

# landscene

A publication of the Natural Heritage Land Trust Summer 2006

## Land Trust buys land and gives it to Village of Cross Plains for park



**O**n May 11, the Natural Heritage Land Trust purchased a 53-acre parcel of land and transferred it to the Village of Cross Plains for a park. The new conservancy park is adjacent to land owned by the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation.

The park is located on the bluffs on the north side of the Village. It has always provided spectacular views of the Black Earth Creek valley. And now, it is open to the public for nature-based recreation activities, including hiking, snowshoeing, and bird watching.

The landowners sold the land to the Land Trust at a price below market value, making it possible for the Land Trust to then give the land to the Village.

"Without their generosity, this park wouldn't have been created. This is a great example of how community-minded citizens make Dane County a great place to live. In the years to come, as people visit the park and enjoy the view, I hope that many people will want to thank the landowners for their generosity and foresight," said Welsh.

Cross Plains continued on page 2



**Jim Welsh, NHLT Executive Director, accepts \$227,000 grant, from Scott Hassett, DNR Secretary, for the Lakin property.**

## Land Trust helps protect 349 acres of land at Avon Bottoms

**T**he Land Trust purchased 349 acres of land adjacent to the Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area in Rock County from the Lakin family in March. The land will be restored and opened to the public for outdoor recreational activities, including hunting. This is the

Avon Bottoms continued on page 2

View from the new conservancy park in the Village of Cross Plains.

Join us on a field trip to the newest park in the Village of Cross Plains—see Hickory Hills field trip on page 2.



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The Land Trust will retain a conservation easement over the property, ensuring that the land will always be protected and open to the public as the landowners wanted.

“Two generations of the Tubbs, Esser and Swanson families have enjoyed the land,” said Lee Swanson, one of the landowners. “We are very pleased that it is being protected and preserved for others to use for all generations in the years to come.”

The acquisition is important because it gives people access to a new conservancy park that is adjacent to a 50-acre parcel owned by the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation. The Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation will eventually run a portion of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail across the new park to connect with existing trail on the land it owns.

The acquisition also helps the Village work towards a goal of completing its conservancy park system—the Village’s Comprehensive Master Plan Update included this 53-acre parcel in its Proposed Conservancy Area.

The State’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program provided funds for this acquisition. ■

## Hickory Hills field trip

**Thursday, August 10, 2006**

**6:00 pm until dusk**

**Meet at the gate to the property at the end of Hickory Hill Street**

**Directions** Take Highway 14 to the Village of Cross Plains. Highway 14 is called Main Street as it goes through the Village. Turn north on Hickory Street. Hickory Street becomes Cross Street as it rounds a curve, and as it does, turn left onto Hickory Hill Street. The street ends at the gate to the property.

The hike will be on gravel road and rough terrain; please wear appropriate footwear. We will proceed rain or shine (except for severe weather). The Natural Heritage Land Trust and the Friends of the Conservancy (a local group based in the Village of Cross Plains) are co-sponsoring this hike.

**Questions** Contact Kate Wipperman at the Natural Heritage Land Trust at 258-9797.



**Bidders enjoying the silent auction at the Stewardship Awards Celebration.**

*Avon Bottoms continued from page 1*

largest purchase the Land Trust has made in its 23-year history.

Located approximately 10 miles west of Beloit, the nearly 2,000-acre Avon Bottoms State Wildlife Area includes bottomland hardwoods such as silver maples and swamp white oaks, scattered oak woodlots, grassland, river, and marsh habitat. The area provides habitat for many wildlife species including pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, deer, waterfowl, turkeys, and cranes. It is open to the public for bird watching, canoeing, fishing, and hunting.

“The Land Trust purchased the parcel to provide additional wildlife habitat and public access,” said Jim Welsh, Executive Director of the Natural Heritage Land Trust. The Land Trust’s partners—the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Wisconsin’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program—funded the purchase which cost nearly \$860,000.

To ensure the land would be restored, the landowners placed the property in the Wetland Reserve Program with the NRCS as part of the acquisition. The NRCS plans to restore the land to a mosaic of shallow marsh, wet meadow, floodplain forest, and prairie. Once the restoration is complete, the Land Trust will give the property to the State of Wisconsin for inclusion into the Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area. The NRCS, WI Department of Natural Resources, and Waterfowl USA are funding the restoration on the property. ■



## Land Trust honors people promoting conservation and quality of life

The Natural Heritage Land Trust honored people and local governments who have helped protect the landscape and quality of life in the Dane County region at its recent Stewardship Awards Celebration.

