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

$5000+
- Eugene Mayer Bolz Family Foundation
- Estate of Theodora H. Kubly
- Madison Community Foundation

$2,500+
- BT2
- Walt & Stacey Meanwell
- Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Inc
- Vandebilt & Associates

$1,000+
- Architectural Building Arts
- Robert & Anne Bolz
- John J. Frautschi Family Foundation
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- Anonymous
- Emily H. Earley
- John Feith
- First Business Bank
- Fontana SportsSpecialties, Inc
- Goodman’s Jewelers
- Mr. & Mrs. Oscar G. Mayer
- Pacific Cycle
- Bill & Win Welsh

$500+
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- Bill & Win Welsh

The Natural Heritage Land Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of natural areas, farmland, and wildlife habitat in Dane County and the surrounding areas. To achieve our mission, we protect land primarily through land protection agreements (called conservation easements) with landowners.

Since our inception, we have protected more than 3,000 acres of land, including prairies, wetlands, woodlands, and farms.

Financials

The Natural Heritage Land Trust’s fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

During fiscal year 2003, we received $177,482 in revenue and spent $219,449 on programs and other operational expenses.

At June 30, 2004, we had total assets of $931,235. We maintained the following funds to help accomplish our conservation work:

- Conservation Fund: $307,515 (land acquisition and conservation easement costs)
- Easement Enforcement Fund: $88,675 (conservation easement enforcement activities)
- Operations Fund: $232,960 (general operations of the Land Trust)
- Operations Endowment*: $125,041

* In addition to this endowment, the Madison Community Foundation holds an endowment that also supports the general operations of the Land Trust. It was valued at $152,681 on June 30, 2004. A portion of each endowment is available to the Land Trust for project funding.

Contact us if you would like a copy of our audited financial statements for July 1, 2003–June 30, 2004.

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest dollar.
In 2003/04, we focused our land protection efforts in two watersheds in Dane County: Black Earth Creek and Upper Sugar River.

**Black Earth Creek Watershed**
This watershed covers more than 100 square miles in Dane and Iowa counties. The valley is characterized by farmlands whose soils are rich and productive and surrounded by bluffs and rolling hills. Black Earth Creek is a cold-water fishery and draws trout fishermen from throughout the nation.

**Negotiated with landowners to protect 215 acres of important farmland near Cross Plains.** We negotiated the language of a conservation easement with landowners who wanted to ensure that the most productive soils on their property remain in agricultural production. More than 60% of the soils on this property are classified as “prime” or as “statewide important,” according to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. In addition to meeting the goals of the landowners, protecting this property from development will also help protect Black Earth Creek, a regionally important trout fishery. We also raised the funding to pay for the easement.

**Transferred restored wetlands to a state agency.** After overseeing the restoration of 53 acres of wetlands along Garfoot Creek in 2001, we transferred the restored wetlands to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) in 2004, which in turn opened it to the public for hiking, fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreational activities. Garfoot Creek is a critical tributary of Black Earth Creek.

**Laid the groundwork to create a conservation park and a trail corridor in the watershed.** We worked with several parties to determine how to best structure an agreement that would ultimately result in the creation of a conservation park and additional land for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

**Upper Sugar River Watershed**
Located in southwestern Dane County, this watershed encompasses more than 170 square miles. Farmland, a scenic rural landscape, and notable natural and recreational resources, including the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, Donald County Park, the Military Ridge State Trail, the Madison School Forest, and the Upper Sugar River Watershed Corridor, characterize this watershed.

**Finalized our site conservation plan for the watershed.** We developed and finalized our site conservation plan for the area. This plan will help us better target our land protection efforts and help guide the efforts of other organizations that created it. Although 17 organizations participated in the planning effort, our key partners include: Capitol Water Trails, Dane County Parks, Dane County Land Conservation Department, WDNR, Town of Verona Open Space and Parks Commission, and the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association.

**Worked with landowners to protect a farm near Verona.** We continued negotiations with landowners to protect a farm along the Upper Sugar River. The Sugar River flows through the property—a conservation easement here would protect farmland and wetlands.

**Provided technical and fundraising assistance to landowners, groups, and municipalities working to protect important areas outside of our priority areas.**

**Helped the Patrick Marsh Conservancy raise the requisite funds to purchase a 35-acre parcel of land within the Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site near the City of Sun Prairie and negotiated the terms to purchase that land.** The Patrick Marsh Conservancy is committed to protecting wildlife habitat around Patrick Marsh. The Conservancy also wants to expand educational and recreational opportunities around the Marsh. Last year, we received a grant from the Dane County Conservation Fund and from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program to purchase a parcel of property within the Natural Resource Site. We also negotiated the terms of the purchase with the landowner.

**Collaborated with the Town of Dunn to protect farmland and wetlands.** Through its Rural Preservation Program, the Town of Dunn placed a conservation easement on 68 acres that includes farmland and wetlands, and that is adjacent to other protected lands. As a co-holder of this easement, we will annually monitor the property to ensure land management activities comply with the terms of the easement. We now hold 13 conservation easements with the Town.

**Assisted landowners and Dane County Parks in their work to enhance the protection of a National Natural Landmark and to protect and expand biking and hiking trails near the Village of Blue Mounds.** We worked with interested parties to protect a 30-acre parcel of land around Cave of the Mounds, a National Natural Landmark and important local business; preserve scenic vistas from the Military Ridge State Trail; create a new trail that will connect the Military Ridge State Trail with Brigham County Park; and transferred restored wetlands to a state agency.

**Lowered $40,000 to the Town of Merrimac in Sauk County to purchase property on Lake Wisconsin.** Although there were more than 8 acres of land with 510 feet of frontage on Lake Wisconsin, the Town of Merrimac quickly raised funds from a variety of sources. At the time the seller needed the funds, the Town was $40,000 short and asked us for help. Because this purchase was a key step in a transaction that will ultimately protect 17 acres of land and 1/2 mile of undisturbed shoreline on highly developed Lake Wisconsin—thereby creating the largest public fishing and recreational site on the lake—we took the unusual step of providing a short-term loan to the Town to help them complete their purchase.

**Finalized the language of a conservation easement for a parcel of land on Lake Wisconsin.** We worked with three family members to develop a conservation easement that met their goals of protecting the natural characteristics of the property and maintaining a homestead with access to the lake. We also developed and received a grant for this easement from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

**Wildwater plan could change the way land is managed and evaluated in Dane County and set a standard that could be replicated in other areas throughout the nation.** This ambitious plan could change the way we plan for the area. This plan will help us better target our land protection efforts and help guide the efforts of other organizations that created it. Although 17 organizations participated in the planning effort, our key partners include: Capitol Water Trails, Dane County Parks, Madison School Forest, and the Upper Sugar River Watershed Corridor, characterize this watershed.

**Expanded the Blue Mounds area to serve on the technical advisory committee looking at the transfer of development rights component of this initiative.**

**Maintained our conservation easement monitoring program.**
We monitored 23 parcels of land on which we hold conservation easements many of which we co-hold with the Town of Dunn to ensure compliance with the terms of each easement.

**Explored and advanced innovative land protection, management, and funding strategies through conservation partnerships and community networks.**

**Appointed to an advisory committee for the Attain Dane initiative.** In early 2004, Dane County Executive, Kathleen Falk launched Attain Dane—a long-range plan aimed at preventing sprawl through a regional, comprehensive approach to housing, transportation and open space issues. This ambitious plan could change the way land is developed and conserved in Dane County and set a standard that could be replicated in other areas throughout the country. Falk appointed Executive Director Jim Welsh to serve on the technical advisory committee looking at the transfer of development rights component of this initiative.