



FORMERLY KNOWN AS NATURAL HERITAGE LAND TRUST



Growing the next generation of conservation heroes

Even on a cold early-spring day, Lake View Elementary School children are brimming with enthusiasm, curiosity and smiles as they play beneath a skeletal canopy of mature oak trees. Thanks to strong community support, in December we purchased a small piece of land that will play a big role every day in the lives of those students by expanding their much-used outdoor classroom.

Located on the north side of Madison, nearly 80% of Lake View Elementary School children come from low-income families, typically living in apartments with no yard or natural areas nearby to explore. Recognizing this disadvantage, the school expanded curriculum activities beyond the classroom. Students plant trees and annual and perennial edibles, tap maple trees for sap to make syrup, enjoy writing, art and music activities outdoors, and help maintain walking paths through the woods.

Later this year, we will donate the half-acre of wooded land abutting the school to the Madison Metropolitan School District, to be added to Lake View's school forest. But first we are working with the school and Operation Fresh Start to restore the woods and build a nature course on the new land, where the students can have fun while learning about nature. We hope the children will take these wonderful experiences with them into adulthood, growing the next generation of conservation heroes. ●



Lake View Elementary School students can learn and play in nature everyday thanks to their enlarged outdoor classroom.

Farm sisters save Yahara River wetlands



An oil painting of Full Circle Farm, done by the farm's hired man in the 1930s. The part of the farm that we protected is adjacent to 82 acres of wetland, including 2,500 feet of shoreline on the east side of the Yahara River, owned by the DNR.

Thanks to the generosity of three sisters, in December we permanently protected 31 acres of wetland north of Stoughton. Here is the sisters' wonderful reminiscence of life on their farm.

"Growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, we three sisters of Full Circle Farm loved to spend time at our grandparents' farm in rural Stoughton. It was quite an adventure for us. There were horses and dogs to visit, fresh beans to snap, birthday celebrations with fancy doll cakes baked by a neighbor, and sometimes we walked down to the Yahara River to fish. The farmhouse was very different from our house in town. The cellar had dirt walls. There was no indoor plumbing,

making daily life a bit of a challenge. Our grandma had to pump drinking water from the well and carry it into the house in buckets. Rainwater was collected in a cistern and boiled for dishwashing. Water for bathing was heated on an oil stove--and as there was no bathroom, bathing took place in a tin tub in the living area. Of course that also meant we had to use the smelly outhouse! Despite these inconveniences, we had a lot of fun.

"Our grandpa died in 1961 and our grandma moved into town in 1966. The farmhouse was taken down in the 1970s. The land, however, is still being farmed--and two of the big trees shown in the painting are still standing. We recently donated a portion of our family's property to Groundswell Conservancy. This property, while not directly connected to the present-day farm, had been used to grow hay for the horses. In recent years it has been bordered by DNR property, inaccessible by vehicle and difficult to traverse on foot. We look forward to a time when Groundswell will make this area accessible to everyone. It is nice to know that it will be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations." ●

Groundswell adopts easement at Gallus Slough

In September we assumed responsibility for the stewardship of a 359-acre conservation easement in the heart of the Merrimac Preserve on the southeast side of Devil's Lake State Park.

Merrimac Preserve is a 1,700-acre natural area owned and managed by Riverland Conservancy. The preserve, which is made up of forest, prairie, savanna, wetlands and streams, is an important wildlife corridor between the Baraboo Bluffs and the Wisconsin River.

The conservation easement was established by the landowner – Wisconsin Power & Light Company – and Riverland Conservancy in 1998 to protect the land around Gallus Slough. Recently, Riverland Conservancy asked us to take over the conservation easement. "Stewarding conservation easements is one of our strengths," according to Groundswell Executive Director Jim Welsh. "From now on, we will be responsible for making sure that the land under the easement remains undeveloped as wildlife habitat." ●



We protect special places, forever. Our vision is a world filled with green places where communities thrive.

