

Land Matters

A Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust Publication
Spring 2020



NORTHEAST WISCONSIN
LAND TRUST
Preserving Our Natural Heritage

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Land Matters is published by Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, a non-profit, member-supported conservation organization dedicated to preserving lands that protect our waters, landscapes, and natural habitats for this and future generations.

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Contributors

Articles –
David Calle
Kayla Rouse
Anne Jones
Milly Rugland
Dave Overstreet
Bill Christofferson
Karin Borgh
Michael Kraft

Photos –
Relena Ribbons
Michael Kraft
Bill Christofferson
Karin Borgh
Keith Novenski
Fritz Albert
Dave Overstreet
Milly Rugland
Wisconsin Historical Society

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A Healthy Planet Keeps Us Healthy

By David Calle

The recent weeks have turned our lives upside down. I cannot even remember what I was worried about before. Now every day is filled with concerns about staying healthy, keeping family safe, and worrying about the livelihoods of friends whose work has been impacted.

I hope that you and all of your loved ones are safe and well.

One happy place for me has been to think about the good work that we all make possible through Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust. The pandemic reminds us that we are all connected. Continents are connected, people are connected, land is connected, and waters are connected.

As the Native American saying goes, “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” The work of the Land Trust directly enhances the health of our planet for this and future generations.

For the Land Trust, the world has also changed. We have cancelled outreach events and the network of businesses we rely on are closed. We wonder if we will still get the support that we need to continue our work. Thank you for all you do to make sure that we make it through this crucial period.

A great way to recognize what we have accomplished and plan for the future is to celebrate Earth Day’s 50th Anniversary together.

Fifty years ago, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson founded Earth Day, rooted in the powerful belief that all people have the right to a healthy environment.

Nelson biographer and conservation landowner Bill Christofferson reminds us that the most lasting treasure of Earth Day is the environmental education and concern for the world it inspired in generations of young people.

To celebrate Earth Day, let’s of course get outdoors, take in the fresh air, listen to the birds, and watch the buds start to bloom.

Also, please join in making sure that the Land Trust makes it through this turbulent time stronger than ever.



Deb Nett, David Calle and Linda Shealey at our Winter Event

Programs

Brewin’ by the Fox

So good to see you in February at the Emprize Brew Mill! Here are a few pictures of us in the brewery, adding the honey and extras to our own Land Trust lager. Remember...beer is 95% water, so protecting the Fox and Wolf Rivers as they travel north into Green Bay is important work!



Steeping the brew



Adding honey to the brew



Emprize Brew Mill in Menasha

Spring Program
Red Banks: The Land and the People

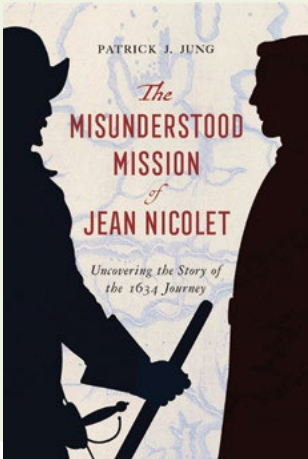
Patrick J. Jung, Author, Historian, Researcher

Join us soon as Professor Jung from MSoE helps us understand the importance of the Red Banks area in Brown County to our regional culture and history.

Red Banks, thought to be the site of Jean Nicolet’s landing, is important to both descendants of early settlers and to tribal groups who occupied the area for millennia. Come learn more about the most current state of knowledge on both. The program will be followed by an optional 2-mile guided hike along the sanctuary’s trails.

Free of charge to Land Trust members, families, and friends.
Registration details upcoming.

Date To Be Determined
Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary
1660 East Shore Drive
Green Bay, Wisconsin



Dr. Jung’s latest book

A Healthy Planet Keesps Us Healthy, continued

As you know, your support protects valuable lands, wildlife habitat, and scenic areas that benefit the health and happiness of everyone in the region. As an extra bonus, your gifts this spring will be doubled by a wonderful group of supporters, including all board members.

