



MINNESOTA LAND TRUST
MID-YEAR REVIEW | APRIL 2014



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF WETLANDS

Let's go outside and *play!*



We're announcing our latest season of Field Trip opportunities for the coming months. What better way to get out and enjoy Minnesota's Treasured Places? Here's just a sampling:



FINE TUNE your photography skills under the direction of renowned Minnesota nature photographer Craig Blacklock. You'll hike on Blacklock's protected nature sanctuary property near Moose Lake, with individualized instruction on how to improve your photography. You'll go home with a beautiful custom-printed enlargement of your work.

OBSERVE peregrine falcon expert Bob Anderson, Director of the Raptor Resource Project, as he bands falcon chicks on Land Trust protected property located on Mississippi Blufflands in southeastern Minnesota.

EXPLORE Listening Point, one of our most renowned conservation easements and Sigurd Olson's inspiration for his nature writings. Your field trip will include a boat tour of Burntside Lake and a delectable shore lunch at Listening Point.



GET up close and personal with the bison at Belwin Conservancy, protected with MLT conservation easements and home to a herd of this incredible American icon. You'll be treated to a personalized tour of Belwin's restored landscape by a naturalist, with an opportunity to learn about Minnesota's prairie past and how organizations like Belwin and the Minnesota Land Trust are working to preserve some of our few remaining prairie places. Includes a light meal on the prairie.

These Field Trips and more will be offered at our "Minnesota Made" fundraising event on May 28, 2014. Any unfilled spaces will be available starting May 29.



Join us for our

3rd Annual Minnesota Land Trust

A benefit to preserve the very best of Minnesota's Treasured Places

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

6-9pm

New Century Theater in Downtown Minneapolis

Convenient parking available in the adjacent Marriott ramp.

Tickets available at www.mnland.org or by calling 651-647-9590.

MUSKIE SPAWNING BEDS NOW PROTECTED.



LANDOWNER SUE LYBACK AND “RESILIENCE.”



A STORY OF RESILIENCE

Childhood memories for Mille Lacs Lake landowner Sue Lyback are intertwined with scenes of harvesting sap for maple syrup, part of her family’s livelihood for years. One particular maple tree, appropriately named “Resilience,” has captured Sue’s imagination as a symbol of the struggle to protect her property from development. “Resilience shouldn’t be alive, as precariously as she stands,” marvels Sue. But thanks to this conservation project, “Resilience”—and the land’s natural forest cover—will remain as part of the property’s legacy.

Minnesota Land Trust membership support was instrumental in protecting this rare, prized Mille Lacs Lake muskellunge spawning bed on a shallow, undeveloped bay. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Muskies and Pike Alliance, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the Initiative Foundation all wrote letters of support for the project. The Outdoor Heritage Fund provided funds through the Conservation Partners Legacy grant program.

Without the efforts of this unique partnership, landowner Sue Lyback would have needed to sell her land for lakeshore development. In fact, the site was already approved for a residential subdivision containing numerous lots, which would likely have destroyed the sensitive shoreline and severely impacted the extraordinary spawning beds and associated wildlife habitat. Instead of pursuing development, however, Sue contacted the Minnesota Land Trust with the hope that her family memories and the wildlife habitat she’s grown up with would be left in its natural state forever.

In addition to the Outdoor Heritage Fund grant, the Land Trust was successful in garnering membership support necessary to complete the funding that permanently protects the 52-acre property. In all, more than a quarter mile of natural shoreline is protected from future development or alteration.

Sue and her husband Doug Jacobson have observed yellow and pink ladyslipper, trout

lilies, blue heron, painted and snapping turtles, pelican, mink, river otter and others. They see many deer on their property, including a rare albino specimen.

The project was completed through the Department of Natural Resources’ Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant program, which funds conservation projects that restore, enhance, or protect forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife in Minnesota.

Funding for the CPL grant program comes from the Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and approved by the Minnesota Legislature.

