



Door County Land Trust

# LANDINGS

Connecting You to Door County's Vital Lands & Waters

Journal of the  
Door County Land Trust  
Spring 2024, Vol. 27, Issue 1



**Wildlife Corridors: Linking Lands for Protection**

**Islands: Crucial Stepping Stones for Migration**

## Making Connections for Conservation

Photo by Naseem Reza



# Door County Land Trust

Mailing: PO Box 65, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235  
Phone: (920)746-1359  
Email: [info@DoorCountyLandTrust.org](mailto:info@DoorCountyLandTrust.org)  
[www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org](http://www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org)

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 9,400 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



Jesse Koyen



Brian Forest



Drew Reinke

**Executive Director**  
Emily Wood

**Land Program Director**  
Jesse Koyen

**Land Protection Manager**  
Brian Forest

**Conservation Easement Manager**  
Drew Reinke

**Land Project Manager**  
Carrie Ehrfurth

**Ecological Restoration Manager**  
Tina Lee

**Land Stewardship Specialist**  
Thomas Stasiak

**Community Conservation Coordinator**  
Paige Witek

**Director of Charitable Giving**  
Cinnamon Rossman

**Communications Coordinator**  
Kay McKinley

**Administrative Director**  
Kristi Rice

**Administrative Assistant**  
Amy Dwyer



Carrie Ehrfurth



Tina Lee



Thomas Stasiak



Paige Witek



Cinnamon Rossman



Kay McKinley



Kristi Rice



Amy Dwyer

### Board of Directors

**President**  
Roy Thilly

**President-Elect**  
Deb Hagman-Shannon

**Treasurer**  
Bob Ling

**Secretary**  
Jeff Ottum

Meredith Coulson-Kanter  
Peter Deschler  
Barbara Frank  
Donna Hake  
Mark Holey  
Mark Martin  
Bryan Nelson  
Anna Pepelnjak  
Rick Scott

### Past Board Members

Nancy Aten  
Bob Barlament \*  
Jean Barrett  
Tom Blackwood  
Mike Brodd  
Dan Burke  
Fran Burton  
Dave Callsen  
Beth Coleman  
Andy Coulson  
Robert Cowles \*  
Donna DeNardo  
Sharon Donegan  
Frank Failing \*  
Jack Finger  
Cathy Fiorato  
Robert Forsberg  
Darlene Forsberg  
Ken Gill  
Betsy Guenzel \*  
Julie Guilette  
Chan Harris \*  
Tony Haswell  
Jon Hollingshead  
Laurel Hauser  
Jim Janning  
John Jessup  
Jim Ingwersen \*  
Jim Kinney  
Lucy Klug  
Lon Kopitzke  
Terry Lappin

Jim Lester  
Judy Lokken  
Paul Mahlberg  
Neil McCarty  
John McMahon  
Beverly Njaa \*  
Kevin Nordahl  
Frank Pechman \*  
Judy Perkins  
Nancy Rafal  
Kate Rohrer  
Gretchen Schmelzer  
Carl Scholz  
Neil Shadle  
Oliver Skrivanie  
Mary Standish  
Tim Stone  
Bill Tischler \*  
John Turner  
Kieth Van Dyke  
Rob Van Gemert  
Rob Watson  
John Wilson \*  
Kathy Wolff  
Karen Yancey  
Robert Yeoman  
Bill Yunker \*  
Virginia Yunker \*  
Elizabeth Zimmerman  
James Zimmerman \*  
\* Founding Members



## Your Legacy Will Live Forever.

Planned giving through the Legacy Circle protects Door County's vital lands and waters...forever.

Please consider the Land Trust in your estate plans.

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

[DoorCountyLandTrust.org/legacy](http://DoorCountyLandTrust.org/legacy)

Contact us at (920)746-1359 or email [giving@DoorCountyLandTrust.org](mailto:giving@DoorCountyLandTrust.org)

# Celebrating Connections Between Lands, People & Nature



I wonder if the birds notice that this place is exceptional when they are migrating through. Do they start dreaming of the spectacular forests and sparkling bays while they are flying over the hundreds of miles of construction in Milwaukee—or is that just me?

