

landscene

Natural Heritage Land Trust

Dedicated to the conservation of natural areas and open space in Dane and the surrounding counties.

NHLT working with Town of Verona Open Space and Parks Commission

The Town of Verona Open Space and Parks Commission (OSPC) and Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work on a scenic riverway and natural resource protection project along the Upper Sugar River. The Upper Sugar River winds its way through a valley of rich farmland in the southwestern portion of the Town of Verona. The Upper Sugar River has been designated as an Exceptional Resource Water (ERW) by the State of Wisconsin. This means that it is a stream with excellent water quality, high recreational and aesthetic value, and high quality fishing, but it may be impacted by point or non-point sources of pollution. The Upper Sugar River is a dominantly spring-fed system with



extensive riparian wetlands (wetlands near streambanks) and a diverse fishery. These waters and lands provide necessary habitat for many birds and also serve the watershed by providing filtration and drinking water, making the Upper Sugar River a valuable resource to the community.

The Town of Verona OSPC has a vision for an Upper Sugar River valley that includes protecting environmentally sensitive lands and creating a scenic river corridor that will be a water-based trail, so future river-goers can appreciate its beauty. The Natural Heritage Land Trust has identified the Upper Sugar River Watershed as a priority area for protection, making this project a natural partnership. NHLT is working with willing landowners in the area to

acquire and hold conservation easements, preserving the watershed quality and the scenic beauty of the river corridor. NHLT, along with the Town of Verona OSPC, will be seeking grants and other funding sources for this on-going project.

Together, the two groups will work to spread the word about this exciting project, kick off fundraising activities, develop educational materials, and further the success of this project. With the strong vision of the Town of Verona OSPC and NHLT's commitment to and experience with land conservation, the completed project will protect the natural resources that make the Town of Verona a wonderful place to live and visit.

For more information about this project, call Kate at the NHLT office at (608) 258-9797.

NHLT welcomes new Executive Director, Jim Welsh!

After three months with no one at the helm (see "Danielle Wood says farewell to NHLT," next page), Natural Heritage Land Trust is excited to announce that we have a new Executive Director. Jim Welsh will be joining our organization on May 19.

Originally from Maryland, Jim has lived in the Midwest for the past 20 years. For the last ten of those years Jim has been working for The Nature Conservancy on their Baraboo Hills project as the conservation planner, biologist, and project director.

A word from our new Executive Director: "I am looking forward to joining NHLT, putting my conservation skills and experiences to work in the landscapes of Dane County and surrounding areas. I am excited about working with NHLT members, volunteers, staff, and partners." Welcome Jim!

Want to meet Jim? Please see NHLT's upcoming events (page 3) to learn about our membership picnic this summer.

Spring 2003

Dutchman's Breeches
(*Dicentra cucullaria*)
in the Upper Sugar
River valley.

"When one tugs at a single
thing in nature...
he finds it attached to
the rest of the world."

John Muir

Natural Heritage
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Danielle Wood says farewell to NHLT

Natural Heritage

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Dear members and friends:

It was with great fondness and hesitation that I left the NHLT family to work on a project in the Northern Territory of Australia in February. I will miss the wonderful people and the beauty of Wisconsin and hope to hurry back home toward the end of the year. I anticipate great things from my favorite non-profit in the coming years!

I am working with CSIRO, a government research agency, as part of their Sustainable Futures partnership on a project initiated by the Northern Territory (NT) government. The NT is exploring options for regional planning and/or governance to address natural resource management. Working with a professor for the University of Queensland, I am inventorying current activities, identifying issues of concern, and looking at potential models.

Since I have been here, I have visited two of the national parks, several of the outdoor markets, and some of the galleries. I spend time cycling and swimming too, but not in the ocean yet (it is box jellyfish season). Occasionally, I try to catch a lizard.

The Northern Territory is an interesting place! It is amazingly biologically diverse and still has a fairly young government. The population is highly concentrated in Darwin and Alice Springs, so much of the region is given to rangelands and natural areas. It is projected for increased development, however, and since it still has much of its natural habitats intact, the government is researching ways to maintain sustainable ecosystems in the process.

I want to thank the dedicated board of directors, past board, legal council, staff, volunteers, and partners of NHLT for their years of dedication to protecting the health and beauty of a place we all love. They are an inspiration! Most of all, I would like to thank our members and donors, without whom none of the work would be possible. Thank you for your commitment.

