

# landscene

A publication of the Natural Heritage Land Trust Fall 2006

## Four farms preserved in the Town of Dunn



Farm protected by conservation easement in the Town of Dunn

The expanding network of farmland protected by voluntary conservation easements in the Town of Dunn

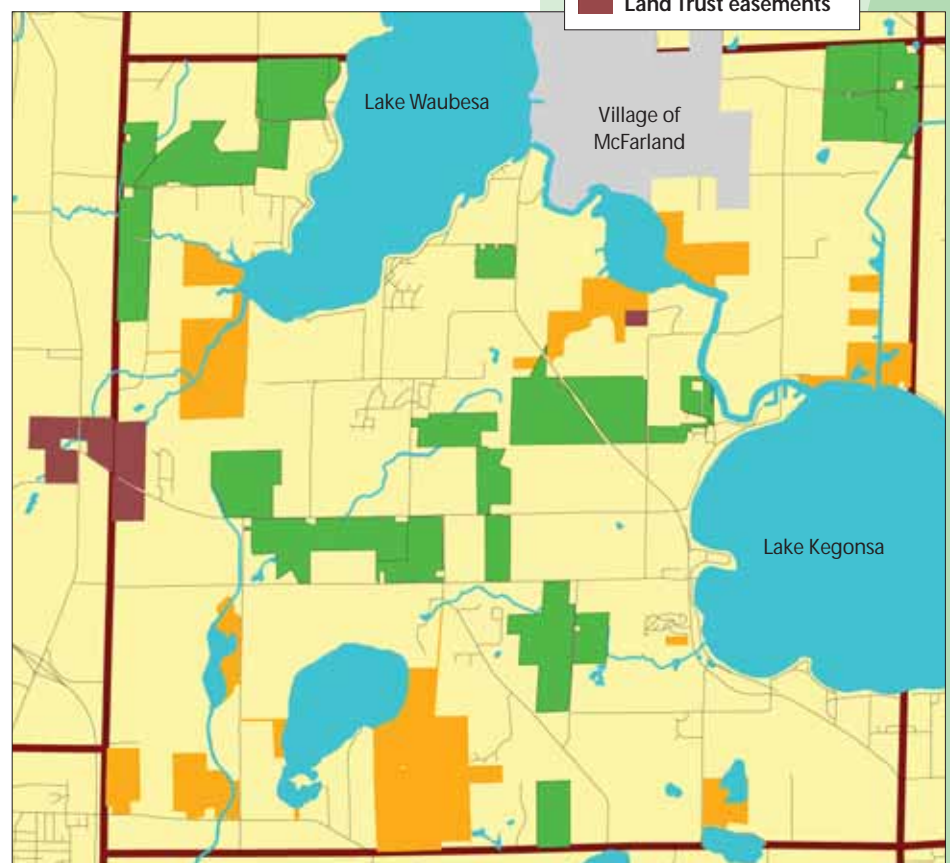
The Town of Dunn protected an additional 478 acres of land in four separate transactions in the last 12 months through its purchase of development rights (PDR) program. The Town and the Natural Heritage Land Trust co-hold the conservation easements on these four farms.

Each of these conservation easements protects soils that the US Department of Agriculture has classified as Prime and as Statewide Important farmland. Each of the properties is cropped, and two of the properties contain woodlots. In addition, the majority of the land protected by the four conservation easements lies within the Agricultural Protection and Environmental Corridors in the Town of Dunn's Land Use Plan.

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.

“The commitment of farmers to protect

Town of Dunn *continued on page 3*



303 S Paterson St  
Suite 6  
Madison, WI 53703  
608.258.9797  
608.258.8184 fax  
www.nhlt.org

*President*  
Kathy F. Pielsticker

*Vice President*  
Jeffrey Strobel

*Treasurer*  
Michael Dubis

*Secretary*  
Johanna Allex

*Directors*  
Tom Bergamini  
Lloyd Eagan  
Rob Gottschalk  
Tom Hebl  
Chris Hughes  
Ken LePine  
David Simon  
Carla Wright

*Past Presidents*  
Norman C. Anderson  
John B. Hutchinson  
William G. Lunney  
Jean D. Meanwell  
Michael A. Slavney  
Mark B. Williams

*Executive Director*  
Jim Welsh

*Development Director*  
Meg Nelson

*Conservation Specialist*  
Kate Wipperman



## We need your help to clean up Patrick Marsh

Land Trust property at Patrick Marsh/Staging Area of work party

**Saturday, September 30, 2006**

**9:00 a.m. until noon** Meet at bend in the 1000 block of Schuster Road  
*Sturdy shoes and work gloves are essential*

The Natural Heritage Land Trust, the Patrick Marsh Middle School Discovery Club, and the Patrick Marsh Conservancy are planning to remove trash from the property the Land Trust purchased at the Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site.

"We want people to see the area and get an idea of what it could be once we restore our property and create trails," said Jim Welsh, Executive Director of the Natural Heritage Land Trust. "We also need help to remove trash from the forested area of the property."

The Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site encompasses 785 acres. Less than 40% of the site is protected. The Land Trust has purchased 57 acres at the site and is working to acquire more. Ultimately, the Land Trust will restore the land it owns to wildlife habitat. The Land Trust also plans to develop trails that link the protected properties and the surrounding neighborhoods together.

Here's how to get to the staging area for the work party in Sun Prairie: Head east on Business 151/Main Street. Shortly after you go through the downtown area, East Main turns into State Highway 19. Proceed about two miles and turn left (north) on Town Hall Road. Proceed about one half mile and turn left (west) on Schuster Road. Travel approximately one quarter mile. There's a wide spot in the road in the 1000 block of Schuster where the road curves left (south). We'll meet in the bend on the right (north) side of the road.

Please wear sturdy shoes and bring work gloves (ideally leather)—there's lots of old metal and glass. The Land Trust will provide trash containers, beverages, and snacks.

For more information, please contact Meg Nelson at 258-9797 or [meg@nhlt.org](mailto:meg@nhlt.org). ■



## Land Trust establishes focus areas

**A**t a strategic planning retreat last fall, the Land Trust established three focus areas for its work. The focus areas are: the Black Earth Creek Valley, the Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site, and the Town of Dunn.

“To make the best use of our staff and financial resources and to maximize our on-the-ground impact, we are focusing our land protection work in three areas,” said Kathy Pielsticker, President of the Natural Heritage Land Trust. “We selected these areas based on their conservation and recreation values, our opportunity to tap public funds for acquisition and conservation easements, and our organizational commitment to these areas,” she said.

According to Pielsticker, the Land Trust may get involved with projects outside of its focus areas if conservation partners need limited assistance to protect important conservation lands such as state wildlife areas, county parks, or places like the Verona Sugar River Valley, or the Leopold-Riley Game Cooperative. The Land Trust may also help individual landowners protect lands with high conservation and recreation values if the landowner donates the conservation easement and funds to ensure the Land Trust can annually monitor the easement.

The Land Trust is currently working on land protection projects in each of its focus areas. It hopes to protect 300 to 400 acres in the 7/1/06 - 6/30/07 fiscal year. ■

Land Trust Conservation Specialist Kate Wipperman with new sign at Hickory Hills.



Hikers on Hickory Hills overlooking the Black Earth Creek Valley. The Land Trust purchased Hickory Hills in May and donated it to the Village of Cross Plains for a conservancy park.

Town of Dunn *continued from page 1*

work land in the Town is having real on-the-ground success,” said Jim Welsh, Executive Director of the Natural Heritage Land Trust. “When you are in the Town of Dunn, you can start to see a landscape where farming has a future.”

The Town of Dunn launched its innovative PDR program in 1996. It did so to permanently protect the Town’s farmland. The Town’s residents pay for the program through their property taxes and the program leverages grant funds from other sources. When the Town purchases development rights, the landowner retains most other rights. The Town records the sale of development rights as a conservation easement. The easement stays with the property deed, so that even when the land is sold, development cannot occur on that property.

The Land Trust co-holds 17 of the Town’s conservation easements—this ensures that even if the Town of Dunn changed its program, the properties would still be protected as the landowners and the Town had envisioned. ■



## IRA Rollover could help you help the Land Trust

Individuals aged 70½ and older can now make a charitable donation of up to \$100,000 from an IRA (Traditional and Roth) without having to count the donation as taxable income. This provision, which was included in the recently passed Pension Protection Act of 2006, is only in effect for 2006 and 2007. For more information, contact your financial or legal advisors.

## New Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements

In August, Congress passed, and the President signed, legislation that expands federal conservation tax incentives for people who donate conservation easements.

Section 1206 of HR 4 (The Pension Protection Act of 2006) provides farmers, ranchers, and other landowners with significant tax benefits for donating a conservation easement. The legislation:

- Raises the deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income (AGI) to 50%.
- Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years.

In addition, the legislation allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their AGI (again with a 15-year carry-forward). Donors will need to check with their financial and legal advisors to determine whether or not they are eligible to use the 100% tax incentive.

"These changes could help landowners in our focus areas who want to donate a conservation easement or part of the value of a conservation easement," said Kate Wipperman, Conservation Specialist with the Natural Heritage Land Trust. The Land Trust's focus areas include the Black Earth Creek Valley, the Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site, and the Town of Dunn.

This new law is only effective for conservation easements donated between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2007. After that, the law will revert back to its previous provisions.

For more information about this law, see the Land Trust Alliance's web site: [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org). The Land Trust Alliance is a national organization that represents more than 1,500 land trusts. Potential conservation easement donors should seek qualified, independent counsel from financial and legal experts familiar with charitable giving of conservation easements. ■

Dane County farmland.



303 S Paterson St, Suite 6  
Madison, WI 53703

[www.nhlt.org](http://www.nhlt.org)

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