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Photo by Eric Sherman



gathering waters conservancy

Standing Room Only

2010 Land Conservation Leadership Awards Celebration

On September 30th this year, Gathering Waters ran into a good problem. So many people attended our annual Land Conservation Leadership Awards Celebration that we ran out of chairs and had to order more food. Perhaps our record-setting crowd came because several of our awardees live in and around Madison, where the event was held. The number of celebrators was also due to the fact that Wisconsin land conservation is increasingly a project of partnerships. All our winners have been leaders in collaborations and partnerships with so many, in some cases for decades, that the room was filled with those colleagues without whom our honorees' achievements might not have been possible.

These awards were given this year in memory of Bud Jordahl, a founder of Gathering Waters who passed away earlier this year. The room was packed with Bud's former colleagues, students, and notable conservation peers. Our cast of honorees, who illustrated so well the power of partnership, seemed a fitting tribute. (Continued on p. 4)

Measuring Land Trust Success

By **Kate Zurlo-Cuva**, Land Trust Programs Director

How many acres have land trusts protected? How many conservation easements do they hold? These are questions we are asked fairly frequently.

The expansion of land trust activity has driven the fastest-growing conservation movement in the country, but defining that growth in exact numbers is challenging. There's no official clearing house for data about land trusts' work.

But there are many people who'd like those data to help us make the case for the value of land trusts to Wisconsin communities. So, as the champion for land trusts in the state, we at Gathering Waters do our best to quantify land trusts' collective success. Each year we ask them to fill out a survey. We are extraordinarily grateful to the land trust staff and board who take time from their brimming schedules to collect and share their data.

Wisconsin land trusts' accomplishments are impressive, and we have the data to prove it! The information we received this year, the most complete set of data we have collected yet, reveals a dramatic increase in the numbers of acres being conserved by private voluntary action and the help of Wisconsin land trusts.

Since 1990, land trusts can boast a 10-fold increase in acres protected in the state. During the past five years alone, land trust-protected acres have jumped from 80,000 to over 220,000.

A recent Wisconsin State Journal article used our data in a Sunday front page feature on the growth of the movement. "Land preservation in Wisconsin has changed dramatically, due mostly to the largely invisible rise of land trusts — private, non-profit organizations that have worked with local and state government to protect hundreds of thousands of acres of forests, lakes, prairies and farmland."

These figures are noteworthy considering that over the past five years, the number of land trusts has not grown. These data illustrate how land trusts have increased their collective capacity to advance lasting conservation. Among other things, these data demonstrate that your support of land conservation has made a measurable difference: we hope you continue to invest in Wisconsin land trusts. We, in turn, will continue our efforts to chart their progress.

top photo: Milkweed seeds at the Pheasant Branch Conservancy, our 2010 Photo Contest winner, taken by Paul McMahon.



Gathering Waters Conservancy's mission is to help land trusts, landowners and communities protect the places that make Wisconsin special. Our goal is to increase the amount of protected land in the state through private voluntary action.

Gathering Waters Conservancy

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From the Executive Director's Desk...

Advancing Conservation by LEAPs and Bounds

In this newsletter you'll read some new statistics measuring the notable growth of Wisconsin's land trust movement. We worked hard to collect those data. More importantly, Wisconsin land trusts have worked hard to achieve the lasting conservation those data represent.

In coming weeks, land trusts statewide will be working overtime to bring conservation deals to close by the end of the year, improving on their already impressive record.

As land trusts sign closing documents, they will be adding not just protected acres to their lists of successes. They will also be adding to the sobering lists of their perpetual obligations to the places they protect.

We at Gathering Waters are here to support land trusts, and to help make sure the quality and sustainability of land conservation in the state keeps apace with the quantity of acres protected. To those ends, in January, we will officially launch a new suite of services designed to help Wisconsin's land trusts become a network of high-performing, sustainable community institutions.