“MILLE LACS LAKE IS A PREMIER DESTINATION FOR WALLEYE, SMALLMOUTH BASS, AND MUSKIE ANGLERS. PROTECTING IT WILL HELP ENSURE THE PUBLIC WILL ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF THIS GREAT NATURAL RESOURCE NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.”

— Rick Bruesewitz,
Aitkin Area Fisheries Supervisor
for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Wetlands:

ONCE UNDERVALUED, NOW ESSENTIAL TO PROTECT

When many of us were kids, shallow boggy places were regarded as perfect for catching bullfrogs or launching a raft of questionable seaworthiness, but not much else. However, we now know those wetlands are not just fun places to explore—they are critically important to our quality of life in Minnesota.

Why are wetlands important to us?

- Wetland vegetation offers erosion control on lakes and stream beds that are subjected to the destructive forces of wave action.
- Spring flooding can be reduced because water that would otherwise race downstream has a chance to percolate deep into the ground.
- While water is held in wetlands, pollutants and sediments are filtered out before the cleaner water washes out to lakes and streams.

- Fish need quiet, grassy places for spawning, food and just plain hanging out. Birds thrive with the greater security of a wet, mucky environment which impedes predators. They get nourishment from seeds and tubers found in wetlands.
- 43% of threatened or endangered plants and animals in the U.S. live in or depend on wetlands.

Wetlands have become somewhat of an ‘endangered species’ all on their own, with at least 52% of Minnesota’s original wetlands gone forever. According to the DNR, some areas of Minnesota have lost over 90% of their wetlands. And of the approximately 10 million acres that remain, a large portion is located on private land and vulnerable to the possibility of being filled in for development or cropland.

WETLANDS DESERVE SPECIAL TREATMENT

Land conservation professionals consider wetlands as a key component for inclusion when identifying land for protection. In fact, Minnesota state law sets the standard by specifically prioritizing the protection of wetlands, and Land Trust staff references those statutes to support conservation easement projects. Already well over 4,000 acres of wetlands have been protected by the Minnesota Land Trust.

Recently completed projects provide excellent examples of the value of utilizing conservation easements on private land to permanently protect their wetlands. Here’s a small snapshot:

ANYTHING BUT BOGGED DOWN

Bald eagle, osprey, beaver, wild turkey, sand hill crane, great horned owl, grouse, yellow rail, red-necked grebe and trumpeter swan find the old cranberry bogs on David Heegaard’s Cass County property perfectly suited to their needs for food, breeding and resting places. Migratory birds also find the property’s shallow wetlands on their long journey from winter to summer habitats.

Working with the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation, the Minnesota Land Trust has permanently protected 160 acres of Heegaard land which include nearly 4,000 feet of shoreline along the Pine River, a DNR designated state water trail.

Landowner David Heegaard generously donated the conservation easement. Costs for this project were provided by Minnesota Land Trust members and the Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council with approval of the Minnesota Legislature.



“THE CARE OF THE EARTH IS OUR MOST ANCIENT AND MOST WORTHY, AND AFTER ALL OUR MOST PLEASING RESPONSIBILITY. TO CHERISH WHAT REMAINS OF IT AND TO FOSTER ITS RENEWAL IS OUR ONLY HOPE.”

— Wendell Berry



CHALBERG CREEK



THREE MILES OF SHORELINE PROTECTED ON THE IKE FISCHER FARM

BETTER THAN BRITA: A GIANT NATURAL WATER FILTER

Natural shoreline on Chalberg Creek and surrounding beaver ponds are now protected forever thanks to the generosity and vision of landowners Linda and Ed Hendrickson.

The 159-acre property's natural, unaltered shoreline and wetlands provide important breeding areas for fish and other aquatic creatures, and filters water as it flows into Chalberg Creek, a DNR designated trout stream which flows into the Cloquet River north of Duluth. The wetlands, shoreline and rich forest cover make this property a haven for wildlife of all kinds.