Connections to nature are fundamental to human well-being. From the soothing sound of rustling leaves to the vibrant colors of a blooming flower, nature captivates our senses and restores our souls. Whether it's a wander through a forest, the invigorating crash of waves against the shore, or the simple act of tending to a garden, nature offers us moments of tranquility and inspiration. These connections remind us of our place in the world. Through nature, we find solace, rejuvenation, and a profound appreciation for the beauty and interconnectedness of all living things.

In this issue of *Landings* we explore connection. We take a deep dive into how migratory species utilize corridors to safely travel across fragmented landscapes—and how we are engaging the community in projects that help us understand

how to best steward these places to ensure that they can thrive for generations.

As members of the Door County community, you play a pivotal role in preserving these connections. Your unwavering support, whether through membership, volunteering, or sharing our mission with others, is a testament to your commitment to something greater than ourselves—the preservation of our shared natural history.

So let us continue to nurture and celebrate these connections—between lands, between people, and within nature itself. We have this one chance to ensure that the vital threads of life remain unbroken—and we can only do it if we stick together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily".

Emily Wood  
Executive Director



Photo by Jeff Ortinau

Our cottage borders one of the Land Trust preserves and the nighttime calls of the Barred Owl are one of my favorite things about it! - Pam Mehnert



Photo by John Van Den Brandt

This preserve site was my favorite new find this summer. Thanks to all who maintain this area!  
- Lynn Sommers

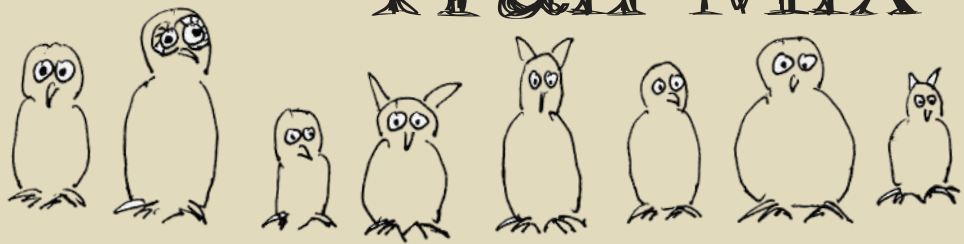


Photo by Kay McKinley



WE GIVE A HOOT!

# Trail Mix



I really appreciate all the work you people are doing. Not easy being a leader in today's modern world. Just keep doing it.  
-James L. Johnson (Thanks for your artwork, James!)

Thank you! Love Heins Creek.  
- Beckie Meerdink Perez

Happy to have another nature preserve in the southern part of Door County.  
- Patty Melchior Quinn



Photo by Drew Reinke



Photo by Carrie Ebrfurth

Photo by Dan Eggert

We are eternally grateful for Door County Land Trust! The forethought to protect this precious land is unparalleled. -Jessalynne Adams Nelson



Thank you all for taking care of these beautiful lands. - Denise McGinnis

# 2023 Land & Water Protection For All Living Things



Photo by Jeff Lutsey

## 2. Kellner Fen Natural Area

Through community support, the Land Trust completed several land projects in 2023. With the continuing goal of protecting Door County—from its northernmost islands to its southern border—these new lands protect critical wildlife habitat, preserve scenic beauty, and ensure Door County’s rural character remains intact. Of special note is the Southern Door property that will become the Land Trust’s 15th nature preserve.

**1. Ursula Petersen donated 10 acres adjacent to the Land Trust’s Coffey Swamp Natural Area on Washington Island.** The undeveloped forested wetland will protect more forest canopy of the northern wet, mesic cedar forest in Coffey Swamp. The swamp provides outstanding migratory and nesting habitat for songbirds and waterfowl.

