

landscene

Spring 2011

Natural Heritage
LAND TRUST

PERMANENTLY
PROTECTED

MARIO QUINTANA



Over One Mile of Vermont Creek Permanently Protected

Bubbling up from the eastern hills of the Driftless Area, Vermont Creek begins its 7-mile journey. If you have driven highway 78 from Mount Horeb to Black Earth, it has been your constant companion. Sometimes it skulks in dense brush, other times it shoots straight as an arrow through corn fields or meanders through pastures. Eventually it empties into Black Earth Creek.

As with many cold-water streams in Dane County, recent history hasn't been kind to Vermont Creek. Over the last century it has been straightened, its banks have been buried in eroding soil from poor farming practices, and woody brush has taken over in many sections. Even the DNR, in a less enlightened time, dammed a large spring that fed the creek with the cold water critical to the trout fishery and used it as a fish-rearing pond.

In recent years, however, much has been done to bring Vermont Creek back to its former glory. In cooperation with landowners, the Dane County Land Conservation Division, DNR, and Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited have been active in putting the creek back in its meandering stream bed, recontouring and stabilizing the banks, clearing brush, building fish habitat structures, and fixing culverts that once blocked fish passage. And, yes, that DNR dam has been removed.

To help protect these investments and ensure permanent public access to the creek, the Natural Heritage Land Trust completed two streambank easements along over a mile of Vermont Creek just outside the Village of Black Earth. The permanent easements create a wide corridor along both sides of the meandering stream for the public to use and enjoy.

These easements were made possible through a partnership with Dane County, the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and landowners Steve and Barb Parrell and Sandra Johnson. Funding was provided by the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, Dane County Land and Water Legacy Fund, Trout Unlimited, Madison Community Foundation, and the continued support of our members. ■

WISCONSIN'S
2010
LAND TRUST
OF THE YEAR

Discover Vermont Creek

Tuesday, May 10, 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Thursday, May 12, 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Come join us and explore Vermont Creek—a picturesque trout stream and important tributary to Black Earth Creek in western Dane County. Trip leaders will be Dane County Conservationist Pat Sutter on May 10th and Water Resources Planner Pete Jopke on May 12th. They will provide inside accounts of how the county has been working to re-meander sections of the creek, stabilize and re-vegetate its banks, and build fish habitat structures.

This outing is free of charge, but space is limited and pre-registration is required.

To register or learn more, please contact Heidi Habeger at heidi@nhlt.org or 258-9797.

Sign-up Today!

Special thanks to On the Creek, DEW Signs & Engraving, the Shoe Box, and The Flower Factory for sponsoring the field trip to Vermont Creek.





Bird Walk at Rattlesnake Ridge

Saturday, May 7, 8:00 – 10:00 am

Grab your binoculars and join us for our spring bird walk. We'll be visiting a 290-acre conservation easement north of Dodgeville, which protects a forested ridge and valley landscape along Sneed Creek. The Land Trust's Conservation Specialist Caleb Pourchot will help us identify birds. We will be on the lookout for various warblers and other neotropical migrants. Don't miss your chance to visit this scenic wonderland the landowners call Rattlesnake Ridge.

Carpool with us from the Land Trust office or meet there. Please wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots. The field trip is free of charge but space is limited and pre-registration is required.

To register, please contact Heidi Habeger at heidi@nhlt.org or 258-9797. Sign-up Today!



Special thanks to Cardinal Solar Technologies for sponsoring the bird walk.

Join today! Your gift will be matched!

New member gifts, up to \$1,100, will be matched by NHLT board member, William Van Haren and Roz Gausman

Please fill out this form and return it to Natural Heritage Land Trust, 303 S. Paterson St., Suite 6, Madison, WI 53703. *If you prefer to donate online, go to www.nhlt.org.*

\$45 \$60 \$100 \$250 Other _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Payment Method: Check enclosed (payable to Natural Heritage Land Trust) Bill my credit card: Visa Mastercard

Name on card _____

Card number _____ Exp. Date _____

To make a credit card donation by phone, please call 608-258-9797.

Contributions are tax-deductible as provided for by law.

350 acres of farmland protected at Military Ridge

In December, the Natural Heritage Land Trust collaborated with Driftless Area Land Conservancy to permanently protect 350 acres of farmland in eastern Iowa County within the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area. The two adjacent farms are owned by John and Nancy Meyers, who have been farming here since the early 1980's.