Farewell and best wishes in your new endeavors!



NHLT's newest partner project: Patrick Marsh



Marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) is commonly found in southern Wisconsin in wetlands like

Patrick Marsh.

Photo by Virginia Kline, courtesy of Wisconsin State Herbarium

Natural Heritage Land Trust is working with the Patrick Marsh Conservancy and others to enhance the current Patrick Marsh Wildlife Area, near Sun Prairie. Together, we are seeking grants and working with willing landowners to expand the boundary of this beautiful wetland area on the east side of U.S. Highway 151, north of Sun Prairie.

Patrick Marsh Wildlife Area, currently owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, was restored to wetland in 1991 as a highway mitigation project. Since its revival, the marsh has become home to many birds. In addition to birds such as ducks, swans, and geese, the marsh also provides habitat for turtles, deer and small mammals. Visitors to Patrick Marsh enjoy walking, cross-country skiing and birdwatching, and a group of students from the nearby Patrick Marsh Middle School helps with restoration activities. Watch for future news about this exciting project!

Upcoming Events

NHLT's Annual Membership Picnic and Board/Volunteer Appreciation Event

Sunday, July 13, Noon - 3:30 P.M., Lussier Family Heritage Center. Activities to be announced. For more info, look for upcoming announcements or contact the NHLT office at 608-258-9797.

NHLT's 10th Annual Stewardship Awards

October 13, evening. More info to come, but mark your calendar today!

Saturday, May 17, 9 A.M. - Noon. Madison Area Weed Warriors need volunteers to help pull garlic mustard from woodlands in Madison city parks. Training and supplies provided. Contact Laura Whitmore, 608-266-5949 or lwhitmore@ci.madison.wi.us.

Saturday, May 17, 8 A.M. - 5 P.M. Wetland Restoration Workshop. Registration required and is limited. Call 608-250-9971 or email: derek@wiscwetlands.org.

Wednesday, May 28, 5:30 - 7:30 P.M. Clean Wisconsin (formerly Wisconsin's Environmental Decade Institute) presents "Rain Gardens: Protecting Our Water Resources Through Gardening" at The Garden Room in Shorewood. For info and to R.S.V.P., call 608-251-7020.

Saturday, June 14 and Saturday, June 21, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. 16th annual Take a Stake in the Lakes. Hundreds of volunteers will clean shorelines and streambanks across Dane County. Part of Yahara Lakes Week. Contact Louise Goldstein, 608-224-3601 or goldstein@co.dane.wi.us.

The **Aldo Leopold Foundation** is gearing up for an exciting schedule of spring and summer activities including tours of the Leopold shack, Shack Seminars, and Woodland School Courses. For info, visit www.aldoleopold.org or contact Rob Nelson at 608-355-0279

(rob@aldoleopold.org).



Thursday, September 25. Gathering Waters Conservancy's First Annual Land Trust Awards Celebration, Monona Terrace. Honoring Land Trust of the Year (\$1000 award), Conservationist of the Year, and Legislator of the Year. Contact Gathering Waters at 608-251-9131.

More info to come...

September 24-27: Natural Areas Conference in Madison.

Ford Freyberg, age 10, sent us this painting of a deer lingering at a riverbank.

We have not inherited the world from our forefathers – we have borrowed it from our children.

Kashmiri Proverb

Have you seen our website lately?

See www.nhlt.org for detailed information on the organization, conservation and giving information, options for conserving your land, events, archives, and more.



Let's Talk Conservation!

Is your church, synagogue, religious institution, or other group interested in investigating issues related to the environment? Staff of the Natural Heritage Land Trust have been invited by many groups to speak, provide information, and attend fairs on the subject of conservation and related topics. If you have a group that may be interested, please call our office at 258-9797.

Natural Heritage Land Trust

Help us protect natural areas close to home!

Individual Memberships:

- Student \$15
- Individual \$25
- Household \$50
- Enthusiast \$100
- Benefactor \$250
- Other \$_____

Business Memberships:

- Patron \$100
- Sponsor \$250
- Guardian \$500
- Conservator \$1,000
- Other \$_____

Additional project contributions

- Black Earth Creek Watershed \$_____
- Upper Sugar River Watershed \$_____

Please send information on:

- Volunteering
- How to make a gift through my will
- How to make a gift of real estate
- Land Registry Program

Contributions are tax-deductible as provided for by law. Please make checks payable to the Natural Heritage Land Trust. Thank you

Send to:
Natural Heritage Land Trust,
303 S. Paterson, Suite 6,
Madison, WI 53705

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Would you like to receive e-mail notices about NHLT events?

