



Door County Land Trust

LANDINGS

Connecting You to Door County's Vital Lands & Waters

DOUBLE your DONATION!
Give before year-end with a
matching gift challenge. Pages 10-11

Journal of the
Door County Land Trust
Fall 2024, Vol. 27, Issue 3



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Door County Land Trust

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Door County Land Trust protects the wild places, scenic beauty, and ecological integrity that make the peninsula and islands so special. The Land Trust is a local, member supported, non-profit organization. It is thanks to members and donors that more than 9,700 acres are now protected.

Land Trust nature preserves, located throughout Door County, are open for hiking and other low-impact, non-motorized recreational activities—all at no charge to the public.

Meet the Staff



Emily Wood

Executive Director
Emily Wood

Land Program Director
Jesse Koyen

Land Protection Manager
Brian Forest

Conservation Easement Program Manager
Drew Reinke

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Membership Coordinator
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Kristi Rice

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Amy Dwyer

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Jesse Koyen



Brian Forest



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Carrie Ehrfurth



Tina Lee



Thomas Stasiak



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Maddie Tishler



Cinnamon Rossman



Sara Dennison



Kristi Rice



Amy Dwyer

Plan Your Legacy to Last Forever.

Members of the Legacy Circle make planned gifts that ensure their life's work helps protect Door County's vital lands and waters...forever.

Consider naming the Land Trust as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance, or other accounts.

In 2024, 10% of your intent to join the Legacy Circle and \$1,000 will be donated in your honor.



Contact us at (920)746-1359 or giving@DoorCountyLandTrust.org. Details at DoorCountyLandTrust.org/legacy

Challenge Gift Sets the Pace of Conservation

As we reflect on the past year, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the incredible community of supporters like you. Your dedication has made it possible for the Door County Land Trust to achieve remarkable milestones in land conservation over the last two years. If you're reading this, you are an integral part of our success in protecting the beauty and ecological treasures of Door County. Without your support, these irreplaceable landscapes could be at risk.

I am excited to share that we ended 2023 with record-breaking achievements. We protected nine new properties, setting a high bar among Wisconsin land trusts and marking a significant accomplishment for the Door County Land Trust.

While there are few things in life we aim to break, records in land conservation are the exception! Each year, we are committed to safeguarding the best of Door County's landscapes and permanently conserving our priority areas.

This year, we are on track to surpass last year's accomplishments, having already protected eleven new properties—another milestone in our conservation efforts. This includes a blend of donated land, purchased property, and newly established conservation easements. These successes are a testament to the dedication of our community, which is vital in driving our mission forward.

To continue this momentum, our annual Conservation and Stewardship Campaign sets the stage for our projects today and into 2025. I am excited to announce an opportunity for you to double your impact! **Your contribution before year-end will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$50,000 through our Matching Challenge**, thanks to the generous support of our dear friend, Phyllis.

Join us in the vital mission to preserve the unique charm and natural beauty of Door County. By giving to the Matching Challenge before the year's end, you're not just making a donation; you're taking an active role in protecting our natural heritage.

Every gift matters, and we are deeply grateful for the support of every individual in our community. Together, we can set new records in land protection and ensure the conservation of Door County today and for future generations.



Emily Wood
Executive Director



On the Cover

Photo by John Van Den Brandt

The cover photo is courtesy of DCLT member and professional wildlife photographer John Van Den Brandt. When asked about the amazing shot John replied, "In this image, a green heron and a wildlife photographer are both rewarded for their infinite patience and quick reflexes. The heron's efforts yielded a green frog breakfast and my own patient stalking produced this memorable picture. I hope it inspires others to find their own beautiful and dramatic moments in the wild places of Door County and to do what they can to help protect and preserve it."

Although green herons are quite common with a world population of more than 1 million birds, their numbers have slowly but steadily declined by about 50% over the last 50 years. The primary cause of this decline is thought to be the draining and development of wetlands. Door County Land Trust's conservation efforts protect 2,700 acres of wetlands in Door County, including rare habitats consisting of boreal forest, open-water fen areas, and extensive wetland habitat for the federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly. Permanent conservation efforts ensure these wetlands provide viable habitat for wildlife like this green heron and leopard frog.

FIND YOUR NATURE PRESERVE

15 nature preserves. 20 miles of hiking trails.

With 15 nature preserves located throughout the Door Peninsula and its islands, a walk in nature is never more than a few miles away. Nature preserves are free and open to the public, every day, dawn 'til dusk, for low-impact recreation like walking, skiing, and wildlife viewing. Respect nature by staying on the trails. Collecting or foraging is not allowed. Take nothing but memories. Leave nothing but footprints.

- 1 Little Lake Nature Preserve
- 2 Domer-Neff Nature Preserve
- 3 Detroit Harbor Nature Preserve
- 4 Richter Community Forest Nature Preserve

- 6 Ephraim Nature Preserve at Anderson Pond
- 5 Three Springs Nature Preserve

- 7 White Cliff Nature Preserve
- 8 Kangaroo Lake Nature Preserve

- Lautenbach Woods Nature Preserve
- 9 Heins Creek Nature Preserve

- 10 Oak Road Nature Preserve
- 11

- 12 Bay Shore Blufflands Nature Preserve

Lake Michigan

Green Bay

- 13 Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal Nature Preserve

- 14 Legacy Nature Preserve at Clay Banks

- 15 Bear Creek Nature Preserve



1 Little Lake Nature Preserve

- 42 protected acres
- 1.25-mile hiking trail
- Fairly level terrain with some uneven areas



2 Domer-Neff Nature Preserve & Bird Sanctuary

- 43 protected acres
- .6-mile looped hiking trail
- Level terrain



3 Detroit Harbor Nature Preserve

- 148 protected acres
- .5-mile trail
- Rolling terrain connects to the Town of Washington's Heritage Nature Trail



4 Richter Community Forest Nature Preserve

- 159 protected acres
- 1.5-mile looped trail
- Rolling terrain connects to the Town of Washington's Heritage Nature Trail



9 Heins Creek Nature Preserve

- 74 protected acres
- .75-mile looped hiking trail
- Easy, on level-to-rolling terrain



10 Lautenbach Woods Nature Preserve

- 160 protected acres
- 1.25-mile looped hiking trail
- Level-to-rocky terrain with inclines along the bluff



11 Oak Road Nature Preserve

- 155 protected acres
- 1.75 miles of looped hiking trails
- Level terrain with viewing platform overlooking 40-acre wetland complex



12 Bay Shore Blufflands Nature Preserve

- 273 protected acres
- 2.5 miles of hiking trail
- Easy-to-moderate with more difficult steep incline along the bluff slope

Exploring Your Door County Land Trust

About Door County Land Trust

Door County, with its 300 miles of shoreline, sweeping blufftop vistas, and forested wilderness corridors, is one of Wisconsin's most biodiverse landscapes. Thriving in Door County's clean water, undeveloped wetlands, and diverse forests are an array of plants and animals that depend upon each other and contribute to the health of the landscape.

Since 1986, the Door County Land Trust has preserved the lands vital to Door County's scenic beauty and ecological integrity. Recognized as a leading Midwest conservation organization, the Land Trust protects nearly 10,000 acres on the Door Peninsula and its islands. Each year, additional lands are protected thanks to the outpouring of donations from the community. Community support funds both new land protection and the ongoing work to care for these protected lands.

The Places We Protect

Door County Land Trust nature preserves possess some of the most beautiful scenery and important wildlife habitat found not only in Door County but within the state of Wisconsin. These nature preserves range in size from small oases tucked away in our quaint villages to large tracts of remote wild lands encompassing hundreds of acres. Although each nature preserve is unique, all are open to the public with marked hiking trails. These places are rustic in character; they do not offer garbage receptacles, drinking water, or restrooms.

Your Membership Matters

Your support is vital. Member donations fund nearly 85% of our program and operational costs, including most land stewardship expenses. Program grants, event income, and an annual disbursement from our donor-funded Stewardship Endowment Fund make up the remaining 15%.

To help us purchase properties of high ecological and scenic value, we apply for state and federal land acquisition grants. Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund is a source of grant funding for purchasing lands. We also apply for grants to help us carry out large-scale ecological restoration efforts at our nature preserves. We rely on membership contributions to match the state and federal land acquisition grants we receive as most grants require a 50% match in private donations.

Benefits of Giving

When you give to protect Door County's vital lands and waters, you become a member of Door County Land Trust and **receive all the benefits of membership**, including:

- *Landings, Journal of the Door County Land Trust*
- Guided hike opportunities to explore protected properties
- Invitations to Door County Land Trust events
- Rewarding volunteer opportunities
- Connect with fellow supporters who share a passion for Door County's natural spaces
- ***The satisfaction of knowing you've helped protect Door County now and forever!***

Take nothing but memories. Leave nothing but footprints.



5 Three Springs Nature Preserve

- 515 protected acres
- 1.9-mile looped hiking trail
- Fairly level terrain



6 Ephraim Nature Preserve at Anderson Pond

- 26 protected acres
- 1-mile looped hiking trail
- Fairly level terrain



7 White Cliff Nature Preserve

- 103 protected acres
- 1.5-mile looped hiking trail
- Level terrain



8 Kangaroo Lake Nature Preserve

- 281 protected acres
- 1.5-mile looped hiking trail
- Level-to-rocky terrain with inclines along the bluff



13 Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal Nature Preserve

- 445 protected acres
- 2.5 miles of hiking trails
- Level-to-sandy terrain with scenic overviews of the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal



14 Legacy Nature Preserve at Clay Banks

- 91 protected acres
- 1-mile looped hiking trail
- Access to Lake Michigan



15 Bear Creek Nature Preserve

- 75 protected acres
- .9-mile looped hiking trail
- Views of grassland prairie and Bear Creek valley
- More trails coming in 2025!

Find Your



Nature Preserve

In Their Own Words

Members believe in protecting Door County because...

“It’s been here for our parents & grandparents. We hope it’ll be here for our great-grandchildren and their families!”

~Robert & Marcia Pavich

“Nature and all the wildlife will be preserved for all to enjoy in the future.”

~Robert Hintzke

“We love it and what you love is worth protecting!”

~Stephen G. & Anna Marie Keller

“It’s a place of beauty and peace.”

~Bob Brewster & Emily Rosenzweig

“We have been in Door County for 35 years. The changes we see in the destruction of trees & land for monster homes cannot be underestimated.”

~Kevin & Jean Kennelly

“It’s so nice to have a beautiful place to go and hike.”

~Denise Schindell

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF LAND PROTECTION



with Terrie Cooper

Terrie Cooper recently retired from the Door County Land Trust after 25 years, having made an extensive impact on land protection in Door County. Terrie was involved in over 220 land projects that yielded over 8,800 protected acres. She also co-created 12 new DNR State Natural Areas in Door County. As the second employee of the Land Trust, Terrie was honored as conservationist, mentor, educator and friend. In her own words below, she expresses her appreciation for those she has worked with in the community.

Growing up in Ellison Bay, my childhood was immersed in nature. At the same time, I witnessed rapid changes to the lands I loved. These experiences fueled my lifelong passion for land conservation.

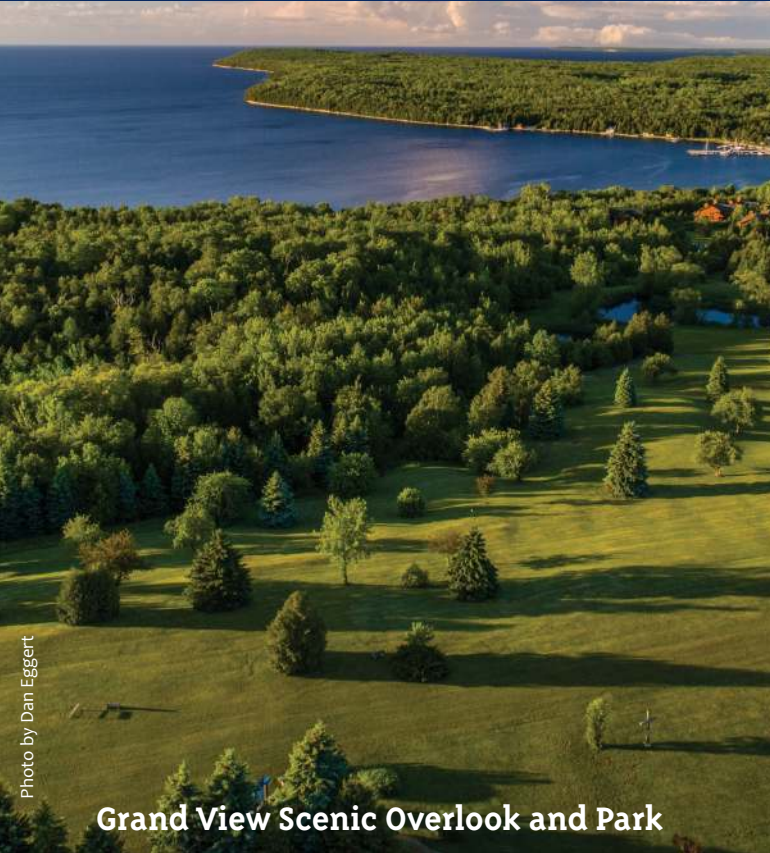
After working at nature centers for 15 years and founding the Glacial Lakes Conservancy in Sheboygan in 1996, a new career path opened for me. I am so grateful to have returned home 25 years ago as Door County Land Trust's second staff member.

I am so proud of the great community, staff, board members, and conservation partners who have allowed us to accomplish this vital conservation work. It takes a village, and do we ever have a powerful one!

It has been such an honor to fulfill my passion and life purpose to do this work. I will miss the rollercoaster ride of making the impossible possible but will continue to volunteer and teach at the The Clearing, The Ridges, and Door County Land Trust to further our collective missions.

It's in my blood, and the work is more important now than ever! I hope to continue to travel, paddle, hike, and explore the wild corners of this beautiful planet! Thank you, I am grateful to have been your Partner in Preservation!

**Thank you for your service, Terrie!
Door County would be a very different place
without your years of dedication.**



Grand View Scenic Overlook and Park

Photo by Dan Eggert



Pebble Beach

Door County Land Trust

Photo by Dan Eggert



Chambers Island

Photo by Dan Eggert

LAND PROTECTION

The Strategy to Connect Door County's Wildlife Corridors

For many reasons, lands under permanent conservation benefit plants and wildlife most when they are linked together. Door County Land Trust's efforts to connect protected habitats provide pathways for wildlife to move across the landscape, which is necessary for their survival. Wildlife corridors allow for forests and plants to regenerate by seeds and by roots. Connected lands along streams and surrounding wetlands improves water quality by filtering sediments or pollutants from rain and snowmelt.

Door County's connected landscapes follow a remarkable pattern that was formed more than 10,000 years ago when glaciers still covered North America. Rivers of melted ice ran diagonally across the county, carving valleys into Door County's bedrock. Notice the dark green areas on the map to the right. Follow the wetland corridors that align from bays on the northwest to harbors on the southeast.

These corridors of contiguous wetlands are among the county's most important wilderness areas. Here, you'll find areas that stretch for miles with few roads, little development, and forests where wildlife thrives. Land conservation focuses on connecting lands to create corridors to help protect species from being negatively impacted by development that can inadvertently damage sensitive wildlife habitats.

"Land protection makes the greatest difference in areas where we can reconnect fragmented habitat. It's a process much like assembling a complex puzzle, where each piece represents a critical step towards the larger goal of a thriving, intact ecosystem. It's a gradual but profoundly impactful journey towards a more resilient and biodiverse Door County."

- Executive Director Emily Wood

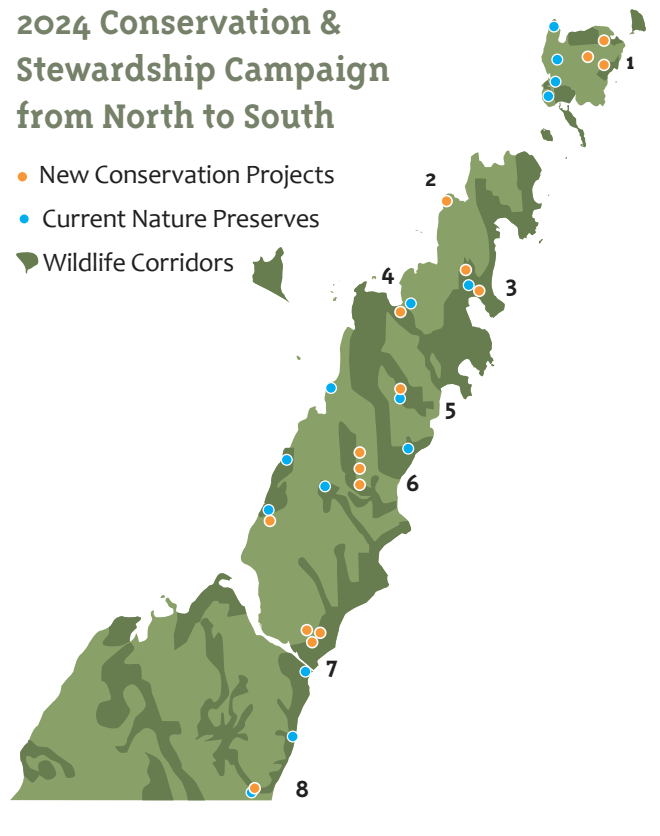
Celebrating this Year's Success

Door County Land Trust has completed the permanent protection of 11 properties this year and has another 15 projects currently underway. The 2024 Conservation and Stewardship Campaign aims to support these land protection projects and community conservation programs to continue to protect Door County's most critical landscapes before they are lost to inappropriate development.

Your Role in Land Protection While grant funding is sometimes available to help purchase property, Door County's conservation efforts are largely funded by community members like you! Community support provides the foundation for Door County Land Trust's annual conservation and stewardship projects.

2024 Conservation & Stewardship Campaign from North to South

- New Conservation Projects
- Current Nature Preserves
- ▶ Wildlife Corridors



2024 Conservation & Stewardship Campaign

1. Washington Island Natural Areas

With two projects completed in 2024 and three projects on the horizon for 2025, your donation benefits migratory birds, several rare plants, and the federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly.

2. Grand View Scenic Overlook Area, Ellison Bay

From the top of the hill in Ellison Bay, the view looks out over the forest growing at the base of the Niagara Escarpment. Two properties here were purchased in 2024. Your donation helps care for this northern white cedar forest on ephemeral wetland.

3. Three Springs Nature Preserve, Sister Bay

A property at the headwaters was protected in 2024 and the preserve will grow again in 2025. Your donation helps protect habitat for fish, birds, mammals, amphibians, and insects that call this refuge home.

4. Gibraltar-Ephraim Swamp Natural Area, Ephraim

Your donation helps protect and care for a key property in the wetland basin around the village of Ephraim. Neotropical warblers, northern waterthrush, and habitats of countless rare and threatened birds will be protected.

5. Camp Cuesta at Kangaroo Lake, Baileys Harbor

The Camp Cuesta property abutting the Kangaroo Lake Nature Preserve provides a buffer of wildlife habitat that enhances water quality and keeps native forest intact. Your donation helps protect diverse wildlife and the Girl Scout camp tradition. Donations to the 2024 Conservation and Stewardship Campaign support both land protection efforts and safety renovations for the indoor/outdoor classroom at the troop house.

6. Hibbard Creek Natural Area, Baileys Harbor

Your gift helps to protect two new sites in Hibbard Creek Natural Area which safeguard a mile of creek where fish spawn. Porcupines, fishers, mink, otters, birds and waterfowl all rely upon this creek for their survival.

7. Kellner Fen Natural Area, Sturgeon Bay

Your donation helps connect protected lands in a large wildlife corridor filled with rare plants adapted to unique conditions on the fen's floating sedge mat. Red fox, badger, bobcats, Eastern bluebirds, snow geese, and reptiles find refuge within this protected landscape.

8. Bear Creek Nature Preserve, Clay Banks

Your donation will be used to plan trails and complete restoration work at wildlife observation areas. This new preserve improves habitat for nesting birds and protects a half-mile stretch of Bear Creek, spawning grounds for several species of trout.

Double Your DONATION

A Generous Donor Matches Gifts to the 2024 Conservation and Stewardship Campaign

When you give before December 31st, our dear friend Phyllis will match your donation with her generous \$50,000 challenge gift!

If you give \$100, Phyllis will give \$100.

If you give \$1,000, Phyllis will give \$1,000.

If you give \$10,000....

With your help, more lands and waters will be protected, trails remain free and open to the public, and the clean air and clean water of the Door Peninsula and islands will be protected forever.

Donate in the enclosed envelope, scan the QR code on the next page, or visit www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org/donate

You've Earned Your Land Protection Merit Badge!



For the past 60 years, nearly every Door County Girl Scout camped at Camp Cuesta, with its rustic lodge atop the wooded bluff at the north end of Kangaroo Lake. An old handpump on the well gave campers a true rural experience. The quiet of the woods beckoned exploration. The old stone campfire ring has certainly heard many ghost stories over the years.

When Girl Scouts of the Northwestern Great Lakes announced their intention to sell the property earlier this year, Door County Land Trust negotiated an agreement to permanently protect the land and maintain the camp as an indoor/outdoor facility for Girl Scouts to continue to use.

A friend of the Door County Land Trust, Phyllis Geyer, generously offered to kick off the fundraising campaign with a challenge grant to help spark the community to donate. Today, we can happily announce that Phyllis's original \$50,000 donation has been exceeded! The community met her donation with an additional \$175,000, but the project to complete Camp Cuesta—and protect more of Door County—is not yet finished.

Earn your badge at www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org/CampCuesta

DOUBLE Your DONATION

Help protect the lands and waters of Door County

It's remarkable that the community has come together over the past 38 years to support the Door County Land Trust, safeguarding more than 9,700 acres. By early next year we will have protected 10,000 acres, an achievement marking extraordinary success for the lands, waters, and people who cherish Door County.

Next year's land protection projects are well underway. From the northernmost reaches of Washington Island to the county's southern border and from shore to shore, a record number of properties will be permanently protected to preserve the natural wonders, healthy water, and rustic landscape of Door County.

Your gift today becomes a protected landscape for tomorrow and forever.

Your gift joins with gifts from thousands of other concerned community members to protect the scenic beauty, ecological diversity, and open landscapes that make Door County such a wonderful place.

Door County's wildlife is dependent upon your support to protect its lands and waters.

When you give by December 31st, your donation will be **DOUBLED** thanks to a matching challenge gift!

Your gift today becomes a more
beautiful tomorrow.



By enclosing a gift or
donating online, you ensure
Door County's wild places
will be protected forever.

DONATE at DoorCountyLandTrust.org/donate

WILDLIFE THROUGH THE SEASON

Staghorn Sumac

Photo by Andrew Pirrung

Leopard Frog

Photo by Heather Frykman, Frykman Galleries



North American River Otter

Photo by John Van Den Brandt

Seasons of Change Wildlife adapts to the weather, temperatures, availability of food, and breeding cycles.

Photo Paul Danese



In Spring, the hermit thrush forages for insects like beetles and bees, and occasionally eats small amphibians.

The hermit thrush nests on the ground or low in vegetation, often beneath small conifer trees or shrubs. Males gather food for the nest, while females feed the nestlings.

Northern Pike

Top predator of the shallows off Door County, Northern pike cojoin land and water into home as seasons change. Northern pike swim up tributaries into ephemeral wetlands to spawn in early April.

As lake waters warm during summer, Northern pike often seek cooler waters near inlet streams or springs.

Photo by Joe Taylor



Northern Long-eared Bat

Bats return to Door County when evenings provide abundant insects.

Vivacious aerial creatures of long summer evenings in Door County and torpid in caves through winter, the Northern long-eared bat's existence is considered threatened in Wisconsin. Its persistence depends in part on large forests above ground and habitable caves below.



Common Merganser hen with chicks on Chambers Island
Photo by Michael Demchick



Fall Fungi
Photo by Andrew Pirrung

Special thanks to Mike Grimm for his contributions to seasonal notes about species that highlight conservation successes in Door County. Grimm is a conservation ecologist, recently retired from The Nature Conservancy.

Hermit Thrush

Residing here in summer and Central America in winter, this woodland singer's rich, touching voice is heard from the depths of the hemlock woods—if we listen. Its range includes the northern half of the western hemisphere.

The hermit thrush migration peaks in mid-October before freezing temps set in.



In the fall, Northern pike will be found in the edges of weed beds, along drop-offs, and near the tips of islands.

During less frigid temperatures, Northern pike are drawn to shallow water. As the temperatures drop, Northern pike shelter in deeper waters. Their range is 5 to 15 feet deep.

Many of Door County's Northern long-eared bats fly north to overwinter in caves in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. A deadly fungus that causes White Nose Syndrome threatens their life during hibernation.



Northern long-eared bat is one of 8 bat species found in Door County!

Photo by USFWS

FALL FOCUS

Birds & Berries



Photo by Naseem Reza

Cedar Waxwing

Fall Bird Migration Pit Stop

Door County is a flyway for numerous migrating birds. The county's unique geology as a peninsula with an island chain that bisects Lake Michigan makes it a highway for numerous bird species who use these islands as rest stops. Among these species are the Tennessee warbler, Blackburnian warbler, and Blackpoll warbler who travel from the southern tropics northward to the boreal forests and back again. As birds are preparing for their long journeys south, they need fuel. Lower temperatures in the fall means that fewer insects, a vital part of a bird's diet, are available for consumption. Berry-producing native shrubs and trees such as nannyberry, pagoda dogwood, and black elderberry provide rich nutrition for these winged travelers as the temperatures sink.

One way Door County Land Trust caters to bird species on their way through our area is by focusing on providing food or fuel sources year-round, including during their fall migration. This is achieved by planting nutrient-dense, fall berry-producing native shrubs such as winterberry and serviceberry. Planting of ninebark at the Legacy Nature Preserve at Clay Banks and removal of invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn at the Bay Shore Blufflands Nature Preserve are examples of recent efforts by DCLT to restore these "pit-stop" or stopover habitats and allow migrating birds' fuel sources to thrive.

Fall Visitors

Keen backyard birders are likely to see some of these feathered friends this fall.

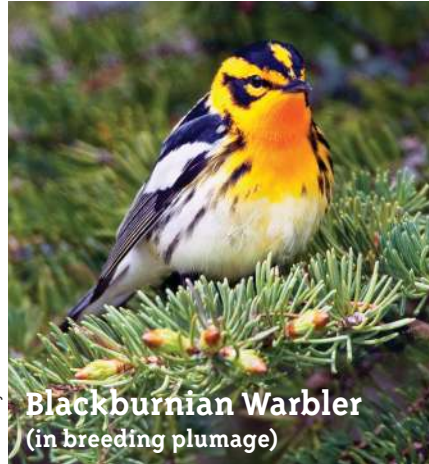


Photo by John Van Den Brandt

Blackburnian Warbler
(in breeding plumage)

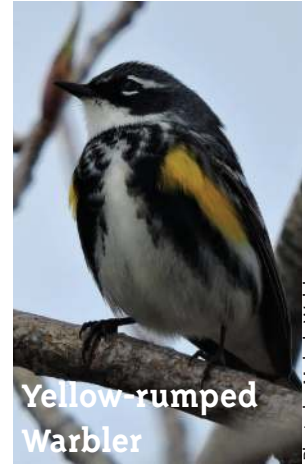
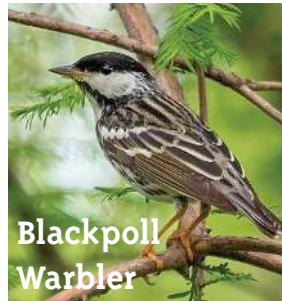


Photo by Melody Walsh

Yellow-rumped Warbler



Blackpoll Warbler



Tennessee Warbler

Not All Green is Good

Invasive species are a major threat to the native habitat of Door County. Migrating birds, avid hikers, car tires, and even the family dog can unwittingly carry the seeds, spores, or insects that set our systems off balance.

Invasive plants are those that have developed exceptional abilities to propagate, displacing native plants that play a niche role in the local ecosystem. Some plant roots emit toxins killing anything but their own kind, others bind and strangle nearby plants. Some can grow earlier in the spring, and faster than other plants in the vicinity, winning the competition for sunlight and nutrients, overgrowing native plant neighbors. Wetlands are turned acid from the toxic roots of the buckthorn, negatively impacting the breeding of our spring peepers and leopard frogs. And the list goes on.

Carefully monitoring the spread of invasive species, combined with efforts to maintain and restore native habitats—especially where migrating birds can forage for the nutrient-rich foods that fuel their migration south—can make fall migration just a little bit sweeter for the birds!

STEWARDSHIP

Caring for the Land Forever

Stewardship makes it possible to protect the land forever. Door County Land Trust has a long-term commitment to the land, to our mission and to our community in Door County. The Land Trust facilitates land stewardship by:

1. Restoring Forest Habitat 1,500 trees planted in 2024!

Replanting Door County Land Trust's nature preserves with native species may be one of the most effective ways of restoring ecological balance. Reforestation projects serve multiple purposes, like creating wildlife habitat, shading out non-native invasive species, and buffering run-off and erosion on adjacent lands. In other areas, planting prairie and grassland species native to Wisconsin can expand habitat for species adapting to the effects of climate change.

2. Controlling Invasive Species

DCLT staff, volunteers, and contractors worked to control invasives at each DCLT Nature Preserve in 2024!

Door County Land Trust staff and volunteers monitor the spread of invasive plant species by mapping locations where invasives threaten native ecosystems. Invasive plant maps are then used to strategize a plan for their removal and prepare to reintroduce native species.

3. Volunteering on the Land

94 volunteers helped at Stewardship Workdays in 2024

The volunteer "Stew Crew" is the heart and soul of the work we do to protect Door County's exceptional lands and waters forever. In addition to assisting with the activities mentioned above, volunteers maintain trails and preserve infrastructure, monitor trails and boundaries, and help to conduct biological inventories used in land management.

4. Maintaining Trails

3.5 Staff members, 45 Preserve Stewards maintain trails

Fifteen nature preserves and more than 20 miles of trails are free and open to the public, every day of the year from dawn to dusk. Nature preserves are open for recreational activities, like hiking, wildlife observation, snowshoeing, and other low-impact, non-motorized activities. Maintaining trails is a team effort and relies on a crew of volunteers led by our staff.

5. Research

More than 10 research projects happening on DCLT land in 2024

Door County Land Trust protected lands are home to many plant and animal species that are the subject of ongoing studies by partner organizations. Research is shared with Door County Land Trust and often managed by the partnering organizations. Volunteer citizen science programs like the Bumble Bee Brigade and Water Action Volunteers (WAV) enlist and train volunteers to assist in collecting data and observations while the data helps us understand how to better manage the land.

6. Hunting and Ecological Balance

Over 275 hunters signed up to hunt on DCLT land in 2023

Door County Land Trust relies on the good sportsmanship of local hunters to help control deer and turkey populations which pose a threat to the balance of ecological systems. For more details about our hunting program, visit www.doorcountylandtrust.org/hunting.

**Highbush Cranberry,
*Viburnum trilobum***

SEASON IN REVIEW

Trails and Public Access

Each month, volunteers and staff walk more than 20 miles of trails to ensure visitors to the nature preserves can enjoy Land Trust trails at their best.

Bear Creek Nature Preserve is the newest addition—Door County Land Trust's 15th Nature Preserve! This summer, several special workdays were held for trail maintenance and tree planting. Hike the mowed trails and enjoy the view! A wetland boardwalk and two overlooks are on our wish list. Membership donations help fund these trail projects.

Three Springs Nature Preserve Stewardship work crews helped clear branches and shrubs encroaching on the trails.

Lautenbach Woods Nature Preserve New trail markers were installed to show the trail intersections more clearly and a wooden footbridge was built to help hikers traverse the old stone fence.

Oak Road Nature Preserve is a great place to visit this fall! Tamaracks turn gold in October and the trail through the hardwood forest is easy to navigate thanks to improved trail marking with yellow blazes to guide you.

All 15 nature preserves will receive updated seasonal signage over the next few months. When you visit the nature preserves, watch for notice of hunting dates and other nature preserve specific information.



New blaze orange signs display hunting information at all 15 nature preserves

Photo by Thomas Sfasiak

Ecological Restoration

Kellner Fen Natural Area protects a rare wetland fen—a globally rare landscape type where plants have made special adaptations to grow on a floating mat of interwoven grasses. But, where there are wetlands, there are wetland invaders too! Non-native shrubs like buckthorn, honeysuckle, and barberry were found on the edges of the fen. Over the past three years, we've been working to remove the woody invasive shrubs throughout the natural area. This winter, Door County Land Trust will enlist the help of specialists to remove these invasive shrubs and preserve the ecology of Kellner Fen.

Domer-Neff Nature Preserve and Bird Sanctuary on Washington Island is being stewarded as a refuge for birds. Its mix of grasses and native shrubs make it an ideal location for nesting and migratory birds that prefer these habitats. Scots pine, an invasive conifer that can quickly consume grasslands, was removed throughout the preserve this year to maintain the open spaces that grassland birds need to forage insects for young nestlings.

Oak Road Nature Preserve and **Bear Creek Nature Preserve** both benefitted from tree and shrub planting projects this year. A variety of species, including American plum (a good cover plant for nesting birds) and elderberry (excellent food for birds), restore the diversity to former farm field.



Photo by Carrie Ehrnforth

Ecological Restoration Manager Tina Lee monitors invasive *Phragmites* at Kellner Fen Natural Area

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS

TO OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS,

We've said it before, but it bears repeating—this work of protecting Door County's exceptional lands and waters forever would not be possible without folks like you willing to donate one of the most precious resources—time. It is an honor to celebrate all that we have accomplished this year together. We are excited for the possibilities of all we might further accomplish together in the future.

From all of us at Door County Land Trust, Thank you!

Paige, Tina, Thomas, Maddie, Jesse, Emily, Carrie, Brian, Drew, Cinnamon, Sara, Kristi, Amy, and Terrie

Stewardship Workdays = 352 hours

Workdays provide opportunities for our community to participate in land stewardship or, in essence, actions that take care of the land and provide opportunities for people to explore and enjoy. At this year's stewardship workdays, volunteers spent 22 hours across 8 preserve and natural areas conducting various tasks such as spreading seeds on preserve grasslands, removing invasive scotch pine, planting trees, piling trash, hand-pulling forget-me-nots, dismantling an old fence, piling wood, and trail trimming. These actions help create higher quality habitats for our native species, and a more enriching experience for our preserve visitors.

Preserve Stewards = 596 hours

Door County Land Trust protects more than 9,700 acres including over 5,300 acres that the organization manages. Staff can't be everywhere at once, which makes volunteer Preserve Stewards essential to maintaining high quality visitor experience as well as conducting habitat protection and restoration. Preserve Stewards have spent over 596 hours in 2024 out on the natural areas and preserves monitoring trails and alerting staff to any changes.

Boundary Marking = 106 hours

For the first time this year, 14 brave souls joined us to bushwack through the woods to posting preserve boundary signs on newly protected lands and improving boundary marking on previously protected lands. Marking boundaries is an essential requirement of the Land Trust's accreditation. Land trust accreditation is a mark of distinction, showing that a land trust meets high standards for land conservation.



Volunteer Gretchen Schmelzer monitoring wood duck nest boxes at Oak Road Nature Preserve

Citizen Science = 117 hours

Citizen science, in its simplest terms, involves community members collecting or sorting through data for scientists to further their research. Several groups of volunteers have spent a total of 117 hours at six preserves conducting various citizen science projects including: pollinator observations; bumble bee surveys; Eastern bluebird, American kestrel, and wood duck nest box monitoring; bat maternity roost counts; and more! These efforts not only contribute to a larger understanding of native species and habitats, but also to the Land Trust's efforts to better steward the lands and waters we manage.

Hike Leaders = 397 hours

If you've ever enjoyed one of the Land Trust's guided hikes, you have hike leaders to thank. This season, volunteer hike leaders have spent approximately 397 hours preparing and leading guided programs out on DCLT nature preserves and natural areas. DCLT's hike leaders are dedicated to sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm to inspire folks for further conservation action.

Mailing Parties = 200+ hours

Spreading the word and gaining further support for the protection of the exceptional lands and waters of Door County is essential for the work of the Land Trust. This year, volunteers have packaged more than 7,500 pieces of mail during scheduled "mailing parties." We have had 38 mailing volunteers with more than 200 hours volunteered.

Events & Annual Gathering = 220+ hours

This year, a few enthusiastic volunteers spread the Land Trust message by being DCLT ambassadors at an Earth Day booth at the Kress Pavilion. These folks showed great passion to get the community involved in the important work of protecting our lands and waters.

We had a total of 76 folks volunteer at this year's Annual Gathering assisting with set up, takedown, desserts, decorations, parking, greeting, and distributing beverages. They helped make the event a success and an enjoyable experience for all.