The Land Trust Excellence and Advancement Program (LEAP, for short) is a comprehensive effort to increase the pace, permanence and quality of conservation statewide.

We have created LEAP in partnership with the Land Trust Alliance. GWC and the Alliance have worked in parallel to strengthen Wisconsin land trust for many years. We saw an opportunity to coordinate our complimentary services, and by doing so, channel greater financial resources to Wisconsin land trusts than ever before.

To design LEAP, we reviewed similar statewide programs in other parts of the country. We vetted LEAP plans through the Land Trust Council, an advisory body of Wisconsin land trust leaders, and we've collected extensive feedback from our member land trusts about their needs in the next three years.

LEAP will be our best funded and most coordinated capacity building push to date. LEAP will help land trusts define their own path to excellence, then pursue that with sustained and customized support. Through LEAP we may facilitate a land trust's first strategic plan, or help craft an agreement to combine resources with neighboring organizations, or support an application for Land Trust Accreditation.

LEAP is an ambitious program, and our success will depend on broad support from people who care about Wisconsin's land conservation. You'll be hearing more from us soon, for LEAP is our chance to collectively ensure that those thousands of acres and counting will be stewarded by strong organizations for the benefit of our children's children and beyond.



Michael Strigel, Executive Director

Board member profile



Nelson French is the Executive Director of the Kinnickinnick River Land Trust. He started that job in 2007 after an already impressive list of conservation accomplishments. Mr. French served as Director of Legislative Affairs at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Before MPCE, Mr. French served as Executive Director of Friends of the Minnesota Valley, and before that, he served as Vice President and State Director of The Nature Conservancy of Minnesota where during his tenure the Minnesota program doubled in size. At the Kinnickinnick River Land Trust, he led their effort to become the first Accredited Land Trust in the state. We asked him what motivates him to serve on Gathering Waters' Board: "It is important to be constantly learning and sharing knowledge about the work we do as land trusts. I value the relationships and great vision of Gathering Waters' board."

PACE Workshops

Gathering Waters Conservancy and the American Farmland Trust received funding from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program to hold a series of workshops about Wisconsin's PACE program and how to develop local farmland easement programs.

Two workshops are scheduled so far, with more to come. Save these dates and check our website www.gatheringwaters.org for registration details and additional workshops.

January 13th in Sheboygan
February 24th in Green Bay

For more information or if you are interested in hosting a workshop in your community, please contact Mike Carlson, Government Relation Director—608-251-9131 extension 13, carlson@gatheringwaters.org



Greg Blonde and Mike Koles, with UW Extension in Waupaca County, have been instrumental in setting up Waupaca's new farmland easement program. That program is well represented among the first recipients of Wisconsin's PACE grants.

New Tools for Farmland Preservation By Mike Carlson, Government Relations Director

There's exciting progress to report on the implementation of the Working Lands Initiative. Earlier this year, the first applications were submitted for the statewide Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program, and of 36 proposals, 16 are moving forward in the funding process. The 16 projects represent more 5,000 acres of farmland, which will remain in agriculture and will be permanently protected by conservation easements.

Land trusts were involved in many of the proposals in this first round of PACE applications, and eight of the projects selected for funding were either sponsored or co-sponsored by land trusts.

Gathering Waters continues to serve on the state's PACE Council. From that seat, we are working closely with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), representing land trusts' perspective as the PACE program absorbs the lessons of the first round of grants and refines the program for next year.

You'll also remember our partnership with the American Farmland Trust called the "Campaign for Wisconsin's Farm and Forest Lands." With the successful passage of the Working Lands Initiative and its new tools,

we're continuing our partnership to promote support for the Initiative's programs. To that end, we have expanded our Working Lands Initiative website www.wisconsinfarmland.org.

This site now includes a comprehensive library of resources, The Wisconsin Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements Resource Index. It is a set of downloadable materials useful to anyone interested in exploring a PACE program in their community. It's a rich compendium of sample documents, models and examples, reports on PACE and more technical information, drawing from successful programs in Wisconsin and other states.

