

Land Trust protects prime farmlands in the Black Earth Creek Watershed

The Natural Heritage Land Trust just signed a conservation easement with landowners Ken and Charleen Zander in the Black Earth Creek watershed.

Ken's family has farmed the property for more than 100 years. During his lifetime, Ken developed a deep appreciation for their agricultural land. "It was the idea of preserving the farmland," said Mr. Zander, which motivated him to put a conservation easement on his property.

As a result, 215 acres of high-quality farmland in the Black Earth Creek watershed will be protected from development. Protecting this property will also help protect Black Earth Creek and the valley's scenic views.

"We are very grateful we were able to work with the Zanders to protect this farmland for future generations," said Kathy Pielsticker, President of the Land Trust. "The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has classified more than 60% of the soils on this property as prime or of statewide importance. This easement ensures that the land won't be developed and that it can remain in agricultural production."

Protecting the property from development will also help protect Black Earth Creek, a regionally important trout fishery. Black Earth Creek is fed by springs and groundwater recharge. Zander's property drains into the creek and provides a large area for water infiltration. Protecting large parcels of land in this watershed helps maintain the quantity and quality of water making its way to Black Earth Creek.

"It's really wonderful that this property is protected from future development," said Susan Fey, President of the Southern Wisconsin chapter of Trout Unlimited. "Part of the property adjoins public fishing lands owned by the Department of Natural Resources. In addition



to helping protect the creek itself, the easement prohibits the building of homes or other structures that could significantly diminish the fishing and recreational experience of people using these public lands."

The Land Trust purchased the conservation easement with financial support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, the State Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, and the Dane County Conservation Fund.

Protecting the agricultural use and open space characteristics of this property meets the goals of several local plans. The Black Earth Creek Resource Area, which is an element of the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan 2001 - 2005, includes a portion of the Zander property and identifies the property as prime farmland. In addition, the land use plan of the Town of Cross Plains includes most of the Zander property within its Farmland Preservation Area. And the comprehensive plan of the Town of Berry includes it in its Agricultural and Rural Lands Preservation Area.

For more information about this project or conservation easements, please contact Kate Wipperman, Conservation Specialist, at 608-258-9797. ■

The Zander family has placed a conservation easement on their farm in the Black Earth Creek Watershed.





Natural Heritage
LAND TRUST

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2004 Stewardship Award Celebration

At our Stewardship Awards Celebration in May, we honored several people who have made significant contributions to conservation in Dane County and surrounding areas. We also heard from Dane County Executive, Kathleen Falk, who outlined her ambitious new program—Attain Dane—to combat sprawl.

Land Trust Honors Bolz Family

In recognition of the Bolz family's generational commitment to conservation in Dane County and to Bob and Anne's personal commitment to the Land Trust, we named our lifetime stewardship award the Bolz Lifetime Stewardship Award.

At the Stewardship Awards Banquet in May, Kathy Pielsticker, President of the Land Trust, explained that Bob, and his brother, Jack, learned about conservation from their father, who instilled a love of the land and community in his sons. The Bolz Conservancy Park in the Village of Waunakee is one of the properties their father had purchased to protect it from development. Bob and Jack permanently protected it with a conservation easement that is held by the Land Trust.

In addition to helping found the Land Trust and to entrusting us with the protection of family lands, Bob and Anne established a \$125,000 endowment for the Land Trust through the Eugenie Mayer Bolz Family Foundation. This endowment supports our daily operations now and will continue to do so in the future.

Land Trust Presents Stewardship Awards

The first recipients of the Bolz Lifetime Stewardship Award include: Ken LePine, a lifetime conservationist and parks professional who dedicated his career to protecting natural areas and recreational lands in Dane County; Phil Lewis, a professor who developed a process to identify and protect lands with high conservation value; and Jean Meanwell, a founder of our organization and Gathering Waters Conservancy.

We also presented awards to people who have made important contributions over the course of the last year. We recognized the two-person partnership of Glenda Denniston and Roma Lenahan, who steward the natural areas on UW-Madison's campus (including Wally Bauman Woods which is our first conservation easement). We also recognized the Town of



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Merrimac in Sauk County for its farsighted vision and commitment to protecting open space on the highly developed Lake Wisconsin.

Kathleen Falk speaks about Attain Dane

"I've come to believe that a bold initiative is needed, or we will simply plan ourselves to sprawl to death," said Kathleen Falk.

During her keynote speech, Falk outlined her initiative—Attain Dane—to combat sprawl. She explained that Attain Dane is a long-range plan aimed at preventing sprawl through a regional, comprehensive approach to housing, transportation and open space issues.

Attain Dane includes two major points: 1) A Shared Vision: Citizens and governmental units would create a "build out plan" to identify the best long-term pattern of development and conservation that integrates new development, existing infrastructure, environmental protection, and community character. This plan would be incorporated into the county's comprehensive plan. 2) Tools to Implement the Vision: This could include: a transfer and/or purchase of development rights program to protect farmlands and natural areas; a system of tax base sharing to share the benefits of development; and an intergovernmental agreement to ensure coordination among all units of government.