The conservation easement was donated by the Hendricksons, and project costs were funded by Minnesota Land Trust members and the Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council with approval of the Minnesota Legislature.

FAMILY MATTERS: A MULTI GENERATIONAL EFFORT FOR LAND PROTECTION

Located near the town of Frazee in northwestern Minnesota, the Ike Fischer Century Family Farm is a terrific example of diversity in wetlands. This large complex of protected land contains nearly 500 acres of forests, wetlands and grasslands and more than three miles of undeveloped shoreline on five lakes! The open wetland and shallow lake edges are dominated by rushes, cord grass, sedges, arrowhead, cattails, bulrush, wild rice and pond lily. This type of cover is excellent habitat for

white-tailed deer, red-shouldered hawk, sand hill crane, snowshoe hare, heron, bittern, bobcat, voles, shrews, beaver, mink, otter, muskrat, red fox and various amphibians and waterfowl.

Funding for this project was provided by Minnesota Land Trust members and by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.

LOOKING AHEAD:

THE WETLAND HABITAT PROTECTION PROGRAM

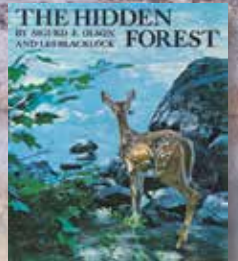
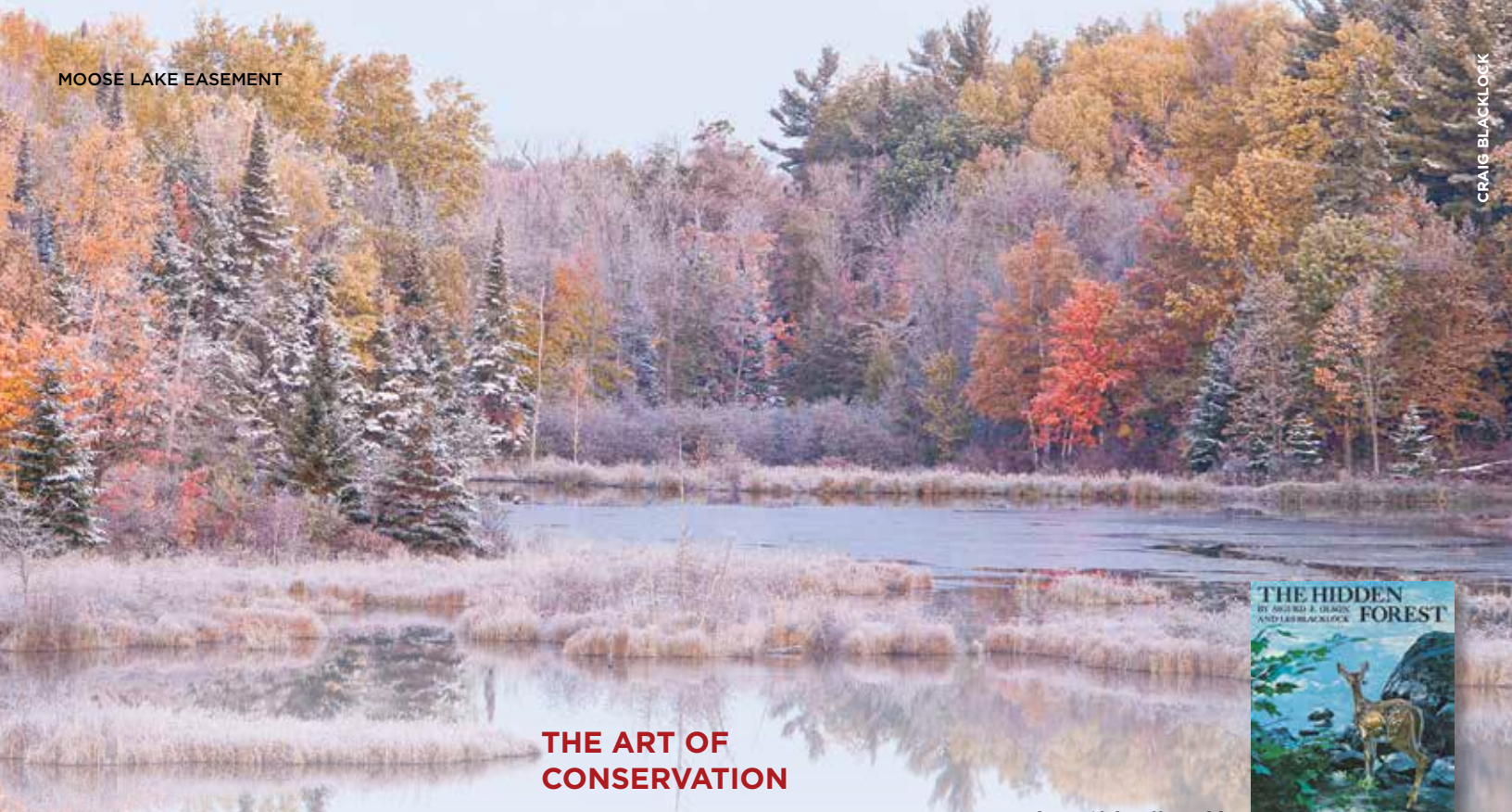
Minnesota Land Trust aims to protect high priority wetland habitat complexes in Minnesota's Forest-Prairie transition area by securing permanent conservation easements using a cost-effective approach to maximize conservation benefit and leverage. The Land Trust will work with landowners to permanently protect more than 1,000 acres through a unique ranking system and market approach for