No Yes E-mail _____

Check if you'd prefer to remain anonymous

NHLT Member Spotlight: Diana Smith

Member Spotlight article
by Sara Greenslit

Diana Smith works on one of her latest projects, turning the ruins of an old barn on her farm into a walled garden.



"Heaven is home," says Diana Smith. An NHLT member since 1999, Diana, 83, shows her concern for animals and nature by dedicating herself to the land where she lives.

Residing on a 140-acre rented farm in Black Earth, Diana has been reclaiming its prairie landscape, which is overgrown with invasives such as European honeysuckle, cedar trees, Canadian goldenrod, and reed canary grass. The fields were burned

last year, with the help of the Black Earth Fire Department, for the first time in many years. She has also been fixing the farmhouse and creating a walled, raised bed garden from the remains of a tumbled down barn. She jokingly calls the gardening project "Diana's Folly," trying to finish it before the south wall falls into a nearby pond.

Before Diana moved to the farm in 2001, she owned five acres in Berry with a goat prairie on steep, thin soils. When she bought that land in 1960, it was considered worthless. However, it was there that she first fell in love with the prairie. "I learned a lot about the prairie out there," says Diana.

Diana's interest in the land started early. "I wanted to be a farmer until I learned you had to

sacrifice animals," she says. So at 12 she switched her interests to forestry. She was told women couldn't hold that job, that women were supposed to be housewives. Yet she persisted against prejudice and received a bachelor's degree from Edinburgh, Scotland's School of Forestry in 1947. That same year Diana moved to the US. In 1956 she received a master's degree in wood technology from Syracuse University.

Diana worked for the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison for more than two decades as a researcher, studying environmental effects on wood structure, especially in southern pines, in hopes of creating desirable commercial results. "It was great fun," she said, "and I loved the work." But gaining respect as a women in forestry had taken its toll. She wanted to spend her remaining years well, so she left the lab in 1972, before her full retirement kicked in. "Money is not the answer," she said.

To support herself, Diana went back to school and became a nurse. For 17 years she worked at Oakwood Lutheran Homes, which gave her "all day to work on prairies, all night to work," Diana said. "I don't need much sleep," she laughs.

Diana's dedication to the environment is fervent as ever these days. With prairie and garden projects on her mind, she's continually busy on the farm. "I have lived in the country my whole life and love it."

In-Kind Thanks

- Peter Erk for the donation of a digital camera
- Jeff Strobel for digital camera accessories and for letting us borrow his until we had our own
- Camera Casino of Oshkosh, Wisconsin for their digital printing services
- Kathy and Bill Pielsticker for the "new" sketch artwork to decorate our office walls

Honorarium

- A special gift in honor of Jane and Wes Licht, from Elvin and Wilma Balch
- A special gift in honor of Jane Licht, from the staff at the Dane County Register of Deeds office

Volunteers

- Kathy Brown
- Aaron Christensen
Publications Intern
- Sarah Gehlhoff
Stewardship Assistant
- Andrea Good
- Sara Greenslit
- Melissa Hornung
Stewardship Assistant
- Jan Hunt
Website Coordinator
- Andrea Cypriano Oliveira
Membership Assistant
- Ana Zambie

NHLT Wishlist

- Newer desk
- Newer laptop computer (IBM compatible)
- Small book shelf
- Portable digital projector for computer presentations

► **Moving?** Please let us know your new address! We'd love to keep in touch with you. Returned newsletters waste valuable paper and postage. ► **Not a member?** If you are not a member of the Natural Heritage Land Trust and are receiving a complimentary copy of this newsletter, please consider joining NHLT today. We need your support. ► **Is there a student in your family?** We have a student membership category at the \$15 level. See the membership form in this newsletter. ► **Spilt coffee on your newsletter?** Want to look up all the places you've helped to protect? Know someone who might be interested in conservation options for property they own? Check us out on our web site and tell your friends – www.nhlt.org



Conservation where you live

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