In addition, the site features Profiles of Farmland Preservation Leadership, a growing collection of sketches of trailblazing farmers and communities in Wisconsin leading the way in protecting farmland. Read more about Greg Blonde and Mike Koles, (pictured) for example, and others on the leading edge of lasting farmland protection.

If you'd like to know more about Gathering Waters' support of farmland protection, contact Government Relations Director Mike Carlson – Carlson@gatheringwaters.org or 608-251-9131 x 13.



Help us bid farewell

Not many people write this little blurb about themselves, but as the Outreach Director for Gathering Waters, this job usually falls to me. I am Pam Foster Felt, and I'm leaving Gathering Waters this month to become the Non Profit Grants Manager for the Stewardship Fund at Wisconsin DNR. To all Gathering Waters' members, you should know that your contributions support an office full of frequent laughter among very smart colleagues who are all motivated toward excellence and lasting conservation. I took the job with the Stewardship Fund knowing that I will continue learning from the extraordinary leaders of Wisconsin's land trust community. This is the best job I've ever had. To all the people I've worked with and all our contributors who make Gathering Waters possible, thank you very much.

Help us Welcome

Gathering Waters' three newest board members illustrate how many professions and vocations have essential connections to land conservation in the state.



Thomas Mitchell is an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School. He has researched extensively how land tenure systems impact poor and minority communities. At UW-Law he directs the Community Development Externship program, placing law students with public interest firms and organizations to offer legal services to community development initiatives. He also served on the American Bar Association's Property Preservation Task Force and as vice president of the board of directors of Farmers' Legal Action Group. Professor Mitchell has provided several legal interns for Gathering Waters in recent years, including two working with us this fall.



Since 1970, **Randall Lawton** has been President and CEO, and then Board Chair of C. A. Lawton Co. a 131 year- old family owned industrial machinery and components manufacturing company in De Pere. He has served on the Board of many non-profit organizations including the Community Partnership for Children, the Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, and the Partnership for Wisconsin's Economic Success, dedicated to making the success of every child one of Wisconsin's top economic priorities. Randall is also an outdoor enthusiast who owns and has protected land on Moonlight Bay in Door County.



Jeffrey Crawford has served as the Attorney General for the Forest County Potawatomi Community since 1997: he is also a member of the Forest County Potawatomi Tribe. His previous professional life was in Minneapolis where he was an associate at Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi, then an attorney for General Mills. More recently, he served Wisconsin as a member of the board of the Governor's Task Force on Global Warming and is a board member of the Wisconsin Business Council. He is a frequent presenter on environmental topics and was a panelist for the 2010 Marquette University Law School Public Service conference on water law and a water ethic for Wisconsin.

Standing Room Only

2010 Conservation Leadership Awards *continued from page 1*



The 2010 Land Conservation Leadership Awards went to:

Natural Heritage Land Trust *Land Trust of the Year*

The Natural Heritage Land Trust, which works in and around Dane County, has permanently protected more than 6,500 acres of parkland, natural areas, hunting and fishing areas and 23 working farms. In a region with dynamic boundaries between urban, suburban and rural places, NHLT has been a strategic champion of critical watersheds, an innovator for farmland preservation and a respected partner of federal, state and local agencies alike.

NHLT now also holds the record of most nominations for this award! No fewer than 16 organizations and individuals called for this award, among them a County Executive, a DNR Regional Director and several other conservation luminaries.

Staff and board of Natural Heritage Land Trust, the 2010 Land Trust of the Year: Renee Lauber, Willi Van Haren, Johanna Allex, Jim Welsh, Caleb Pourchot, Heidi Habeger, (seated) Carla Wright & Martha Frey



Milwaukee Alderman Nik Kovac *Policy Maker of the Year*

Kovac, a freshman member of Milwaukee's Common Council, deftly championed the agenda of the Milwaukee River Work Group to protect 800 acres of greenway in the heart of Wisconsin's largest urban center.

