols	
	Preserve
	Easement
*	Not developed for public access at this time