Falk, with the help of Mike Slavney, a planning consultant and a former Natural Heritage Land Trust board president, developed this plan in response to the concerns Dane County citizens have raised about sprawl and the loss of agricultural lands. This ambitious plan could change the way land is developed and conserved in Dane County and set a standard that could be replicated in others areas throughout the country. ■

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Land Trust Welcomes New Board Members

Following a spring election, three new people joined the board on July 1. The new board members are Tom Bergamini, Mike Dubis, and Ken LePine.

Tom Bergamini is a Principal, Senior Hydrogeologist, and co-founder of BT², Inc., a civil and environmental engineering consulting firm in Madison. Tom also co-founded Gateway Real Estate, LLC, a Brownfield Redevelopment Company that specializes in repositioning and redeveloping contaminated properties. He has an M.S. in Water Resources Management from UW-Madison. In his spare time, Tom and his wife Herika enjoy fishing, camping, snowboarding, and travel.

Michael Dubis is a Certified Financial Planner™ and President of Touchstone Financial, LLC. He is active in several non-profit organizations, including Southwest Wisconsin chapter Trout Unlimited, West Towne Middleton Rotary, the WI Real Estate Alumni Association, and the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors. Mike completes his life with his wife

Shelley, and golden retriever, Amber. He is an avid reader, enjoys the outdoors, and devotes many hours to perfecting his fly-fishing skills.

Ken LePine retired from Dane County Parks in 2003 where he had worked for more than 20 years; the last 13 as Director. Under his leadership, the County added more than 4,500 acres of land to its park system; established a volunteer program to help maintain those areas; developed the Conservation Fund Grants Program; and conceived and built the Lussier Family Heritage Center. Ken is keeping himself busier than he had intended during his retirement helping people with home construction projects. Ken is married to Beth and has two adult children.

In addition to welcoming new board members, the Land Trust thanks Nancy Mead, who stepped down from the board during the past fiscal year. The Land Trust extends much appreciation to out-going board member Mark B. Williams who served on the board for more than nine years; the last two as president. ■

City of Sun Prairie commits \$150,000 to Patrick Marsh Project

On September 7, the City of Sun Prairie's Common Council pledged \$150,000 to the Land Trust to help purchase land near Patrick Marsh.

This gift will allow the Land Trust and the Patrick Marsh Conservancy to complete the purchase of an approximately 35-acre parcel of property within the Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site.

The Land Trust previously secured grants from the county, state, and Ducks Unlimited for this purchase.

Calendar

**Saturday, October 2
Information Session:
Ways to Give to your
Land Trust**

9:00 am to 10:30 am
Lussier Heritage Family Center
3101 Lake Farm Road
Madison
Contact Meg Nelson
to sign up for the seminar
meg@nhlt.org or 608-258-9797

Ways to Give

... an information session about making charitable gifts

The Natural Heritage Land Trust is hosting an information session about charitable giving. Charitable gifts are critical to the Land Trust's continued ability to protect natural areas, agricultural lands, and open spaces in Dane County and surrounding areas.

The session will be on Saturday, October 2, in the Ken LePine Hall on the lower level in the Lussier Heritage Family Center at 3101 Lake Farm Road in Madison. It will run from 9:00 am to 10:30 am and start with a continental breakfast.

Johanna London, an attorney with Michael Best & Friedrich, whose area of practice includes estate and financial planning, will outline and discuss the different ways people can make gifts to the Land Trust. She will cover in-kind donations, and gifts of cash, stock, and real estate. She will also explain split interest gifts including charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, and charitable lead trusts.

In addition, long-term members Judie Pfeifer and Bill Lunney will briefly share why they decided to include the Land Trust in their will.

After the formal presentation, Johanna and Mike Dubis, Certified Financial Planner and President of Touchstone Financial, LLC, will be available to talk with people individually. Both Johanna and Mike are board members of the Land Trust.

To sign up for this seminar, email Meg Nelson at meg@nhlt.org or call her at 258-9797, by Monday, September 27. ■

Partnership protects 66 acres of land in the Town of Dunn

The Town of Dunn recently protected an additional 66 acres of agricultural land and open space through its purchase of development rights program. The Town and the Land Trust co-hold the conservation easement on this property. This is the 13th easement co-held by the two partners.

Approximately 18% of the soils on the property have been classified as Prime Farmland and 20% have been classified as Statewide Important Farmland by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Department of Agriculture. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has designated approximately 13 acres of the property as wetland.

The Town of Dunn is a nationally-recognized leader in farmland protection. It purchased the conservation easement on this property through its Rural Preservation Program. The Land Trust will monitor the property to ensure land management activities comply with the terms of the easement. ■



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