Alderman Kovac's efforts ensured permanent protection of natural open space and some of the best hiking trails and scenic vistas found in any urban area in the world.

Kimberly Gleffe, Executive Director of the River Revitalization Foundation told us, "this is one of the strongest urban river conservation laws in the country. This is an example for other cities to replicate as a model of urban conservation at its finest."

« Alderman Nik Kovac with some smiling members of the Milwaukee River Work Group: Ann Brummitt, Vince Bushell, Theresa Morgan, Jeanne Salmon, Alderman Kovac and (seated) Kimberly Gleffe



Dr. Noel Cutright *Lifetime Achievement Award*

Dr. Cutright was recognized for notable contributions to land conservation through his achievements as an ornithologist. Through both paid and volunteer efforts, Dr. Cutright has raised both awareness and thousands of dollars for permanent protection of bird habitat in Wisconsin.

Among other things, he has been instrumental in the protection and restoration of the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, a former golf course being transformed by the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust into a migratory bird stop-over along the Great Lakes flyway.

Gene Roark *Lifetime Achievement Award*

Gene Roark's environmental protection and land conservation leadership in Wisconsin has spanned 60 years and touched dozens of organizations. He helped found the Wisconsin office of The Nature Conservancy, which celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. In addition to being a founder, Roark served on the Conservancy's Board of Trustees for 23 years and as chairman from 1978 to 1981. He continues to be active, helping guide the Conservancy's work in the Baraboo Hills as a long-time member of the Baraboo Hills Working Group and assisting the Conservancy in advocating for public funding and public policy related to natural resource conservation. The long, long list of Boards of Directors Gene has served on includes: Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Dane County Conservation League and the Natural Heritage Land Trust.

*Lifetime Achievement Honorees
Gene Roark and Dr. Noel Cutright*



Photo by David Niergarth

The Baraboo Range Land Preservation Team: David Wernecke, Kevin Connors, Stefanie Brouwer, Pam Phelan, Jim Welsh, Rodney Walter (seated) Mary Rothenmaier and David Tremble

The Highway 12, Baraboo Hills Preservation Team The Harold "Bud" Jordahl Award

The Award went this year to eight individuals representing six organizations together responsible for one of the most creative and successful cooperative conservation efforts in the state. For a decade, this partnership of The Nature Conservancy, Baraboo Range Preservation Association, The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grants Program, DNR Lands Division and Dane and Sauk Counties leveraged \$20 million from state, federal and private funders to permanently protect nearly 12,000 acres in the Baraboo Hills and along Highway 12.

The Baraboo Hills are geologically unique in the world, and home to the largest contiguous stand of upland hardwood forest in the Midwest.