John and Nancy ran the farm as a dairy for 26 years while they raised their three children. Presently they raise crops and run a herd of grazed beef cattle in partnership with their oldest son.

They have seen many changes in the landscape over the years. Of particular concern was the pressure on land prices driven by urban commuters who had deeper pockets than the farmers they were competing with. John worried that farming was going to become a lost way of life if new farmers couldn't afford to get in.

At the same time, a different dynamic was starting to play out. The Nature Conservancy, among other groups, had taken a particular interest in the area as one of the best places to preserve large tracts of open grassland habitat. Then, one of the Meyers' respected neighbors sold a conservation easement that preserved his land as a working farm. Through conservation easements, there now appeared a way to protect agricultural lands, keep them affordable for the next generation of farmers, and benefit the grassland habitat of so many declining animal species.

"Protecting our farm with a conservation easement has been a win-win for everyone," says John. "We are helping preserve the future of agriculture in this area and maintaining habitat for the wildlife."

We thank John and Nancy for their conservation ethic and dedication to their land. Funding came from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, the NRCS Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, a generous donation by the landowners, and Land Trust members. ■

**Remember the Land Trust
in your will and consider
joining the Legacy Circle**

President's Circle

Thank you to our President's Circle members for providing the strong and steady financial support the Natural Heritage Land Trust needs to permanently protect the mosaic of lands we cherish in and around Dane County.

\$5,000+

Alice and Rick Godfrey
Jim and Rumi O'Brien

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Jan and Dan Chabot
Sherren Clark
Government Policy Solutions
Maura Whitmore

\$2,000 - \$2,499

BT Squared, Inc.
Brad and Barbara Glass
Lawrence Hitch
Martha Lound

William and Gail Van Haren
Marc Vitale and Darcy Kind

\$1,001 - \$1,999

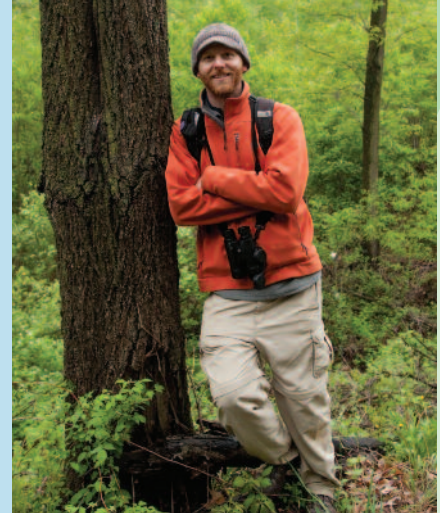
Michael and Shelley Dubis
Marie Fraser
General Heating and Air Conditioning
Joy and Rob Gottschalk
Hooper Corporation
Tom and Margie Krauskopf
Phoebe R. and John D. Lewis Foundation
Frank and Mariana Weinhold
Jim Welsh
Wheeler, Van Sickle & Anderson, S.C.
Rolf and Susan Wulfsberg

\$1,000

Dr. James Amstadt
Bruce Bauman and Emily Bair
Becker Law Office, S.C.
Mary Binkley

Anne Bolz
Lou and Nancy Bruch
Dana and Pat Chabot
Patrick and Lloyd Eagan
Vicki Elkin and Mike Ivey
Dan and Natalie Erdman
John Feith
Martha Frey
Bill Kilgour
David Lee
Kathleen A McCormick and James B Powell
Sarah and Mark McGuire
MGE Foundation
Mike and Pepé Foundation
Bill O'Connor and Krista Roys
PAN-O-GOLD Baking Co./Village Hearth Breads
Scott and Cary Reich
Glenn Reinl and Sara Krebsbach
David and Katie Simon
Michael and Linda Slavney
Stantec
Jeffrey Strobel
Don and Joanne Tierney
Vern and Vicki Treinen
Vandewalle & Associates, Inc.
Bill and Lorette Wambach
Bill and Win Welsh

If you are interested in supporting local land conservation with a major gift, please contact Martha Frey at 258-9797 or Martha@nhlt.org or William Van Haren at 845-9601 or billvh23@yahoo.com.



Caleb Pourchot led the Hickory Hill Bird Walk in May 2010.

