

**The Natural Heritage Land Trust protects natural areas, wildlife habitat, working farms, healthy lakes and streams, and recreation land to provide a high quality of life in the Dane County, Wisconsin region.**

We protect land through voluntary agreements—called conservation easements—with landowners. We also buy land to create nature preserves and parks that will be open to the public for hiking, picnicking, and other outdoor activities. Since our inception in 1983, we—working in partnership with our members, local groups, government agencies, and funders—have protected 4,387 acres of land; including 1,123 acres in this fiscal year alone.

#### Protected land in key areas.

**The Natural Heritage Land Trust protected 1,123 acres this year; more land than we've ever protected in a single year!** To maximize our on-the-ground impact, we focused our land protection work in three areas: the Black Earth Creek Valley, Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site, and the Town of Dunn.

**Black Earth Creek Valley:** Located in northwest Dane County, this valley is known for its scenic landscape, productive farmlands, and rural character. Black Earth Creek, a key feature of the valley, is a regionally important and locally cherished trout stream. Because the conservation and recreation values of the valley are so significant, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) included the Black Earth Creek valley in its Land Legacy Report, a list of the 229 places that are critical to protect “to meet Wisconsin's future conservation and recreation needs in the next 50 years.” The Natural Heritage Land Trust is committed to helping the valley's landowners and communities maintain the characteristics that make this area unique.

• Helped Dane County create a 294-acre natural resource area. Dane County and the Land Trust completed Phase 2 of their acquisition of the 294-acre Sunnyside Seed Farm when they purchased 221 acres in August 2005. Although the public use facilities have not yet been developed, the property is now open to the public for hiking, fishing, and other nature-based activities. Located in the northwestern area of the Town of Middleton along Highway 14, the Sunnyside natural resource area includes wetlands, prairie remnants, and woods. Because of its size and location, the area provides a large recharge area for water infiltration into Black Earth Creek, which helps keep the stream filled with clean water. From high points on the property, it's possible to see Blue Mounds 14 miles away. To help the County acquire this property, the Land Trust sought and received \$1.8 million from the state's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. The Land Trust also helped inform elected officials and area residents about the opportunity to protect this property—those actions helped convince the Town of Middleton to contribute \$1.25 million to the project.

• Purchased a 53-acre parcel of land and donated it to the Village of Cross Plains for a conservancy park. After two years of negotiations with four landowners, the Land Trust purchased Hickory Hills—a wooded bluff that rewards visitors with spectacular views of the valley below. The Land Trust then donated the land to the Village of Cross Plains for a conservancy park. The acquisition is important because it increases the amount of land available to the public for nature-based recreation activities and because it is adjacent to land owned by the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation. Eventually, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail will cross the conservancy park and connect with existing trail. The Land Trust holds a conservation easement over the property to ensure it will always be protected and open to the public as the landowners wanted. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program provided the funds to purchase the land, which the owners sold to the Land Trust below market price.

**Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site:** Located just outside the City of Sun Prairie, this site encompasses 785 acres. It is biologically rich and could be restored to important wildlife habitat. Like the Black Earth Creek valley, the DNR included Patrick Marsh in its Land Legacy Report. Unfortunately, less than 45% of the site is currently protected. The Natural Heritage Land Trust is committed to purchasing land at the site, restoring it to wildlife habitat, creating trails that connect the protected properties at the Marsh with surrounding neighborhoods, and opening the land to the public for hiking, nature study, and other activities.

• Purchased 23 acres of land at the Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site. With a lot of help from its partners, the Land Trust bought a 23-acre parcel of land at Patrick Marsh in July 2005. This brings the Land Trust's total holdings at Patrick Marsh to 58 acres. The Land Trust will ultimately restore this property and open it to the public. The Land Trust was able to buy this property because the sellers worked with us to limit the size of their housing development and sell the remainder of the property to the Land Trust below market price. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, the Dane County Conservation Fund, and the City of Sun Prairie provided the lion's share of the funding for the purchase.