I can’t wait to see you all as soon as we resume our gatherings. In the meantime, stay healthy.

David

David Calle
President, Board of Directors

Front cover: Emmons Creek Annual Picnic. Photo credit: Holly Pershing

A History of Wequiock Creek

By Dave Overstreet

Wequiock Creek began as a trickle when the Green Bay lobe of the Wisconsin glacier began to melt some 12,000 years ago. As the meltwaters increased, the trickle became a torrent, and the gorge that now holds the falls was carved out, retreating eastward some 80 meters from the original position of the falls.

Humankind arrived on the scene about 500 years later. At the gorge, the creek exposed a useful tool-stone in the Niagara Escarpment. It was sandwiched in between the upper Silurian and lower Ordovician bedrock classified by geologists as Makquoketa shale. Roughly 2 meters thick, this formation includes greenish-to-gray chert nodules that were used by ancient flint knappers throughout the Green Bay perimeter for at least 11,000 years.

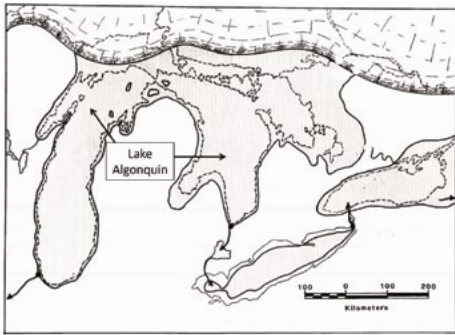
The shale formation persisted as an important chipped stone tool resource for indigenous people until shortly after European-made trade goods became available. Chipped stone tools were then promptly abandoned for iron knives and axes, and clay pots for brass and copper kettles. These items, along with other goods, were traded for the region’s bountiful furs.

The creek valley and Green Bay shoreline stretching from Point Comfort to Point Sauble was always home to indigenous people. The first ice-age hunters wandered along the fringe of tundra where big game such as caribou, muskox, and woolly mammoth could be found. As the ice continued to waste, the water levels rose and inundated the landscape, creating a single lake known as Glacial Lake Algonquin.

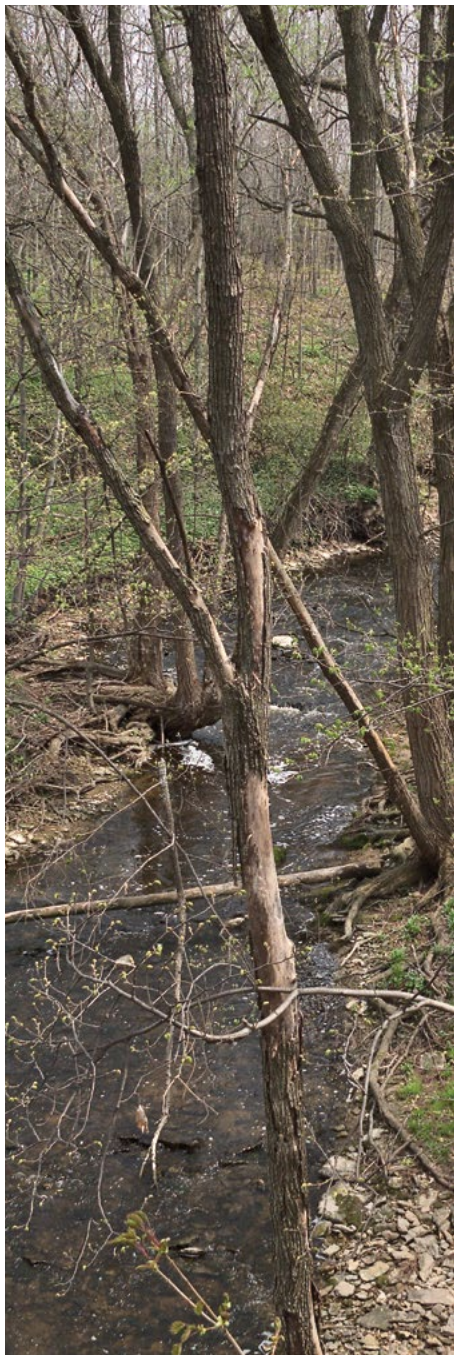
At about 11,000 years ago, Lakes Michigan and Huron were conjoined, and local late ice-age mariners moved about this inland sea by watercraft. Several of their beach campsites have been identified inland from the modern Green Bay shores on the margins of former Glacial Lake Algonquin.