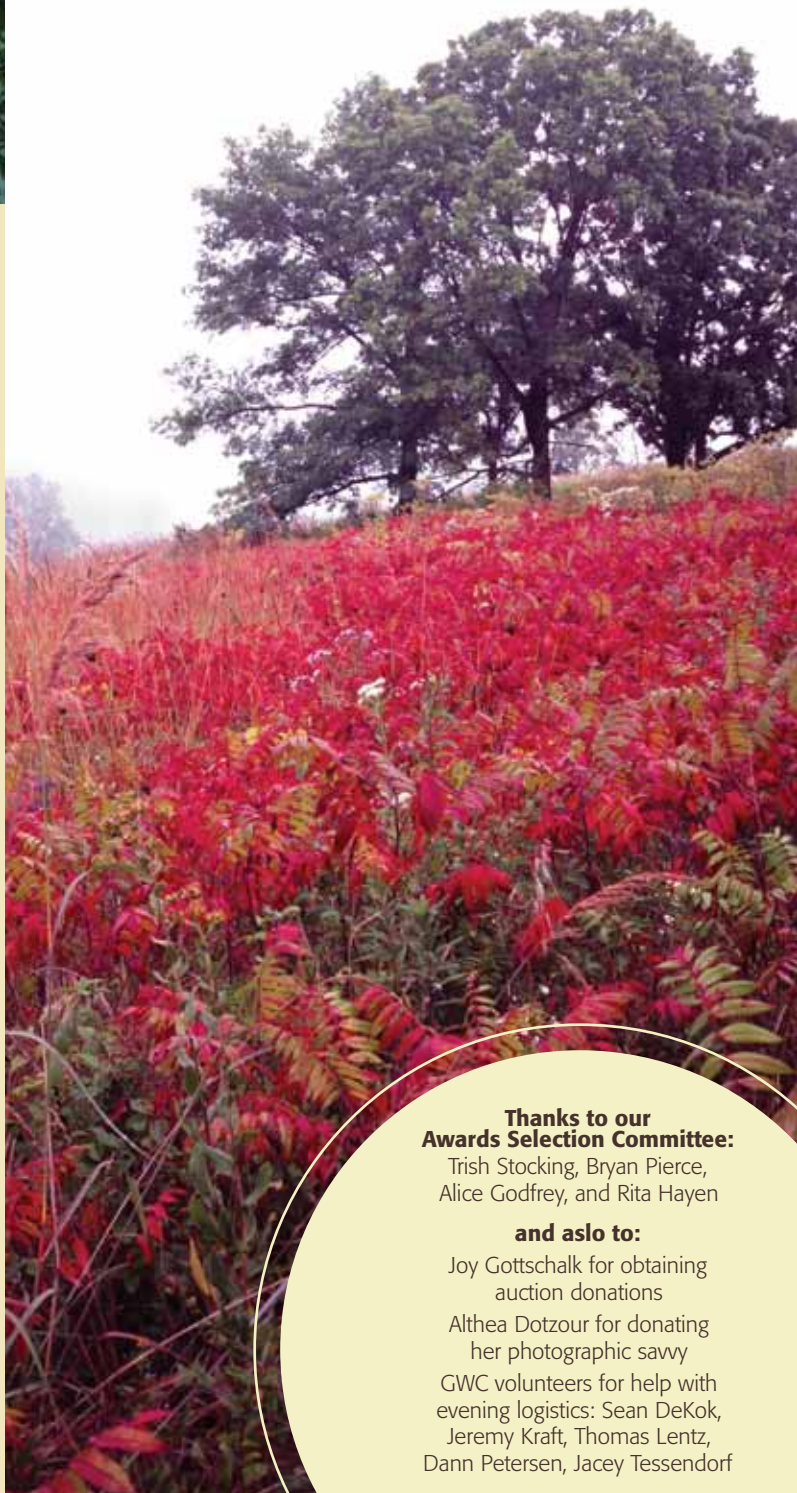
When our event host asked anyone who had some connection to that decade of protection to stand up, easily 30 people rose. Acknowledging everyone participating in such an ecosystem-scale conservation success would have made for a very long program, so the honorees were the "boots on the ground" acquisition team who worked with landowners across kitchen tables, sometimes hand-delivering checks to closings.

If you're inspired, and you should be, it's not too early to nominate winners of the 2011 Land Conservation Leadership Awards! Nomination information is on our web site. It's also not too early to save the date. Mark your calendar for September 29, 2011.



See more photos and read more about the Awards Celebration on our blog – wisconsinlandtrusts.org

Read Our Blog



Thanks to our Awards Selection Committee:

Trish Stocking, Bryan Pierce, Alice Godfrey, and Rita Hayen

and also to:

Joy Gottschalk for obtaining auction donations

Althea Dotzour for donating her photographic savvy

GWC volunteers for help with evening logistics: Sean DeKok, Jeremy Kraft, Thomas Lentz, Dann Petersen, Jacey Tessoroff

Our Awards Celebration is Gathering Waters' biggest fundraising event each year. It is made possible by contributions from many individuals and organizations. Please help us thank:

Want to volunteer?