purchasing conservation easements. Funding for this program is provided by grants from the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the McKnight Foundation.

We are currently seeking interested landowners in Becker, Douglas, Grant, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Otter Tail, Stevens, Swift, Pope, and Todd Counties. Learn more at www.mnland.org.



DON J. OLSON



THE ART OF CONSERVATION

If a picture tells a thousand words, then the Blacklock family has created volumes. You may be familiar with the photography of the late Les Blacklock and his son, Craig, but you may not know about the considerable resources that this family has devoted to land conservation in Minnesota.

Born in 1921, Les had an early interest in photography. Interrupted by a stint in the famed 10th Mountain Division, Les came home from World War II with a yen to return to nature and his beloved camera. Les and his wife, Fran, soon found themselves immersed in Minnesota's unspoiled wonders, including the Boundary Waters, Superior's North Shore, and neighboring Isle Royale.

The Blacklocks were driven by the idea that photography can inspire the desire to experience nature for ourselves and a passion to preserve the land's wild character would naturally follow.

Les worked with Fran, Craig, and Craig's first wife Nadine to create calendars, movies, and books. He collaborated with Sigurd Olson

on a beautiful coffee table work called *The Hidden Forest* and served as a consulting naturalist helping to plan over 30 natural areas, parks and nature centers. Les succumbed to Parkinson's disease in 1995, Nadine died in a tragic car accident in 1998, and Fran passed away in 2008, leaving a legacy which carries forward today.

Perhaps their most significant legacy began in the 1960's in Eden Prairie. Their family property is now part of the parkland that surrounds Anderson Lakes.

In the 1970's, the family moved to Moose Lake, eventually creating a cherished retreat intended to nourish the work of nature-inspired artists, writers and poets called the Blacklock Nature Sanctuary.

A second retreat was created on the shores of Lake Superior. Foundation support disappeared for nature programming at the Sanctuary after the economic crash of the late 2000's, so Craig and his wife Honey redirected their efforts towards land protection.



PETER MARCUS

ABOVE: LES BLACKLOCK WITH SIG OLSON

BELOW: CRAIG, HONEY, CHARIS BLACKLOCK WITH DAVID OLSON ON THE LAKE SUPERIOR EASEMENT



BLACKLOCK FAMILY CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

In June, 2011, the Blacklocks protected the Blacklock Nature Sanctuary located next to Split Rock Light House.