Climate subsequently warmed, terminating the ice-age. As the inland sea disappeared people adapted to the new conditions, which called forth new lifeways. Much of the big game was gone and plant resources and small game and fish grew in importance of subsistence. This was followed later in time by domesticated plants and cultural patterns that persisted until the arrival of Spanish, British, Dutch, and French colonists. They, in turn, disrupted long-standing cultural and economic systems in the “New World.”

At Point Sauble and Wequiock Creek, Jean Nicolet—dispatched to the area in 1634 by Samuel de Champlain, founder of Quebec and New France—is said to have arrived to make peace between warring tribes and to facilitate the French trade in furs. While Nicolet’s landfall has been disputed since the turn of the 20th Century, his statue overlooks the Wequiock Creek Valley and Point Sauble, and artifacts from this period



Glacial Lake Algonquin



Wequiock Creek, Brown County

Life Underneath Our Feet

By Kayla Rouse

The last time you walked in the woods, did it cross your mind that there is life under your feet?

Wisconsin soils are home to a diversity of microbes that support soil and plant health. In fact, there are more microbes in a teaspoon of soil than there are people on earth. These organisms are critical to decomposing organic material and recycling soil nutrients, but scientists still have much to understand about their importance to our ecosystems.

In the summer of 2019, Lawrence University embarked on a project to understand how the quantity of soil microbes varies with habitat type. Relena Ribbons, Lawrence University Assistant Professor of Geosciences, and her student Erin Szablewski designed a study across numerous sites in Northeast Wisconsin.

Through collaboration between Professor Ribbons and NEWLT staff, a group of LU students collected soil samples from fifteen NEWLT preserves where soils are undisturbed by development or agriculture. This included multiple habitat types such as forest, wetland, and prairie.

The students analyzed each soil sample for DNA content to understand quantities of bacteria and fungi. In the process, they gained critical field and lab experience to prepare them for careers in science, including skills such as developing brand new qPCR gene markers. Data analysis is still underway and students hope to sample more sites and more habitat types in the coming year.

NEWLT is proud to partner with Lawrence University and leverage our preserves to help understand more about the life underneath our feet!



Lawrence University students



Reeves Reserve, Waupaca County

We are intertwined with this land, it is our moral obligation to protect it for future life on this planet.

Also, being in nature is pure magic.

—Relena Ribbons

A History of Wequiock Creek, continued

(as well as later British and American interests) are housed at the Neville Public Museum, the Wisconsin Historical Society, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Collaborative efforts are currently underway between land-holders (Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, Town of Scott, and UW-Green Bay’s Cofrin Center of Biodiversity) and stakeholders (Neville Public Museum and Brown County Parks Commission), to develop preservation and interpretive plans for this rich cultural landscape.

About the author:

David Overstreet has conducted archaeological, anthropological, and historical research through the Great Lakes states for 50 years. He retired as director of the Center for Archaeological Research at Marquette University in 2004 and subsequently as director of the Center for Cultural Research at College of Menominee Nation. He has been honored with numerous research awards, including a distinguished lifetime career award from the Midcontinental Archaeological Conference.

Dave is currently working with NEWLT to complete an archaeological survey of its new Wequiock Creek Natural Area.



Photo credit: Wisconsin Historical Society

For These Land Trust Members, Every Day is Earth Day

Dr. Michael Kraft

By Anne Jones

The 50th Anniversary of Earth Day is the perfect time to introduce fellow Land Trust member Dr. Michael Kraft.