We could use your help. Compared to land trust volunteer opportunities—glorious days outside pulling garlic mustard, planting trees, maybe even burning prairies—Gathering Waters offers perhaps less rigorous (but sheltered from the elements and bug free!) opportunities to help people protect Wisconsin. We can use help with our membership program, event planning and other projects. We promise abundant coffee and laughter and the satisfaction of helping Wisconsin land trusts.

If you are interested or have questions, please contact Mindy Petersen—mindy@gatheringwaters.org or call 608-251-9131 x 15.

Thank You

As always, we have a big list of people to thank for their volunteer contributions to Gathering Waters:

Cathy Chybowski, Jim Welsh and Mario Quintana for web site enhancements

Ozaukee Washington Land Trust for hosting staff development

Althea Dotzour Photography and Cricket Design Works for Photoshop expertise

Paul Christenson for video expertise

Stafford Rosenbaum, Godfrey & Kahn, Drinker Biddle & Reath and the Aldo Leopold Foundation for meeting space

Bill and Judith Stone and Paula Puntenney for hosting our joint event with the Kenosha/Racine Land Trust in June

Debbie and John Murphy and Patty Zurlo for hosting traveling staff

Door County Land Trust for sponsoring a LMSA reception

Frank Productions for their neighborly hospitality and office treats

Saxon Homestead Farm for hosting a barn dance benefiting GWC

David and Helen MacGregor for hosting a joint event with Mississippi Valley Conservancy

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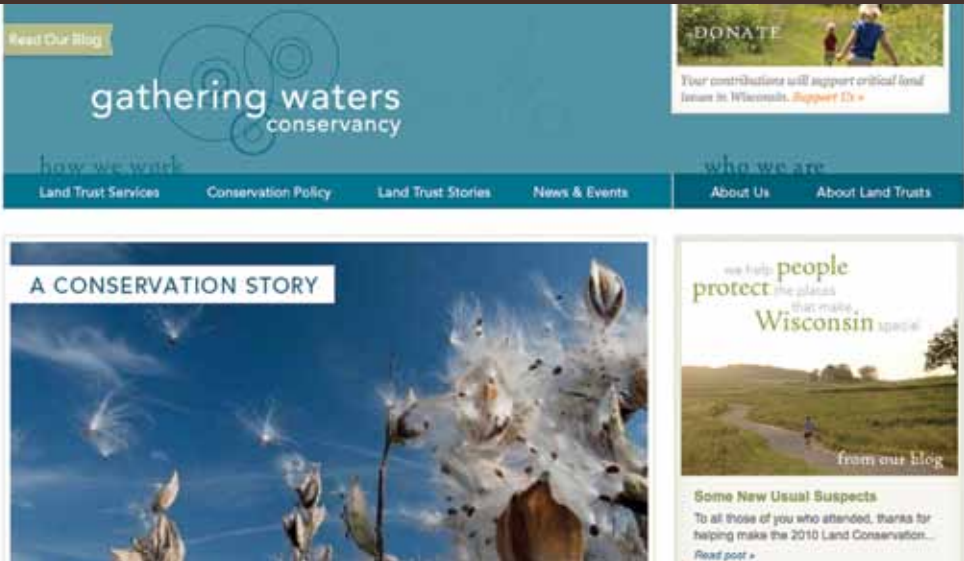
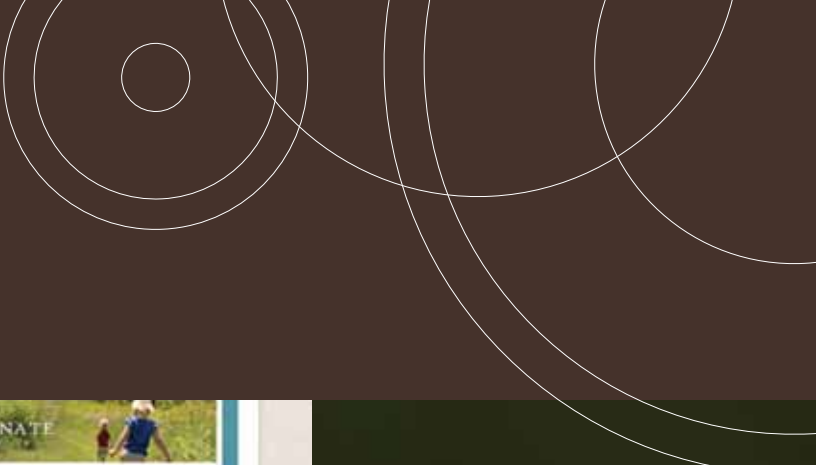
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Cutting Edge Communication Tools

