

Preserving Land Since 1992

Open Spaces

2016 Annual Report

Preserving the water resources, natural areas, and working lands of Ozaukee and Washington Counties



New Era of Leadership at Ozaukee Washington Land Trust

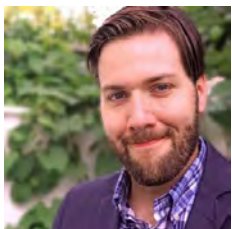


Daniel Dineen
President

Fall of 2016 saw the appointment of a new Executive Director at Ozaukee Washington Land Trust with Tom Stolp becoming our third leader in 25 years. Stolp takes over from the estimable leadership of Shawn Graff whose legacy will be the incredible growth of Ozaukee Washington Land Trust under his tenure, which saw the land trust surpassing 6,000 acres of protected land.

After a national search, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust President Dan Dineen said the search committee homed in on Stolp because of his passion for conservation and his demonstrated leadership, fundraising and management skills.

After taking the reins Stolp said, "This is really a dream come true. I've long admired Ozaukee Washington Land Trust's track record of protecting some of the most critical land and water in our communities and it's an honor to be part of this effective, land conservation leader. As we look to the future of the Land Trust, we must remain steadfast to our mission that what our communities need is a leading local organization working to improve the water quality of our lakes and rivers, enhanced wildlife habitat, and preservation of the scenic character of our rural landscape.



Tom Stolp
Executive Director

By remaining true to these ideals we will ensure that our families will have the same opportunities to enjoy nature-based recreation, like bird watching, hiking, and canoeing and celebrate the cultural heritage that our outdoors provide through hunting, fishing, skiing and more."

A lifelong Wisconsin native, Stolp worked for the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters since 2008, most recently as deputy director.

Stolp, his wife Maria and their two-year-old daughter Rose, love discovering the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust preserves. Asked if he has a favorite Preserve, Stolp responded: "Preserves are like children, so I don't have favorites, but I do have a fond memory of the first preserve I visited with my daughter. Last summer, we explored Sauk Creek Nature Preserve in Port Washington and my still toddling one-year-old could walk out into the shallow upper part of Sauk Creek to discover little ducklings that were waddling about. It was a special memory."

Here's to many special memories for the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust promising future under Tom's leadership.



Excellence · Trust · Permanence

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Fiscal Year 2017
(July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017)

- Dan Dineen, *President*
- Brenda Bowers, *Vice President*
- Manish Gupta, *Treasurer*
- Marjie Tomter, *Secretary*
- John Torinus, *Ex Officio*
- Cheryl Brickman
- Shannon Buending
- John Capelle
- Janet Ehn
- Chris Ford
- Rick Fox
- Pat Marchese
- Michael Nast
- Frank Volpintesta
- Brett Vuyk

Fiscal Year 2016 Financials

Income

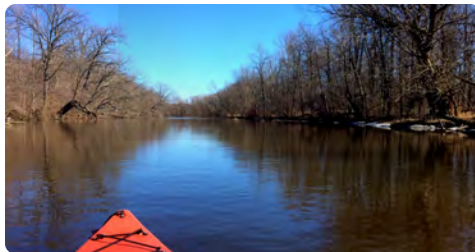
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|--------------------------|-----------|
| Individuals | \$263,866 |
| Grants & Foundations | \$670,463 |
| Special Events & Rentals | \$12,012 |
| Investment Income | \$78,137 |

Expenses

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Land Protection | \$212,414 |
| Stewardship | \$449,228 |
| Outreach & Education | \$27,080 |
| Management | \$133,032 |
| Fundraising | \$31,758 |
| Other | \$29,208 |

Total Income **\$1,024,498**

Total Expenses **\$882,720**



In 2016, OWLT received **\$77,495** from the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Program to help acquire 50 acres of land along the Milwaukee River in Washington County.

STAFF

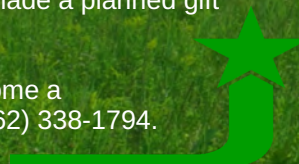
- Tom Stolp, *Executive Director*
- Steve Henkel, *Land Protection Director*
- Ryan Wallin, *Stewardship Director*
- Marilyn Schlotfeldt, *Operations Manager*
- Katie Weber Parrillo, *Conservation Specialist*
- Elaine Gauthier, *Accountant*
- Christine Bohn, *GLRI Project Coordinator*
- Josh Schlicht, *Land Steward*

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 easement, who contributed to our stewardship fund or made a planned gift become Green Stars.

For more information about how to become a Green Star, please contact OWLT at (262) 338-1794.





GREAT RIVERS, GREAT LAKES

The Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan are two of the area's most important natural resources. The river is the lifeblood of an interconnected freshwater ecosystem that includes groundwater, wetlands, streams and lakes. Wetlands serve an important function within the system by retaining and filtering runoff from upland areas resulting in less frequent flooding and improved water quality for the region. Lake Michigan provides drinking water for 1.5 million residents in the greater Milwaukee area.