While his academic interest in sustainability and environmental policy had already been established, it was the founding of Earth Day in 1970 that convinced a young Dr. Kraft to complete his dissertation on environmental policy. Since then, he has gone on to have a distinguished career as a professor, author, editor, and mentor.

Dr. Kraft grew up in Palm Springs, California, and received his undergraduate degree from UC-Riverside and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from Yale University in 1970. He taught at Vassar College until 1976, when he began a post-doc fellowship at UW-Madison. While at Madison, he was offered a position as Professor of Political Science and Public and Environmental Affairs at UW-Green Bay. He was drawn to Green Bay because of its focus on environmental policy. At the time, it was one of only a handful of universities with a strong, innovative environmental studies program.

Dr. Kraft would go on to author or co-author four books on environmental policy and politics, two of which became best sellers and are widely used as textbooks today.

While on the faculty at UW-Green Bay, he was also a visiting professor at Oberlin College and UW-Madison. He retired from teaching a year ago, but remains professionally active on the editorial boards of several journals, reviewing manuscripts, continuing to write and co-author textbooks, and teaching at UW-Green Bay's Lifelong Learning Institute.

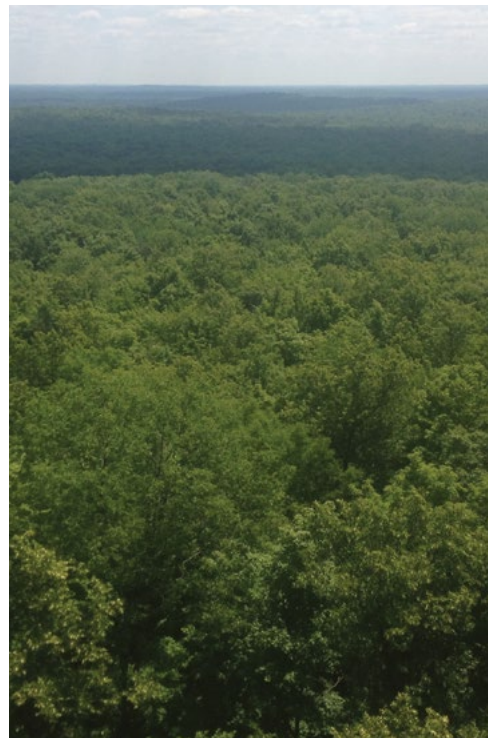
Executive Director Deb Nett was a former student of Dr. Kraft's, and the spark for his Land Trust membership over 15 years ago.

Dr. Kraft believes land trusts have a key role to play in raising public awareness of, and constructive action against, climate change. He particularly supports efforts to maintain and return land to its natural forested state, which allows carbon dioxide to be sequestered from the atmosphere. He is optimistic that public support of NEWLT will continue to grow due to the state's long and passionate history of protecting natural lands for hunting, fishing, and recreation.

We thank Dr. Kraft for his support and life-long dedication to environmental issues and sustainability.



Dr. Michael Kraft



View of Wisconsin's Northwoods

Karin Borgh and Bill Christofferson

Some of Karin Borgh's happiest childhood memories are of summer vacations with her family at a cottage on Waupaca's Chain O' Lakes.

Karin's great-aunt and -uncle built the cottage in 1949 on Butternut Point on Long Lake, one of the largest lakes, on the south end of the 20-lake chain. Karin's family spent the last two weeks of August there every summer while she and her two siblings were growing up.

"It is the most relaxed I can remember ever seeing my dad," Karin said. "It was a real getaway at the end of the summer, before he started another year as a high school history teacher."

It was a simpler time, with card games, no cottage telephone, a trip to nearby Waupaca for root beer and comic books. The mail was delivered by boat, with a mailbox on the pier.

Karin and her husband, Bill Christofferson, co-owned the property with a cousin beginning in 1988 and have owned it since 2002. In 2007, they put the property into a conservation easement with NEWLT. It is a small parcel of less than three acres but heavily wooded and with 280 feet of lake frontage. The small cottage is a classic Wisconsin getaway, complete with knotty pine interior. Going inside is like stepping back in time.