**2. The Fischer Family Challenge made possible the purchase of 63 acres that abut Kellner Fen Natural Area.** Close to the Lake Michigan shoreline just north of Sturgeon Bay, the addition increases the protection of water quality, land, and wildlife. Several rare species of carnivorous plants and insects like the Hine’s emerald dragonfly reside here.

**3. Located west of Kangaroo Lake, the Land Trust’s Hibbard Creek Natural Area expanded with a 77-acre addition of wetland and cedar forest.** By extending the natural area’s acreage, an important corridor that permits the movement of wildlife across the peninsula is now permanently preserved. The Land Trust is working with landowners within the Hibbard Creek watershed to strengthen preservation in this crucial wildlife corridor. *Story continued on pages 6 and 7.*



Photo by Kay McSmiley

## 3. Hibbard Creek Natural Area

# 2023 Land & Water Protection

**4. A land donation from the Bogdanowicz family includes 150 feet of Lake Michigan shoreline near the south end of the Land Trust's Legacy Nature Preserve at Clay Banks.** The donated property provides additional protection for amphibians, waterfowl, and shore birds.

**5. The Land Trust recently protected 119 acres just west of Brussels, now known as Oak Bluff Natural Area.** Overlooking the waters of Green Bay, the property includes a mature red and white oak forest at the top of an undeveloped 150-foot-tall bluff edge of the Niagara Escarpment. The property provides migratory bird habitat and grasslands that will be replanted in the coming years with native shrubs and pollinator-friendly perennials.

**6. The Land Trust now protects its 15th nature preserve, named Bear Creek Nature Preserve.** The first area designated as a DCLT nature preserve in a decade, its varied environments include habitats for a range of species including migratory birds and fish, and grassland and wetland breeding birds. The banks along the half-mile creek provide a buffer zone to filter and clean surface water.

**7. A new conservation easement owned by Michael Schmitz protects shoreline property on the bay of Green Bay.** The agreement with DCLT ensures that the four-acre property, which includes 589 feet of rocky shoreline, will remain undeveloped forever. The easement's rocky lakeshore and a mature cedar forest provide breeding grounds for migratory songbirds and shorebirds.



**6. Bear Creek Nature Preserve**

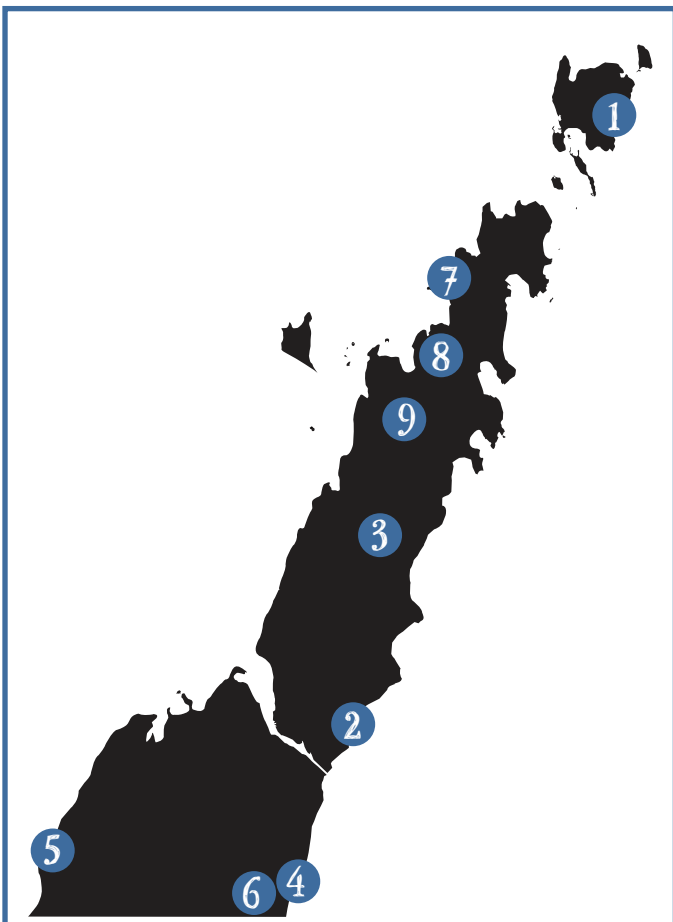
Photo by Carrie Ehrfurth



**5. Oak Bluff Natural Area**

Photo by Joe Taylor

# For All Living Things



## 2023 Land Protection Project Locations



8. Pebble Beach

Photo by Dan Eggert

8. Pebble Beach's 645 feet of shoreline in the Village of Sister Bay is permanently protected. Following successful funding from the Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program, the conservation easement agreement with DCLT was finalized.

9. Private property that bridges wildlife habitats between Peninsula State Park and the Gibraltar-Ephraim Swamp Natural Area is permanently protected through a conservation easement. The 40-acre parcel is along County Road A.



4. Bogdanowicz Donation

We thank the following partner organizations and agencies for their support of our current land acquisition and stewardship projects.

- Fox River & Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council
- Fund for Lake Michigan
- WI-DNR, *Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program*
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, *Sustain Our Great Lakes*, in partnership with *Lake Michigan Bird Observatory*
- USFWS, *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative-Joint Venture Habitat Restoration and Protection*
- USFWS, *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative-Midwest Coastal*
- USFWS, *Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program*



Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program





Hibbard Creek photo by Kay McKinley

W  
I  
L  
D  
L  
I  
F  
E  
C  
O  
R  
R  
I  
D  
O  
R  
S



Kellner Fen photo by David Heilman

LINKING LANDS FOR

**M**ovement means life to wildlife. If conditions of one habitat become unfavorable, wildlife need to be able to leave one habitat for another to meet their needs. The Land Trust is facilitating the protection of wildlife with lands that are connected by being adjacent, or at least near to one another, to form wildlife corridors. According to Land Program Director Jesse Koyen, land protection is the best tool to preserve wildlife corridors.

“The more that lands are connected through corridors, the more resilient the ecosystem,” said Koyen. “Because development is often a barrier to wildlife movement, there are certain habitats that are more of a priority for protection.”

But not all corridors are equal. The type of land in need of protection and the amount of diversity within it must meet the needs of the species that call it home. For birds, contiguous land isn’t as important as having habitats that are within flying distance. A porcupine would require larger, contiguous properties for foraging, shelter, and selecting a mate. Plants that have limited spread for their seed, like the ramshead orchid, also require contiguous habitat for their survival.

Recently, the Land Trust has been concentrating on three areas to protect as wildlife corridors: Hibbard Creek Natural Area, Three Springs Nature Preserve, and Kellner Fen Natural Area.

**Bay to Lake Corridor, Hibbard Creek Watershed**

Streams are considered natural corridors. They are easy for wildlife to move along and provide a richly diverse habitat. Hibbard Creek contains a range of species, including aquatic insects and native plants that spawning salmon and trout feed upon. The area’s wetlands and woodlands provide food and shelter for migratory birds like the Sandhill Crane and mammals such as the gray fox.

A recent purchase of land in late 2023 near the Hibbard Creek Natural Area aligns with the Land Trust’s goal to extend protection in wildlife corridors. “Flowing surface water provides more of a connection, it’s more of a linear function.” said Koyen. “If you think of the wetland corridors in Door County, they stretch from one side of the peninsula to the other.”



The new property contains a drumlin, an elongated hill with rock underneath formed by glacial movement. The drumlin affects the drainage of rain that falls on the property. “Drainage to the west flows to wetlands dominated by white cedar and drainage south flows to our neighboring property, the headwaters of Three Springs Creek,” said Land Protection Manager Brian Forest. “The rain that falls onto this property ultimately drains into Three Springs Creek into North Bay, which drains into Lake Michigan.”

### Door County’s Wildlife Corridors



Atop the drumlin are mature aspen, oak, and other plant species common to upland forests. These forests provide habitat for passerine (also known as perching) birds such as Blue Jays, foxes, and other small mammals. To the east of the drumlin is an old hay field that will be restored to prairie for pollinators.

### Southern Lake Michigan Shoreline Corridor, Kellner Fen Natural Area

Located near the Lake Michigan shoreline east of the Town of Sturgeon Bay, Kellner Fen is a unique type of wetland that features a large expanse of open water with an extensive, fragile sedge mat that floats on top. This corridor offers an abundance of diversity

in landscape and species protection.

The fen is surrounded by dense forests that provide refuge and foraging opportunities for migratory and breeding birds. The fen is also home to several rare orchids and carnivorous

# PROTECTION

Along with the Land Trust’s Erskine Woods and Solitude Natural Areas, Hibbard Creek Natural Area is within the Hibbard Creek watershed west of Kangaroo Lake. The basin surrounding Hibbard Creek plays an important role in its water quality. The watershed contains bordering wetlands and woodlands that follow Hibbard Creek and filter surface water on its way into Lake Michigan.

“Corridors like Hibbard Creek, with surface water outside of bay or lake shorelines, are especially important in the spring,” Koyen said. “These are areas with a large number of insects, providing a rich habitat for migratory birds to forage.”

“The more that lands are connected through corridors, the more resilient the ecosystem. Because development is often a barrier to wildlife, there are certain habitats that are more of a priority for protection.” - Jesse Koyen, Land Program Director

There are two properties under contract to the north and closer to the headwaters of Hibbard Creek that the Land Trust hopes to complete in the summer of 2024. “These lands will enable us to expand our protection of the water quality of Hibbard Creek,” Koyen said.

### Three Springs to North Bay Corridor

Three Springs Nature Preserve provides critical breeding habitat for Hine’s emerald dragonfly (HED), the only federally protected animal species in Door County. Two-thirds of the world’s population of Hine’s emerald dragonflies are found in Door County.

The Land Trust has extended its protection within the Three Springs corridor to include an area near the headwaters of Three Springs Creek. By protecting the water quality of the creek, it increases the protection of the HED.

plants, including sundews and pitcher plants. The stream that runs through the property provides habitat for rare species of insects like the Hine’s emerald dragonfly.

Through a generous donation and matching gift challenge initiated by the Fischer family, the Land Trust protected an additional 63 acres in this corridor in June of 2023.

According to Koyen, species diversity and varied sizes of wildlife corridors provide connections that contribute to strong wildlife protection.

“Conservation is practiced on every scale—locally, nationally, and globally,” he said. “The work we do to protect migratory bird habitat in Door County protects the international Mississippi Flyway. Wherever you are, conservation lands are islands of habitat within a sea of development or land use that is not suitable for certain wildlife habitat.”

# PRESERVE IMPROVEMENTS

## Benefit VISITORS and WILDLIFE



(Left) Volunteer Joe Polacheck helps with the recent seeding at Oak Road Nature Preserve. (Above) A new kiosk is placed at Ephraim Preserve at Anderson Pond.

Photo by Kay McKinley

Stewardship projects in 2023 and 2024 provided enhanced experiences for visitors and increased benefits to wildlife on seven Land Trust nature preserves. The projects would not be possible without community support through donations and hands-on help during Stewardship Workdays. Thank you for your support!

**The new trail bridge at Bayshore Blufflands Nature Preserve provides steady footing and a dry crossing for visitors in all seasons.** The bridge, which is below the Niagara Escarpment, replaces one that was in disrepair. The bridge spans ephemeral wetlands and is meant to withstand decades of foot traffic. This is good news for year-round hikers who want to experience the escarpment up-close and to witness the beauty of the preserve on top of the bluff.

**Little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) mothers have a safe, protected space to roost at the Three Springs Nature Preserve bat barn due to renovations in 2023.** The improvements

The Land Trust provides habitat for grassland birds on the nature preserves by restoring old agricultural fields to prairies. The prairie seeds at Oak Road Nature Preserve were collected and sown by hand during volunteer Stewardship Workdays in August, September, and February. Land Trust stewardship staff took on the seeding of the extensive acreage at Legacy Nature Preserve with the help of a no-till seeder drill.

**Winds and weather at Heins Creek Nature Preserve toppled the trail kiosk in July.** With the aid of volunteers, including preserve steward John Swanson, the kiosk was up and ready for visitors within a couple of days. Another kiosk was installed at Ephraim Nature Preserve at Anderson Pond during the planned July Stewardship Workday.

**New trails at Oak Road and Lautenbach Nature Preserves expand a visitor's outdoor experience. At Oak Road Nature Preserve, trail work involved the opening of two new trail loops.** These trails provide access to both woods and fields. At Lautenbach Nature Preserve, the trail includes



In cooperation with The Big Plant, join us to plant trees at Oak Road Nature Preserve on Tuesday, April 23, 2024.



Volunteer Krista Clarke-Brownstein scatters seed at Oak Road Nature Preserve during a Stewardship Workday.

are crucial to the species' survival as the little brown bat population plummeted due to white-nose syndrome. The bats help provide insect control for area farms. This past fall, reconstruction on the bat barn involved the reinforcement of its frame and the installation of a new roof. When the mothers return to the barn this spring, the updated space will provide a roost for hundreds of bats.

**More native habitat for grassland birds is encouraged through seedings at Oak Road and Legacy Nature Preserves.** According to Audubon, grassland species are among the most imperiled group of birds in the United States. Total populations have declined more than 40 percent since 1966.

woodlands, Escarpment, and now grassland views. Close to a mile of trail was added at each nature preserve.

**Fifteen hundred native trees to be planted by volunteers and staff in April of 2024.** Scheduled for two separate Stewardship Workdays, the trees are being planted to restore forests at Bear Creek and Oak Road Nature Preserves. The Bear Creek Nature Preserve planting of 400 trees is scheduled for April 16. In conjunction with the Big Plant—a community-wide event that celebrates Earth Day—1,100 trees will be planted at Oak Road Nature Preserve on April 23. Additional days may be needed to complete the project, which will benefit woodland wildlife and migrating birds. **Sign up to plant trees at [DoorCountyLandTrust.org/BigPlant](https://DoorCountyLandTrust.org/BigPlant).**

# Conservation Easements: Private Land for Public Good



The Schmitz conservation easement provides migratory bird habitat along the Green Bay shoreline.

**A** conservation easement is land protection on a personal level. It's one landowner's way to protect wildlife habitat, water and air quality, and the open space and scenic beauty of Door County—while continuing to own and live on the property. Conservation easements protect private land without public access. The conservation easement agreement remains binding, even if the property is sold.

“Private landowners who are uncertain of the future of their property but want to see it protected can enter into a conservation easement agreement with the Land Trust to ensure that the conservation values of the property are protected forever,” said Conservation Easement Program Manager Drew Reinke. “As it relates to development, it's like a time stamp. No matter what happens to zoning or the sale of a property, the property cannot be subdivided and split up for future development.”

Each agreement is as individual as the landowner and the land itself. The size of the easement is up to the owner and what they would like to see protected. Reinke evaluates the land for its conservation values and works with the landowner to honor their long-term vision for the property. In many instances, the conservation easement restricts future building or subdividing. Some conservation easements address whether timber harvest or tree cutting is allowed. Ultimately, the landowner determines how restrictive the conservation easement agreement is.

“Owners need to think of their conservation easement as a private land preserve for wildlife habitat,” Reinke said. “They can walk on it, plant native trees and manage their forest, hunt or fish, and even develop hiking trails.”