Between acquiring our first preserve in 1993 and early 2014, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust had protected approximately 5700 acres of natural areas and working lands within and adjacent to Washington and Ozaukee counties. Building on this success, in early 2014 we saw an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of our protection efforts by working with our conservation partners to access regional, state and federal funding sources.

To realize this vision, in the fall of 2014, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust launched our Great Rivers, Great Lakes Freshwater Preservation Campaign; a multi-year effort to develop and carry out a

comprehensive plan to identify, protect, and begin restoration efforts on an additional 2000 acres of critical habitat across the two-county area.

Since the inception of this Campaign and thanks to the support of our regional conservation partners, state and federal agencies, local municipalities, corporations, foundations and individual donors, the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust has created 10 new nature preserves and worked with private land owners to protect two additional properties totaling 997 acres of protected land and water – almost halfway to our goal of 2000 acres.

These newly protected lands preserve open spaces, farms, forests, wetlands, stream and river corridors, and Lake Michigan shoreline while providing our community with access for nature-based recreational activities.

With nearly \$9.7 million identified in donations, pledges and probable grants, OWLT has \$841,000 remaining to raise in donations to fully realize our vision for Great Rivers, Great Lakes. We are on track and proud of our accomplishments to date.



Adjacent to our 160-acre Fellenz Woods Preserve, our first Washington County Preserve, our newest and as yet “un-named” 50-acre Preserve will soon be unveiled in 2017. With extensive Milwaukee River frontage, the Preserve protects water quality by maintaining and improving wetland habitats that store floodwaters and filter runoff. The Preserve will serve generations of families through hunting, fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing.



STEWARDSHIP

2,500+
Wetland plants & trees planted

8
Miles of Milwaukee River frontage now protected forever

25
Acres of buckthorn treated on OWLT properties, equivalent to **19** football fields

14
Dumpsters filled with Garlic Mustard and Dames Rocket removed from OWLT properties

4,537
Hours donated by volunteers to OWLT in 2016

688
Hours worked by the Cedar 7 AmeriCorps Crew

252
Number of bird species observed by Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve

6,658
Acres of land protected by OWLT. This includes **30** nature preserves and **52** conservation easements

2016 brought new leadership to our Stewardship department with the hiring of Ryan Wallin as Stewardship Director. 2016 also marked a turning point for the organization as it takes on the exciting challenge of owning and managing over 30 preserves totaling nearly 1,700 acres across Washington and Ozaukee Counties.

Accordingly, the job of Stewardship at OWLT could be likened to a Swiss Army Knife, you need to have a lot of tools in one handy, complete package. Beyond the obvious role of planning and executing the restoration and stewarding of OWLT Preserves, Ryan and his team of staff and volunteers maintain our four facilities and keep all of our equipment in working order.

To help tackle the tall order of managing so many new preserves – from building trails to restoring habitat – OWLT relies heavily on a robust field crew, bringing on ten summer staff in 2016.

Ryan Wallin reports that in addition to the hard work this group contributed over the season, his young crew provided the extra benefit of inspiring our volunteers: “The stewardship crew’s passion for protecting natural communities is infectious and fantastic! Additionally, the “Cedar 7” AmeriCorps team joined us in the fall – adding eight people to our crew.”

Ryan continued: “The Cedar 7 Team’s curiosity in conservation, wildlife, and native vegetation provided a unique opportunity for our seasoned Stewardship staffers Josh and Christine to share their knowledge and conservation skills and instill a lasting appreciation for natural resources in the AmeriCorps crew.”

Ryan recognizes that volunteers are a key component in helping Ozaukee Washington Land Trust fulfill its mission: “As a new employee in 2016, many of our volunteers reached out to welcome me. I quickly grew to realize how essential volunteers are to our day-to-day operations. From mowing trails, maintaining equipment to pulling garlic mustard, volunteers round out our crew nicely.

Ryan and his team look forward to seeing you outside this year!



LOOKING BACK & MOVING FORWARD



Celebrating 25 Years 1992-2017

Twenty-five years ago (1992) a small band of Ozaukee County conservationists rose up to protect their beloved, but threatened Highland Woods in their “backyard. The idea to become a land “trust” was inspired by the experience of founding board member George Row’s wife Suzanne Row, after learning of a land trust’s essential role in protecting Rookery Bay, Naples, Florida.

That group of volunteers, founders of the Ozaukee Land Trust (OLT), probably didn’t dream that the little organization would grow to merge with their neighbor Washington County and eventually protect over 6,600 acres of precious green space for future generations.

Nor did they foresee that the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWLT) would become nationally accredited and be regarded as one of the leading land trusts in the region. It wasn’t long before the board decided to hire Steve Seyfert as its first executive director in 1996.



The founders include Ginny Bolger, Charlie Mayhew, Barbara Gilmore (pictured above at Sauk Creek Nature Preserve in 1994), Bill Taylor, John Lhost, Jan Montgomery, Jim Reinartz, Carol Bangs, Marion Block, Pat Wilmeth, Barb Greenler, Mary LaVelle, Janet Hessler, Cece Murphy, Mark Murphy, Roberta Hypki and George Row.