"Driving down Butternut Road, we saw more and more original cottages being torn down and replaced with mini-mansions," Bill said. "We wanted to make sure that didn't happen to Butternut Point." Bill and Karin learned about NEWLT from Gathering Waters, which works with land trusts across the state.

Karin is executive director of BTC Institute in Fitchburg, a nonprofit science education organization. Focusing on the life sciences, programs are designed for a wide range of learners—from upper elementary school students to scientists in academia and industry, as well as the general public.

Bill, a former journalist, is a retired political consultant who has worked in state and local government. He is the author of a biography of former Wisconsin Governor and Senator Gaylord Nelson, who founded Earth Day.

Karin and Bill, who live in Milwaukee, love to see their grandsons, 7 and 9, enjoying the cottage, the lake and the land. "In the summer, we can't get them out of the lake," Karin said. "I remember that feeling well, and I'm happy we can share it with them. They're building the same kind of childhood memories I have. That means a lot."

We thank Karin and Bill for being real exemplars of Wisconsin's environmental ethic.



Karin Borgh and Bill Christofferson

Sparks that Lit the Fire: Gaylord Nelson and Gordon Bubolz’s Conservation Collaboration

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, founded by Democratic Senator Gaylord Nelson. Nelson’s track record of environmental successes started in Wisconsin, and depended on forging friendships and working partnerships across the political aisle.

Counted among his close friends and conservation partners were Gordon Bubolz, a Republican colleague in the Wisconsin Senate with whom Nelson enjoyed a 40-year friendship protecting the state’s priority lands and resources.

Gordon Bubolz’ daughter, Milly Rugland—Land Trust member and former Board President—remembers Gaylord visiting their Appleton home often, and recalls that “while Dad was Republican and Gaylord a Democrat, they became good friends and worked together on many issues...most importantly conservation.”

Gordon Bubolz was President and CEO of Secura Insurance Companies, now a \$1.4 B property and casualty insurer in Neenah. In 1945, the prominent Republican was elected to the Wisconsin Senate, where he served until 1953. His term partly overlapped that of Nelson’s, who served in the state senate from 1948-58, before becoming Wisconsin’s Governor and then U.S. Senator.

Despite their political differences, Nelson and Bubolz were great colleagues. Their friendship literally began in the senate, but their affinity for one another was rooted in an intense and shared love of nature. Bubolz was raised on a farm in Seymour, and found solace in the farm’s swampy woodlots, while Nelson was raised in the small town of Clear Lake, and spent much time outdoors. Over time, they worked together to protect Wisconsin’s waters and special natural areas.

When Nelson joined the Wisconsin Senate in 1948, Bubolz was already known as a leader with a strong environmental bent. According to Milly, her father wouldn’t hesitate to speak out about environmental concerns “to anyone who would listen.” That same year, Bubolz, Nelson, and other environmental collaborators achieved passage of the state’s Water Pollution Control Act, which targeted water pollution by the paper industry. At the time, ‘the environment’ was a concern largely taken for granted or ignored, and the act was highly controversial among those fearing it would destroy the industry.