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Helping urban farmers put down roots

When we announced our name change last fall from Natural Heritage Land Trust to Groundswell Conservancy, we reaffirmed our purpose of protecting special places, forever. In addition to our current work to add land to Cherokee Marsh, French Creek, and extending a bike-hike trail in the Black Earth Creek valley, we have also been working to secure land around Madison for urban farming. We are focusing on land for immigrant and minority farmers, people whose access to land has sometimes been marginalized. Near our Westport Drumlin preserve east of Waunakee we are working with a farmer and Community GroundWorks to secure land for Hmong market and subsistence growers. In Fitchburg, in a unique private/public/non-profit venture we hope to find a home for the youth and adult food growing programs of Neighborhood Food Solutions and also protect wetlands that feed into Waubesa Wetlands.

Please let us know if you have ideas of how we can use our land protection tools to meet more needs in the Dane County region. We always like to hear from you.

—Jim Welsh, Executive Director



“For the past 27 years I’ve spent my summers on the Wisconsin River viewing sunsets over Louis’ Bluff. It’s a place that is near and dear to my heart and most importantly, it’s permanently

protected. I want to ensure places like Louis’ Bluff and all the wonderful lands in Wisconsin are protected for generations to come and that is why I support Groundswell as a Sustainer.”
— Sara Giacalone

Sara supports Groundswell with a monthly contribution that helps us protect places like Louis’ Bluff. Monthly giving is a hassle-free way to have a bigger impact by spreading your donation throughout the year and providing us with the certainty of your support. To find out about how you can become a Groundswell Sustainer, please call or email Heidi Habeger at Heidi@groundswellwisconsin.org or (608) 258-9797.



As a Legacy Circle member, you are crucial to protecting our special places for future generations. Learn about your options for adding Groundswell Conservancy to your estate plans, including bequests, IRA or life insurance beneficiary designations, and more by contacting Heidi Habeger at heidi@groundswellwisconsin.org or (608) 258-9797.

OUT ON THE LAND



BRINA SCRIVER

A crowd of kids and adults enjoyed a bonfire and s’mores at Patrick Marsh on a January afternoon. Before a full moon rose over the marsh, Patrick Marsh Middle School teacher Mark Smith led a hike about the history and ecology of the marsh.

Thank you to our sponsors:



BEN JONES

A hardy group of hiking enthusiasts enjoyed a brisk February morning hike on the Ice Age Trail at Lodi Marsh, led by long-time Ice Age Trail volunteer Gary Werner.

Thank you to our sponsor:




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608 258-9797



You have protected forever **11,337 acres** of cherished local land.



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Places worth knowing

Join Groundswell Conservancy outside and get to know the places you help protect. Our expert-led outings offer you unique opportunities to enjoy and learn about our wonderful landscape while meeting others who share your commitment to conservation where you live. Our field trips are free of charge but pre-registration is required at groundswellwisconsin.org/events.



MARIO QUINTANA



MARIO QUINTANA



JULIE WEGNER

Avon Bottoms Paddle

Sunday, April 29th 11 am – 4 pm
Groundswell Conservancy's past president, Willi Van Haren, will lead a 3-hour paddle down the meandering bends of the Sugar River at Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area in southern Rock County. Everyone is responsible for bringing their own equipment.

Thank you to our sponsors:



Annual Bird Walk

**Saturday, May 19th
8:30 am – 10:30 am**
Join us for a morning walk at the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve with birder Marty Evanson. Hear our origin story of how citizens saved the 3.4 acre Wally Bauman Woods on the shore of Lake Mendota.

Thank you to our sponsors:



Farm Tour

Thursday, June 28th 4 pm – 6 pm
Meet farm family Vern and Vicki Treinen on their 184-acre farm in Windsor, which has some of the best soil in the nation. The Treinens protected their dairy heifer farm with a permanent conservation easement in 2010. After the tour, we will have refreshments and snacks in their yard.

Thank you to our sponsors:

