



2015 Monitoring Season Begins

While it's been a chilly start, summer is here and so is monitoring season. The Minnesota Land Trust monitors every protected property annually. While some monitors are paid staff, most are volunteers who enjoy talking to landowners about their beautiful properties and walking the land.

Monitors will contact landowners prior to the visit and invite them to accompany them. This is a great time to let the Land Trust know if you're planning any changes to the property or if you have questions.

Do you have questions about monitoring visits or land management? Contact Kristina Geiger at kgeiger@mnland.org or 651-917-6295. Are you planning any changes to your land or have questions about your conservation easement? Contact Ann Thies at athies@mnland.org or 651-917-6280. You may also call us toll free at 1-877-MLT-LAND.

Grasslands for the Future

Western Minnesota has seen unprecedented landscape changes. Today, less than 1% of Minnesota's native prairie habitat remains. The Minnesota Land Trust is piloting a program that uses conservation easements to help stem the loss of grasslands, while preserving what used to be a mainstay of the area's economy: cattle.

Our pilot Grasslands for the Future program works with conservation-

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Conservation easements protect low-intensity grazing operations and western Minnesota grasslands.

Top 10 DNR Forest Wildlife Habitat Tips

- Develop a long-term plan
- Maintain large, un-developed, unfragmented habitat patches
- Encourage native plants and animals
- Maintain forest structure and diversity of forest types, ages, and plants
- Prevent and control invasive plant and animal species
- Preserve wetland and riparian areas
- Retain sufficient dead and live standing trees and woody debris when harvesting your forest
- Maintain small wildlife openings where appropriate
- Consider wildlife of special concern
- Implement your plan

For more information, go to: www.dnr.state.mn.us/privatelandhabitat/forest_wildlife_habitat_tips.html

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Private Land Habitat Program

NEW Land Trust Land Management Resources Webpages

The Land Trust just launched webpages to provide more information to landowners. Check them out!

Land Management Info: www.mnland.org/landmanagement

Assistance Programs: www.mnland.org/landprograms

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minded owners of working grasslands. Allowing an appropriate number of cattle to rotationally graze large areas of grassland is good for habitat. Cattle mimic bison and disturb prairies just enough to maintain native vegetation and prevent the spread of invasive species.

By lowering the value of the land but allowing low-intensity grazing, conservation easements let owners produce enough revenue to keep the land in grass instead of converting it to row crops.

We're working with grazing operators and partners to create conservation grazing plans that are flexible enough for operators to adapt to changing conditions but limit any negative effects of grazing on habitat and water quality.

Our conservation easements are perpetual, but the Land Trust is always trying new ways to work with landowners as environmental threats and management strategies change—stay tuned for more!

Land Trust Adds to Stewardship Team

To keep up with our growing portfolio of conservation easements, we added new stewardship staff. Conservation Associate Nick Bancks provides administrative and technical support. He'll also monitor in the Avon Hills area this year.

Ann Thies is our new Conservation Stewardship Director. Ann responds to landowner requests—for example, landowner inquiries regarding habitat management or building plans. Ann also works with landowners, realtors, and potential buyers to familiarize them with easement terms.

As Baseline Project Associate, Mark van der Linden updates baseline documentation reports to include new maps, descriptions, and photographs. These documents help monitors and future landowners understand protected properties. If your property was protected before 2003, you may hear from Mark about an update.



New stewardship staff (from left to right): Ann Thies, Nick Bancks, and Mark van der Linden.

2014 Landowner of the Year

All landowners of protected properties deserve recognition for their stewardship of Minnesota's vital natural lands. Every year, the Land Trust recognizes one of them whose conservation ethic serves as a model for others to follow.

Congratulations to the 2014 Landowner of the Year, Don Nelson. While practicing orthodontics at the Mayo Clinic, Don acquired several hundred acres in southern Minnesota. And then he started planting trees...and more trees...and more trees...

Don ended up planting more than 16,000 trees. While his conservation ethic had "taken root," he wanted to do more. These lands weren't just important to him, they were important for wildlife, clean water, and his community. For Don, the solution was permanent protection.

In 2007, Don protected 491 acres near the Zumbro River with the Minnesota Land Trust and then conveyed it to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Today, it is enjoyed by thousands of people each year as the Rock Dell Wildlife Management Area—and by the bees that help pollinate its restored prairie!

In 2009 he protected land that expanded another Wildlife Management Area. Then in 2014 he preserved his grandparents' historic homestead near Nerstrand Big Woods State Park. The walnut and oak trees that Don planted years ago are maturing and providing habitat for as many as 29 species in greatest conservation need.

Don permanently protected more than 850 acres of land—a gift to wildlife and to our collective outdoor heritage. We are humbled by Dr. Nelson's generosity and the legacy he leaves to future generations.



Don Nelson with the Land Trust's Executive Director Kris Larson (right) and former Southern Region Director Clint Miller (left).



Jerry Martin donated 400+ acres of forest and wetlands to the Minnesota Land Trust in 2014.

2014 In Review

In 2014, the Minnesota Land Trust completed 25 projects and protected 2,300 acres of land and 71,000 feet of shoreline. In partnership with over 500 landowners, we steward almost 50,000 acres of forest, grassland, wetland, lakes, and rivers.

We're also dipping our toe into land ownership. A generous gift of land from longtime conservationist Jerry Martin added four projects in 2014. Throughout his life, Jerry pursued land purchases with an eye for high quality bulrush beds and stands of beautiful old pines. Jerry also made a generous monetary gift to support the long-term stewardship costs of the projects.

Many landowners support the Land Trust with annual financial contributions. Your gifts not only help us complete new land projects, but to steward your land into perpetuity. Thank you.

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MINNESOTA LAND TRUST LANDOWNER NEWS



The newsletter for landowners of properties protected with conservation easements

June 2015

The Minnesota Land Trust works in partnership with over 500 landowners to steward land protected by conservation easements. To support the ongoing management of your protected property, this sixth issue of the Landowner Newsletter has information on land management, the 2015 monitoring season, and the Minnesota Land Trust.

If you've received this newsletter in error, kindly contact us. Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE:

TREASURED PLACES

*an adventurous appreciation
for landowners, volunteers,
and partners*

September 19, 2015

St. John's University



At 2014 Treasured Places, landowner Bonita Underbakke & Harvey Benson toured Land Trust protected properties from a Mississippi River boat.