Honorees included:

**The City of Sun Prairie.** The City has supported the Land Trust's efforts to protect the Patrick Marsh Natural Resource Site and has contributed \$270,000 towards the purchase of 57 acres of land within the site.

**The Town of Middleton.** The Town provided \$1,150,000 to help purchase Sunnyside Seed Farm for a new county park. This 292-acre conservancy park provides access to Black Earth Creek; hiking through more than 130 acres of woods; and spectacular views that extend 14 miles to Blue Mounds.

**Dave Ripp.** As a County Board Supervisor, Dave is a strong advocate for the conservation of Dane County's important land and water resources. He is also a "hands-on conservationist." Dave has volunteered with a number of groups, including Dane County Parks, Dane County Conservation League, the Springfield Community Club, and the Friends of Schumacher Farm.

**Terri Potter.** Terri is the President and CEO of Meriter Health Services, Inc. He is also a leader with the Collaboration Council, a regional economic development effort under the auspices of the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. The Land Trust honored Terri for his role to promote building an economy that

## Thank you

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Special thanks to: Mario Quintana and Jamie Young who provided photos for our Stewardship Awards; Natural Resources Consulting, Inc. who helped plot and produce the maps and other displays; Nancy Zucker, who designed our promotional materials; Katie DeGrote, who coordinated the Silent Auction; Mary Schwoch, who helped before, during, and after the event with a variety of tasks; and Karen Bassler, Sara DeKok, Liz Walsh, and Matt Wiperman who helped the day of the event.



Land Trust Honors  
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Kathy Pielsticker, NHLT Chair and Rob Gottschalk, NHLT Board present award to Terri Potter, President and CEO of Meriter Health Services, Inc.

enhances our quality of life.

Terri also gave the keynote address. Terri chairs the Collaboration Council's Quality of Life design team. He believes that as we go about doing economic development, we

need to be good stewards of the assets of this region, including our lands and waters.

"The region needs to grow to protect the tax base, but we need to do it in a manner that protects the core values that bind us together," he said during his keynote address.

Nearly 175 people attended the biennial event which was held at the Monona Terrace in April.

Major event sponsors included: Madison Gas and Electric Foundation; Michael Best & Friedrich, LLP; Natural Resources Consulting, Inc.; Soleil Development Corporation; The Capital Times; Vandewalle & Associates; Veridian Homes; and Wheeler, Van Sickle & Anderson, S.C. ■

## Land Trust receives Award

The Kiwanis Club of Downtown Madison presented its Conservation - Environment Award to the Natural Heritage Land Trust on April 24. The Kiwanis recognized the Land Trust for "conserving and protecting natural areas, farmland and wildlife habitat by the innovative use of easements, contracts and purchase of land for parks and nature preserves."

## Leave a Legacy

By including the Natural Heritage Land Trust in your will, you can help ensure that the lands and waters you love can be enjoyed by future generations. All gifts—large and small—will help you protect special places in the Dane County region ... forever.

Recently, the Land Trust received two bequests—a \$90,000 gift from the Estate of Stephen Ashman and a \$50,000 gift from the Estate of Hazel Knudson. The Land Trust used

the Ashman gift to bolster its endowment funds. The Knudson gift will be used to restore and manage the Wilke Prairie Preserve.

If you're interested in including the Land Trust in your will or in making another kind of planned gift, please contact Meg Nelson, Development Director. If you've already arranged for a planned gift, we'd still like to hear from you—we'd like to acknowledge your thoughtfulness and your gift. ■

## Board Changes

At its annual meeting in May, the Board elected Tom Hebl to the board. A Sun Prairie resident, Tom is a partner with the law firm of Hebl, Hebl & Ripp and a former State Assemblyman. His 3-year term begins in July.

The Board re-elected Kathy Pielsticker as President, Jeff Strobel as Vice-President, and Mike Dubis as Treasurer. In addition, it elected Johanna Alex to serve as Secretary.

Susan Fox and Gene Roark, each of whom served on the board for eight years, recently stepped down. ■

## Save the date for a work party at Patrick Marsh

- Removing trash from Land Trust property at Patrick Marsh
- 9:00 am - 12:00 Saturday, September 30, 2006
- Watch for more details closer to the date.



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