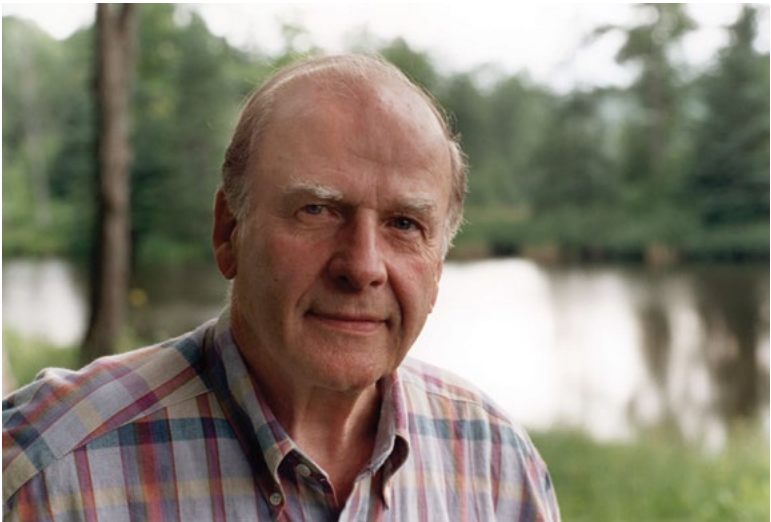
Nelson and Bubolz continued to work together to create and gain support for many environmental regulations, protective agencies and causes. “Through their friendship and years of collaboration I also came to know Gaylord,” added Milly. “I voted for him for U.S. Senate and my dad, a Republican, would pretend to complain about this.” In response, “Gaylord would joke that he was glad to learn that Dad had a daughter who was more intelligent than he was.”

After retiring from the Senate, Bubolz continued his environmental work and stayed in touch with Nelson. In the early 1960’s, he and a small group of Wolf River supporters asked for a meeting with then Governor Nelson to request establishment of a 9-county Wolf River Regional Planning Commission.



Gordon Bubolz

Governor Nelson agreed, and the group’s goal was to protect the headwaters, shorelands, wetlands, lakes, and wilderness areas of the Wolf River Basin. A tour of the Wolf River underscored that the river observed no county boundaries and that collective planning and protection was needed. Governor Nelson agreed, and—in 1962, when regional planning commissions were not familiar to legislators or the public—named Bubolz Chairman of the Commission. Bubolz held the role for 10 years, and, under his direction, the commission created model floodplain and shoreland zoning ordinances.



Gaylord Nelson (Photo credit: Fritz Albert)

The Commission was also provided scientific resources and staff, mostly ecologists, who were tasked with identifying lands whose preservation was most important. They drew up a list of 21 priority lands in the state. “Dad,” says Rugland, “used this list to continue to preserve special natural areas, and all were eventually saved.”

Bubolz also worked with Nelson to develop a Department of Resources Development. Nelson named Bubolz chairman of that Advisory Committee, which was directed to complete a statewide resources inventory and accompanying analysis. With Nelson’s leadership, a 1% tax was initiated to purchase these important wilderness and headwater areas.

Continued collaboration with Nelson was instrumental to the success of Bubolz’ private initiative, the Natural Resources Preservation, Inc., a nonprofit he founded in 1974. The organization was a precursor to land trusts, and a force for acquiring and protecting natural lands.

Often working with local counties, the group permanently preserved nearly 4,600 acres of wild lands in Wisconsin. These preserves include Fallen Timbers, Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve, Hayman Falls, Hobbs Woods, Mosquito Hill, Mt. Morris Hills, Mukwa Marsh, Waukau Creek, Woodland Dunes, and their most significant project, High Cliff State Park.

“These preservation accomplishments were successful only because Dad was joined by other preservation-minded people who stepped up to raise awareness, and money, and set up nonprofit groups to run and maintain the preserves,” says Rugland.

Knowing that his friend would actively and effectively promote conservation goals, Gaylord Nelson honored and extended Gordon Bubolz’ work by nominating him to key positions and awards. These included a National Wildlife Federation Conservationist of the Year award and participation in the prestigious White House Conference on Conservation that spotlights community-driven conservation efforts.

The last time she saw Gaylord Nelson was at another milestone Earth Day celebration held in Oshkosh. “Typical of his outgoing and congenial nature,” Milly says, “he found out that I was at the NEWLT table and came over to talk with me and reminisce about memories of time spent with Dad.” He applauded the Land Trust’s contribution to our environment through land conservation.

Both men were visionary leaders who could motivate others to make things happen. But it was because of their enduring friendship, partnership, and exchange of ideas, Rugland reflects, that they became “sparks that lit the fire” of clean water regulation and land preservation in Wisconsin.

