Wisconsin Dells landmark has been safeguarded forever thanks to the foresight and generosity of Frank and Mariana Weinhold. In May the Weinholds granted a conservation easement on Louis’ Bluff to the Natural Heritage Land Trust.

Louis’ Bluff is an impressive sandstone formation rising above the Wisconsin River at the northern end of the Dells of the Wisconsin River State Natural Area. The Juneau County bluff is dominated by huge white pines and is flanked by floodplain forest and 7,000 feet of river shoreline. The conservation easement permanently limits development of this 133-acre privately-owned property to a small area around the old farmstead. The rest of the property will forever remain undeveloped; its dramatic scenery will be enjoyed by the many people who boat the Wisconsin River every year.

The property is also a unique part of local history—it is named for an earlier owner, Louis Dupless. Born in France, Mr. Dupless came to Wisconsin in 1846 and is believed to have been the first “pilot” of the Dells, directing lumber rafts through the narrow river passage that gives the Dells its name. He is buried at the base of the bluff.

Louis’ Bluff is the 37th conservation easement held by the Natural Heritage Land Trust and a real treasure. Funding for the purchase of the conservation easement was provided by the state’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, with additional funding from Audubon’s Land Fund for Wisconsin.
Thanks to a generous bequest from the estate of Hazel Knudson, the Wilke Prairie Preserve on Hwy. 113 just north of Waunakee has been getting a lot of management attention. Hazel Knudson, who passed away in 2004, was the original benefactor of the preserve, donating the land to the Natural Heritage Land Trust in 1994. The preserve is named in honor of her parents Franklyn and Augusta Wilke and her brother Clarence Wilke.

Last fall, Natural Resources Consulting Restorations, LLC planted the last four acres of the preserve to native prairie, and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association repaired a leak in the berm built ten years ago to restore the wetland. In early May of this year, the prairie and wetland were burned by Natural Resources Consulting Restorations. Thanks to the burn, and to brush cutting completed in February 2006 by Taylor Conservation, LLC, today the prairie is a verdant, open landscape.

The Wilke Preserve has a new conservation neighbor. Eighty acres directly south of the preserve were purchased this spring by Dane County, as the first project under County Executive Kathleen Falk’s new Land and Water Legacy Fund. The Legacy Fund was established by the County Board last year to improve water quality in the county’s lakes and streams by protecting and restoring wetlands. The drained wetlands of the neighboring property will be restored and open to the public, with trails connecting to the Wilke Preserve.

Avoid Deferred Income Taxes while Supporting Land Conservation

Last year Congress passed legislation creating a tax incentive for charitable donations from IRA funds. Individuals aged 70½ and older can avoid paying deferred income taxes on contributions of up to $100,000 each year from their IRAs. This incentive will expire on December 31, 2007. To take advantage of this tax incentive and help the Natural Heritage Land Trust, call your IRA custodian.
Support Your Local Land Trust Today!

Renew your membership, or become a new member today, and help protect natural areas and agricultural lands in the Dane County region. Please fill out this form and return it to Natural Heritage Land Trust, 303 S. Paterson St., Suite 6, Madison, WI 53703.

☐ $35   ☐ $60   ☐ $100   ☐ $250   ☐ $500   ☐ Other _____________

Name ____________________________________________
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 ___________

Signature ____________________________________________________________________________________________________

☐ I am interested in making a gift through my will. Please send me information.

To make a credit card donation by phone, please call 608-258-9797. Contributions are tax-deductible as provided for by law.
VOLUNTEER PROFILE: Mary Schwoch

Mary Schwoch is an indispensable volunteer and a longtime member of the Natural Heritage Land Trust. She serves as our membership coordinator. Martha Frey of the Land Trust interviewed Mary about her interest in conservation and her work at the Land Trust.

Q: Mary, what inspired your interest in conservation?

A: I have lived in Dane County for almost 40 years. What I liked about the area when I moved here back in the 1970's was all the nearby farmlands. For example, I would pass working farms every day on the way to and from work. Agricultural lands are disappearing all too quickly in our area.

Q: When did you become a member of the Land Trust?

A: My husband and I joined the Land Trust in 1990. We support the Land Trust’s work because we want to help preserve natural areas and working farms in Dane County.

Q: What caused you to volunteer at the Land Trust?

A: I began volunteering in June 2004. I learned about the position through RSVP, the one-to-one volunteer referral agency. When I came in for an interview, I liked the staff and was impressed by their commitment to conservation.

The Natural Heritage Land Trust salutes Mary Schwoch for her 700+ hours of volunteer service in support of conservation where she lives.

Thank you!
To Shirley Droste for preparing membership mailings.
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To Jeff Strobel for designing and underwriting conservation easement signs.