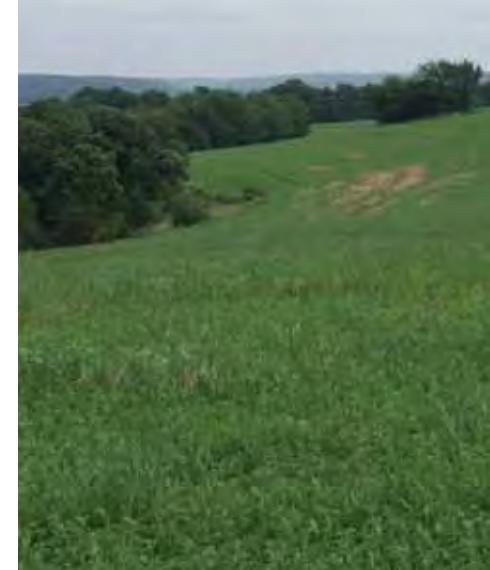
**Town of Dunn:** To help preserve its farmland, residents of the Town of Dunn created a purchase of development rights program in 1996. Since that time, the Town has protected nearly 2,700 acres of farmland and wetlands. Over the course of our fiscal year, the Town protected four more farms covering 478 acres. The largest conservation easement, which covers 162 acres, is particularly important—it connects a corridor of five farms protected by conservation easements. The three other easements also connect with other protected farms. As it has done previously with 13 other farms, the Natural Heritage Land Trust has taken on the responsibility of monitoring and enforcing the terms of the four new conservation easements to ensure that the farmland and rural qualities will be maintained forever.

#### Assisted others working to protect important lands outside of our focus areas.

**Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area:** The Natural Heritage Land Trust bought 349 acres of land adjacent to the Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area—the largest purchase in its 23-year history. Avon Bottoms State Wildlife Area is approximately 10 miles west of Beloit in Rock County. The nearly 2,000-acre area includes oak woodlots, grassland, river, and marsh lands. It provides habitat for deer, pheasants, turkey, and waterfowl. The area is open to the public for bird watching, canoeing, fishing, and hunting. The federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program provided the funds for this acquisition. The NRCS will restore the land to a mosaic of prairie, forest, and marsh. Once the restoration is complete, the Land Trust will give the land to the State of Wisconsin for inclusion in the Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area.

#### Stewarded protected lands.

The Natural Heritage Land Trust monitored 31 parcels of land on which we hold conservation easements to ensure landowners are complying with the terms of the easements and to assist them with management issues. We also assisted Cave of the Mounds National Natural Landmark in the preparation of a land management plan for the oak woodland protected by a 26-acre conservation easement co-held by the Land Trust and Dane County.



**The Natural Heritage Land Trust is grateful to all of its members for their support and wishes to recognize its major contributors.**

\$2,500,000+ Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

\$1,000,000+ Dane County Conservation Fund  
\$500,000+ US Department of Agriculture/Wetlands Reserve Program/Natural Resources Conservation Service

\$75,000+ Madison Community Foundation • North American Wetlands Conservation Act  
\$50,000+ City of Sun Prairie  
\$5,000+ Eugenie Mayer Bolz Foundation  
\$2,500+ BT<sup>2</sup> Engineering & Science • William Fairbanks • Walt & Stacey Meanwell • REI • *The Capital Times*

\$1,000+ Tom Bergamini & Herika Kummer • Sherren Clark • Michael & Shelley Dubis • Lloyd & Pat Eagan • Rob Gottschalk & Joy Stieglitz Gottschalk • Larry Hitch • Hooper Foundation/Hooper Construction & General Heating and Air Conditioning • John Feith • John J. Frautschi Family Foundation, Inc. • Lathrop & Clark LLP • Martha Lound • Bill Lunney & Judie Pfeifer • Walter A. & Jean Meanwell • Michael Best & Friedrich LLP • Natural Resources Consulting, Inc. • Bill O'Connor & Krista Roys • Kathy F. & Bill Pielsticker • Glenn Reini & Sara Krebsbach • Michael & Linda Slavney • Soleil Development Corporation • Jeffrey Strobel • Vandewalle & Associates, Inc. • Veridian Homes Foundation • Webcrafters-Frautschi Foundation • Wheeler, Van Sickle & Anderson, S.C. • Bill & Win Welsh

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