There is much to be learned from their friendship and collaboration.

Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust thanks everyone who has generously supported its mission!

Contributors (10/15/19–4/15/20)
Thank you—you are true champions of our lands, water, and wildlife!

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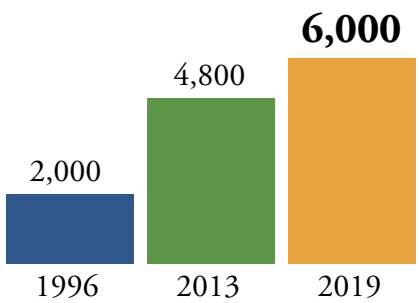


The mission of Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust is to preserve lands that protect our waters, landscapes, and natural habitats for this and future generations.

Natural Lands

Since its founding in 1996, the Land Trust has protected:

6,000 acres of priority lands



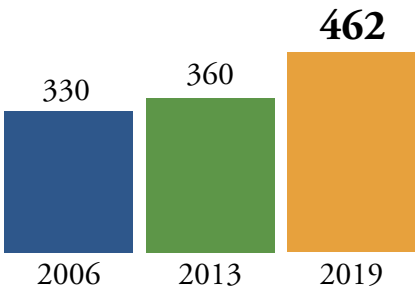
Including:
34 miles of shoreline
950 acres of wetlands
24 Land Legacy Places
5 State Natural Areas

82% of acres held in private conservancies
all 42 conservancies monitored annually

In 2019, with conservation partners, NEWLT won the prestigious National Coastal Wetlands grant to acquire its 12th Public Preserve: Wequiock Creek Natural Area. Other preserves include the last cattail marsh on the Lower Fox River and a rare alvar habitat in the Red Bank project area.

Community Engagement

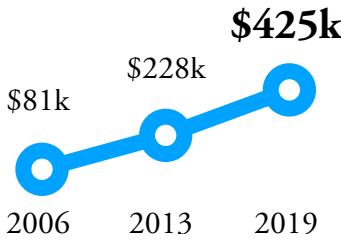
462 Donor Families
+12% vs. 2018



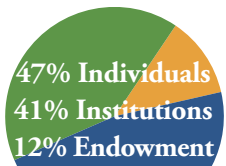
1,500 people engaged
+2,700 website visitors

Financial Stability

Operating Income

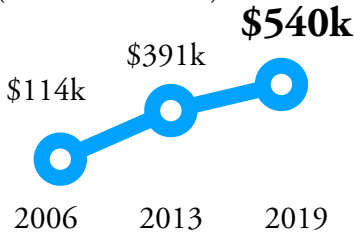


2019 Operating Income Mix and Investment



83% Program
8% Engagement
9% Administration

Endowment
(Internal and External)



Recent Successes

Wequiock Creek Natural Area, Brown Co.
(July through October 2019)

Northern Lake Conservancy, Marinette Co.
Largest in our history
(December 2018)

Oconto Preserve, Oconto Co.
Coastal wetland & community conservation area doubled in size
(April 2018)

Recognition

Presenter, International Great Lake Conference (2019)

Land Trust Alliance Accreditation (2017)

Wisconsin Land Trust of the Year (2016)



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Save the Date!

Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust 3rd Annual Land Fest Saturday September 12, 2020

Wequiock Creek Natural Area, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Join us for the Grand Opening of the Land Trust's newest public preserve, the Wequiock Creek Natural Area in Brown County.

Located adjacent to the Point au Sable peninsula, the new natural area protects one of lower Green Bay's most significant "green corridors." Wequiock Creek and unspoiled surrounding lands are part of the 1.9-mile corridor that connects the important Point au Sable coastal wetland to Wequiock Falls.

The annual gathering will feature a picnic lunch, guided hikes, plein air painters, and a tribute to partners that made the \$1.5 million project possible—WDNR, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Fox River Trustee Council, Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, The 1923 Fund, David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund, Town of Scott, and UW-Green Bay's Cofrin Center for Biodiversity.