Give Today. Become a supporting member.

Every donor is a member of the Door County Land Trust. Your donation will help to protect unique lands and waters, will preserve the rural character, and will safeguard the open spaces and scenic beauty of the Door Peninsula and its islands.

When you join the efforts to preserve Door County's lands, waters, and wildlife, you'll receive a new member packet to introduce you to the protected lands that are free and open to the public for recreation and enjoyment. You also receive the joy that comes from sharing your appreciation of Door County's cherished lands and waters.

Donate today.

Donate with a check or credit card online at DoorCountyLandTrust.org/donate or include a donation when you return the envelope in this magazine.

Donate from your IRA.

If you are 70 ½ years old, giving directly from your IRA is a tax-savvy way to make charitable gifts that benefit you and Door County lands.

Donate stock or appreciated securities.

Gifts of appreciated stocks are a tax-wise way to give. Learn how to direct a stock transfer at DoorCountyLandTrust.org/stock.

Give from your Donor Advised Fund.

If you currently use a Donor-Advised Fund, you may direct one-time or annual donations to Door County Land Trust.

Give Forever. Join the Legacy Circle.



The Legacy Circle is a group of visionary members who have named Door County Land Trust as a charitable beneficiary in their will, trust, life insurance, or retirement account.

A group of generous Legacy Circle members will donate \$1,000 to the Land Trust in your honor when you inform us of your intention to leave a planned gift to the Land Trust. This means your future commitment to saving land can help right now!

Make a gift in your will or trust. A planned gift doesn't affect your immediate finances and can be revised at a later date if circumstances change.

Direct your retirement account, bank account, or other investment account. Joining the Legacy Circle can be as easy as naming the Land Trust to receive a portion of your account. Ask your financial institution for a form to designate Door County Land Trust as a beneficiary.

Direct your life insurance. Naming the Door County Land Trust as the full or partial beneficiary of your life insurance can be a straightforward method to create a planned gift.

Use one of your greatest assets to donate a gift of real estate. Gifts of real estate, whether it is your residence or potential conservation land, can benefit Door County Land Trust. Gifts of real estate can create significant tax deductions as well.

Learn more at DoorCountyLandTrust.org/LegacyCircle. No matter which method you choose when planning your gift, you'll want to inform us of your intention. Members who are planning gifts are recognized in the Land Trust's Legacy Circle.

Long Live Your Legacy

Door County Land Trust relies on community support to protect the beauty and ecology of the Door Peninsula, its islands, and surrounding waters. Among these generous members, there are those who have planned a gift to the Land Trust through their will or retirement account. These future gifts or bequests will help preserve a legacy of land forever.

When you name the Land Trust as a beneficiary in your will, estate plans, life insurance, or retirement account, inform us of your plans. You will be included in our Legacy Circle, and \$1,000 will be donated in your honor to the Land Acquisition Fund! This means your future commitment to saving land will also help right now. There's no better time to begin your will or refresh your existing plans by including a charitable provision for Door County Land Trust.

Join this dedicated group of land protectors today! Joining the Legacy Circle Challenge is as simple as informing us of your charitable gift plan. To participate in the Legacy Circle Challenge, please fill out the [Legacy Circle Challenge](http://DoorCountyLandTrust.org/Legacy) form online at DoorCountyLandTrust.org/Legacy. You may choose to keep your name anonymous but informing us of your charitable gift plan allows us to thank you—and a \$1,000 donation to the Land Acquisition Fund will be given in your honor!

No matter the size of your gift, we can help you create a legacy that lasts forever. Ask us how. For more information contact Cinnamon Rossman, Director of Charitable Giving, at (920) 746-1027 or giving@doorcountylandtrust.org.

Door County Land Trust has an organizational foundation for perpetuity set in place so you can trust your legacy will live on forever. Door County Land Trust is accredited by the National Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission.

BEST FALL & WINTER HIKES



Safe Hiking During Hunting Season

- 1. Know the seasons.** Know when bow and gun-hunting seasons start and end. The Wisconsin DNR 2024-2025 schedule is available at www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org/hikesafe
- 2. Know the rules and reasons.** Door County Land Trust works to protect ecological diversity. Large populations of white-tailed deer are threats to rare and endangered plants on the peninsula. Hunters help keep the number of deer in balance with their habitat, aiding in a more diverse and healthy ecosystem. Because hunting is allowed on most Land Trust properties, hiking in town is a safer choice and it will benefit hunters helping to control the deer population.
- 3. Be seen.** Dress everyone in your party (including pets) in blaze orange or bright colors. Avoid earth tones.
- 3. Be smart.** Hike during midday when there is less hunting activity and when daylight makes you more visible.
- 4. Be heard.** If you hear hunters in the area, or hear shots, speak up. A loud "Hikers on the Trail!" will politely make everyone aware of your presence.
- 5. Be a good pet parent.** The safest place for pets during hunting season is inside. That being said, you can take steps to keep your dog safer when hiking. Dogs should always be on leashes while on Land Trust property, regardless of the season.

For more details about hunting on DCLT properties check out www.doorcountylandtrust.org/hunting

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Door County Land Trust

Protecting Door County's Exceptional Lands and Waters...Forever

(920) 746-1359 • www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org

PO Box 65, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship



Following our Trails?

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram!

Find links at DoorCountyLandTrust.org

“Knowing that you love the earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond.”

— Robin Wall Kimmerer,
*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom,
Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*

Heins Creek Nature Preserve