In 1998, conservationists from neighboring Washington County approached OLT about merging. It was a serendipitous merger; the combination of the two counties worked well from the outset. Newly named The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, it added protection to the balance of Washington County not covered by the Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, which had served the Cedar Lakes watershed since 1974.

The combined strength of the two counties enabled land protection to increase rapidly under Seyfert’s leadership. The largest transactions during his tenure include the Lion’s Den Gorge and initial land purchases for what is now known as the Mequon Nature Preserve.

In 2003, Shawn Graff took over as executive director, who guided OWLT in purchasing Squires Golf Course north of Port Washington on Lake Michigan. In collaboration with Noel Cutright, noted ornithologist, the land trust slowly converted the golf course into the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve with nine different wildlife habitats and as a home to the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory.

During Graff’s tenure, OWLT’s mission was expanded to include Lake Michigan shoreline in Ozaukee County where millions of migratory birds found safety, feeding and resting spots as they traveled to their breeding grounds. In addition, a land and water conservation approach led to a renewed focus to protect frontage along the Milwaukee River and its tributaries.

As the reins of leadership are handed to Tom Stolp and it shifts to a new chapter, the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust operates with a professional staff of eight, stewards 30 Preserves, and -- much like it was in the beginning-- is backed by a dedicated group of over 1,200 volunteers and members.

Kine Torinus, Past Board President



Forging Partnerships to Tackle Regional Issues

Ozaukee Washington Land Trust continues its leadership role as an innovator and facilitator of public and private partnerships, leveraging these collaborations for land and water protection in our community. The need for collaboration has never been more urgent as the pervasive threat of invasive species burns across our region like wildfire.

Invasive species such as Phragmites, Japanese Knotweed, Purple Loosestrife, and Lyme Grass are serious threats to coastal communities along Lake Michigan. If not controlled now, the great majority of our coastal shoreline, riverbanks and other wetlands will be overtaken by these species and our natural Wisconsin habitat will be greatly diminished.

Since 2012, we have been fortunate to receive funding from the US EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to implement a restoration project focused on invasive plant control throughout a seven county, two state project area.

Launched in 2010, the GLRI accelerates efforts to protect the Great Lakes. The initiative has increased OWLT's capacity to carry out control efforts on our preserves and allowed us to hire Josh Schlicht, Land Steward, and Christine Bohn, Project Coordinator, who implements the GLRI invasive species program.

The project has also helped OWLT Preserves situated on the Milwaukee River - Fellenz Woods, Riverbend, Decorah Woods, and Kratzsch Conservancy. Large areas of these preserves have seen their toxic, fruiting buckthorn eradicated to make way for native revegetation.

In 2017, OWLT is continuing to battle invasive plants by "air, land, and sea." We've "taken to the skies" with aerial photography allowing us to map the location and spread of invasive plants. Our campaign by land and sea involves supporting the development of a new smartphone app that allows citizen to report sightings of invasive plants whether you're paddling or hiking. (Download the "Great Lakes Early Detection Network" app today!)



Help us Commemorate

25 YEARS



In honor of our 25th Anniversary, we ask for your support by purchasing:



- 25 Square Feet of Prairie Seed for \$25
- 25 Intern Hours for \$250
- 25 Silver Maples for \$250
- 25 Wildlife Surveys for \$2,500
- 25 Year Legacy Gift for \$25,000

Your donation will further our mission of protecting land and water resources for future generations. Visit www.owlt.org to make your donation today!



STEWARDSHIP WISHLIST

Many supporters ask for suggestions of “wish list” items they can directly donate. We would gladly accept donations of money or new or gently used items to protect and enhance our land and water. Please contact Tom Stolp for more information: 262-338-1794.

- **Pickup Truck** –OWLT relies on the goodwill of our staff and volunteers, utilizing personal vehicles to manage 6600 acres of land spread across 2 counties. A pick-up truck would allow us to cost-effectively manage our Preserves. (*Guidelines: preferably 1/2-ton pickup for towing*).
- **Enclosed trailer** to serve as our “Mobile Stewardship Center” – OWLT has a need for a mobile trailer to serve as office, repair shop, education classroom, and base camp from which our interns, volunteers and staff can safely work. (*Guidelines: preferably a 20’ or larger trailer, with rear ramp, commonly referred to as “toy haulers” for their ability to tow smaller equipment*).
- **Large Tractors & Implements:** Tractors & Tractor implements, Skid steer and implements, Towable Auger.
- **Battery operated power tools and work radio** (*Guidelines: Milwaukee brand to synchronize with existing equipment*).
- **New Sign Kiosk at OWLT Office**– With a gift of **\$3500** for a new kiosk, we expect to reach more community members.
- **Universally Accessible Ramp** for Forest Beach Club House - **\$5,000** to purchase material for an Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliant ramp to make our facility access friendly to participants with disabilities. It will help make nature a joy for everyone to experience.
- **New Pole Barn/Workshop** for Stewardship Program- **\$65,000-\$85,000** for construction of a metal pole building to meet the needs of our professional Stewardship staff and volunteers.