At Gathering Waters, there are eight of us in the office, each with our own tasks and projects, but we share one essential job: we communicate. Gathering Waters communicates the value of private, voluntary land conservation to decision makers, law makers and donors. We connect land trust staff and board with expertise. We introduce landowners to local land trusts. We link land trusts to leadership and resources to help them protect Wisconsin's special places. And we do all that on the phone, via email, in person, and increasingly on the web. Accordingly, we've invested in a new tool that will help us keep our web communication dynamic, accessible, timely, and compelling.

Our new site design is now live. Have a look! See and hear stories of people protecting Wisconsin, track conservation news, follow our efforts, download information and, as always, share any feedback. The website is constantly evolving; we're interested in your ideas about how to make it better.

Speaking of web communications, **we'd like your email address, please.** Gathering Waters has started occasional email blasts with event announcements and conservation news that this four-times-a-year newsletter just can't keep up with. We'd like to send those to you!

If you didn't get a recent note about a few events we co-hosted with land trusts this fall, then we don't have your email. The e-blasts can keep you connected to happenings and news in the land trust community. You can also donate to Gathering Waters paper free! Sign up! Follow the link on our home page **www.gatheringwaters.org**.

Fantastic Photo Contest

When we announced our first ever photo contest, we wondered if anyone would enter. They did! We received 180 photos, in fact, many of which you'll see in newsletters and on the web site for months to come. Our winning photo graces the cover of this newsletter, Taken by Paul MacMahon at the Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Dane County.

One of the most exciting features of our contest was the number of entries we received from high school and college students. Anyone concerned that young people aren't spending enough time outside can be reassured that at least a few students are outside appreciating Wisconsin's special places and have some fantastic photos to prove it.

This newsletter features some winning images. You can see all the winning and runner-up photos on our new website www.gatheringwaters.org



photo by Paul McMahon

crosscurrents

a newsletter to serve the land conservation
community of Wisconsin



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Are you staff or board of a Wisconsin Land Trust?
SAVE the DATE! The **2011 Wisconsin Land Trust Retreat**
will be **February 24-26th** in downtown **Green Bay, Wisconsin.**

On the agenda this next year:

- A Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Workshop
- National experts on funding easement stewardship and land trust record-keeping
- GIS Resources for your Land Trust
- Membership databases
- Plenty of opportunity to connect with your peers
- And, of course, food, networking, sledding, the Annual Dessert Potluck and a tour of Lambeau Field.

This will be the most fun anyone's ever had in Green Bay in February, we're sure of it.

Look for registration information on our website after the first of the year.

Interested in Sponsoring?

The Wisconsin Land Trust Retreat is Gathering Waters' flagship program, and we strive to offer it at no charge to our member land trusts. We can do that thanks to the generosity of sponsors. If you're interested in supporting the only conference designed especially to meet the needs of Wisconsin Land Trusts, please contact Sara DeKok, Member Relations Director – sara@gatheringwaters.org, or 608-251-9131 x 10

Photo by Sarah Bennett



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