Hello Caleb

Caleb Pourchot became the Land Trust's Conservation Specialist last year. He works with landowners to complete conservation easement and land acquisition projects. Caleb has been working for the Land Trust in various roles since 2007.

What did you do before joining the Land Trust? I worked for about a decade making software. I decided I wanted to do something more public service oriented, so I went back to school, got an environmental degree, and started searching for organizations doing great work.

What do you hope to accomplish at the Land Trust? I want to be a part of permanently protecting great landscapes. I want my grandchildren's experience of the southern Wisconsin landscape to be better than mine.

What is your favorite natural history book? I don't have a single favorite, but there are a few I recommend: Nature's Metropolis by William Cronon, 1491 by Charles Mann, Collapse by Jared Diamond.

Can you tell us about your interest in birding? Birds are fascinating in their own right, but birding as a hobby is like a perpetual treasure hunt. Anywhere you go on earth, you can spend hours looking for birds. It's great fun.

Caleb can be reached by phone at 258-9797 or by email at caleb@nhlt.org.

Thank you to our wonderful corps of 2010 volunteers: they lead field trips, design web sites, raise money, provide expert guidance, and more.

Matt Covert • Eileen Dresser • Shirley Droste • Natalie Erdman • Robert Farrell • Rob Gottschalk • Janet Beach Hanson • Rich Henderson • Chris Hughes • Derek Johnson • Claudia Kessel • Rich Lampe • Tim Mair • John Mason • Erin McMahan • Mario Quintana • Cary Reich • Harriet Riley • Eugene M. Roark • Maria Sadowski • Pat Sammataro • Nancy Schlimgen • Mary Schwoch • Chandru Solraj • Kevin St. Angel • Nicole Staskowski • Aaron Stephenson • Matthew Sudac • Lee Swanson • Tim Tielens • Si Widstrand • Kate Wipperman

Peggie James (NRCS), David Kopitzke (Driftless Area Land Conservancy), Nancy Meyers, John Meyers, and Jim Welsh (Natural Heritage Land Trust) at the closing of the Meyers easements.



Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 245
Madison, WI



Natural Heritage
LAND TRUST

Conservation where you live

303 S Paterson St, Suite 6
Madison, WI 53703

www.nhlt.org

INSIDE

- **Vermont Creek streambank protected**
- **Two farms preserved in Military Ridge**
- **Prime farmland preserved in Town of Windsor**

YOU HAVE HELPED PERMANENTLY PROTECT 7,159 ACRES OF CHERISHED LOCAL LAND SINCE 1983

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

President

Carla Wright

Vice President

David Simon

Treasurer

Mike Dubis

Secretary

Brenda R. Haskins

Directors

Tom Bergamini

Rosalind Gausman

Angela James

Darcy Kind

Renee Lauber

David Z. Rice

Kevin B. Shelley

William Van Haren

Mariana Weinhold

Past Presidents

Johanna J. Alex

Norman C. Anderson

John B. Hutchinson

William G. Lunney

Jean D. Meanwell

Kathy F. Pielsticker

Michael A. Slavney

Mark B. Williams

Executive Director

Jim Welsh

Membership Director

Martha Frey

Conservation Specialist

Caleb Pourchot

Membership Coordinator

Heidi Habeger

First Town of Windsor farm easement completed

In November, the Natural Heritage Land Trust partnered with the Town of Windsor, Dane County, NRCS Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, and landowners Vern and Vicki Treinen, to permanently protect 184 acres of the best farmland in the state. The conservation easement project was the first for the Town of Windsor's farmland preservation program, which was modeled on the successful program in the Town of Dunn.

The farm has been in the Treinen family since 1965. Vern and Vicki bought the farm in 1992. They continued to run the dairy operation until 2003, when Vern realized he would have to make a decision. In order to be competitive, dairies had to get bigger and milk more cows. The upsizing meant taking on more debt, hiring employees, and more stress. That was a game that Vern didn't want to play. "I didn't want the debt. I wanted to do farm work—I didn't want to manage people," says Vern.

So, Vern took the farm in a different direction. He is now custom-raising heifers for other dairies, which means he takes day-old calves, raises and breeds them, and returns them to their owners. The new business has been a success.

The Treinen family is very happy with the conservation easement and Vern is relieved that he can stop worrying about all the letters he gets from realtors looking to buy his land. "I wanted to protect the farm forever. I know my grandfather would have wanted it that way." ■



MARIO QUINTANA