Two years later, 345 acres rolling hills, forest, wetlands and grasslands of their family property near Moose Lake in Carlton County were protected. Even more opportunity for creating a large complex of undeveloped habitat lies ahead. Additional easements are pending that will result in a total of 725 protected acres of family land and Blacklock Nature Sanctuary property, all located within about a mile of one another.

These projects represent enormous generosity and

selflessness, but the Blacklocks are circumspect about their considerable contributions. Their philosophy is perhaps best stated in Craig's own words: "Some places are too important to not preserve."

Funding for the Moose Lake easement was provided in part by Department of Natural Resource's Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant program, which funds conservation projects that restore, enhance, or protect forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife in Minnesota. Funding for the CPL grant program comes from the Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and approved by the Minnesota Legislature. The Lake Superior project was funded in part by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. Additional funding came from the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation and the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation, and generous Land Trust members.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

With our relatively small staff size, we rely on trained and certified volunteers to help us accomplish our stewardship mission and visit each of our 460-and-growing protected properties annually. Again in 2013, the Land Trust monitored 100% of its protected properties with the help of over 100 volunteer monitors.

New volunteers become certified by attending a spring training session and accompanying an experienced monitor or a staff person on a monitoring visit. Volunteers renew their training every spring to stay up to date on new policies and procedures, hear an informational talk about a natural resource topic, and collaborate with other volunteers. This year's training sessions will be held in multiple locations statewide during April and May.

Technology also helps the Land Trust efficiently steward our growing portfolio of conservation easements. This year we will implement a secure online database which will help keep our records up to date, saving resources like funding and staff time. We expect this tool to improve staff responsiveness to landowners seeking approval for activities on protected properties, foster relationships and prevent conservation easement violations. The database will store information off-site and protect it from potential hazards like fire or flood.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Kristina Geiger at 651-917-6295.



A TIRELESS ADVOCATE FOR THE PLANET



A longtime advocate for preservation of our natural environment, the late Philip Cook had a deeply held vision for conservation.

Phil and his wife Elsie had planned to permanently protect the 140 acres of hardwood forest and wetlands that make up their property. More than 2,000 feet of shoreline along the Knife River and its tributary, one of the North Shore's most popular trout streams, would be protected as well with the help of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Last summer, long-term plans turned to urgent action: Phil had been diagnosed with cancer.

Giving Phil the satisfaction of knowing the land he loved so dearly would be protected from development forever motivated everyone involved in this project to do whatever was possible to fulfill his dream and complete the project in Phil's last hours.

Phil and Elsie's story is a reminder that when people care deeply about land, great things can happen and a legacy can be created. Our job, of course, is to ensure that their legacy—and those of the other 450 families we've worked with—is continued for generations.

But we need your help. Create your own land protection legacy by including the Land Trust in your will, insurance policy or retirement fund. You can also make a gift of land, stock or other securities (call Walter Abramson at 651-917-6285).

It's not often you can make a gift that will have a permanent impact. This is one of them.

thank you!

A FAREWELL TO FITZ!



We're marking the end of an era for the Land Trust and a new beginning for Francis "Fitz" Fitzgerald who will retire at the end of May.

We can't tell you how many miles Fitz has driven or how many ticks he has removed from Gunny's fur after visits to potential landowners. But we know for sure his work has resulted in thousands of acres in the wilds of northern Minnesota that will be protected from development forever. That includes over 35 miles of shoreline-- and countless nests, burrows, dens, hives and hollows.

Take a moment to say goodbye to a person who has given so much to future generations in Minnesota. Go to www.mnland.org and follow the link to our "Farewell Fitz" Facebook page, and share a thought.

Hard as it is to say goodbye, it will be easy to say "Thank you."

FSC





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