“There may only be one chance to accept a conservation easement on an ecologically significant or scenic piece of property.”

- Drew Reinke  
Conservation Easement  
Manager



Placing development restrictions on the property typically results in a reduced property value. However, many income, estate, and property tax advantages come with preserving a property's conservation value. The donation of a conservation easement to the Land Trust usually qualifies as a tax-deductible charitable gift.

Reinke said it typically takes from six months to a year to complete a conservation easement agreement as easement terms are negotiated, a survey is finalized, and a conservation evaluation of the property is completed.

To date, there are 79 properties (more than 3,500 acres) in Door County protected by conservation easement agreements with the Land Trust. Along with Land Trust nature preserves and natural areas, these easements are integral to protecting the peninsula overall by helping to extend wildlife

corridors from Washington Island to Southern Door, while protecting scenic and open space between.

“We have one opportunity to protect land,” Reinke said. “There may only be one chance to accept a conservation easement on an ecologically significant or scenic piece of property.”

# Discovering COMMON GROUND in Land Protection



Mike Schmitz and Ginny Bolger's passion for land protection resulted in Schmitz recently entering into a conservation easement agreement with the Land Trust. Photos by Kay McKinley

**M**ike Schmitz took a date to the Land Trust's 2022 Annual Gathering and ended up with a conservation easement. At the Gathering, he discovered that his date, Ginny Bolger, shared a passion for conservation equal to his own. Bolger influenced Schmitz's timing for entering into a conservation easement agreement with the Land Trust this past December.

"It's wonderful that Ginny believes as I do—and I wanted to do a conservation easement at some point—but she urged me to get it done," Schmitz said. "It's giving me wonderful satisfaction to know that I'm leaving a legacy that will live on for generations after me."

Schmitz has supported the Land Trust for over 20 years. It was at the Gathering that Bolger revealed to him that she was a charter member of the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust and had been its board president.

"The conversation in the car going home was all about conservation easements," Bolger recalled.

The discussion included the parcel that Schmitz was considering for an easement. Since its completion in December, the conservation easement agreement ensures that the property, with 589 feet of rocky shoreline and mature cedar forest, remains protected forever. A short distance to Ellison Bay Bluff County Park and Grandview Scenic Overlook and Park, the property is also part of a wildlife corridor that caters to migratory songbirds and shorebirds and is buffered by the Niagara Escarpment.

There's a time for everything in life and the time to protect land is now." - Mike Schmitz

Schmitz and Bolger each had a life experience that inspired them to become conservationists. For Bolger, it was fighting a housing project that replaced an abandoned golf course her neighbors treated as a nature preserve. In his 20s, Schmitz witnessed the rural landscape around his boyhood home

become subdivided. His father made an impression on him by planting 5,000 trees rather than selling his land.

"When you live here, it doesn't take long to appreciate what a wonderful

thing we have on the Door peninsula," Schmitz said. "We must do everything we can to preserve it."

Schmitz sees people's role in land protection as guardianship rather than ownership. "We have an obligation to pass as much of this beauty and naturalness on to the next generation as we can," he said. "I'm not against development, but I am against development that offends nature, that destroys genuine beauty. There's a time for everything in life and the time to protect land is now."



# Door County's Islands: Links in the Flyway's Chain

**A flicker of golden yellow within a highbush cranberry shrub is a sign to Washington Islanders that the Yellow Warbler has returned, and spring bird migration is in progress.** It's hard to imagine the extreme effort it took for this tiny bird to fly from Central or South America to find the appropriate conditions to start a family in Door County. The Yellow Warbler is one of over 325 avian species that follow the Mississippi Flyway to migrate to breeding grounds that range from the northern United States to lands within the Arctic Circle.

Numbers do not tell the whole story of Door County's importance to bird migration, but they certainly are impressive. According to the National Audubon Society, as part of the Mississippi Flyway, Door County and its islands

“Without the islands, birds would need to fly further to refuel, costing them energy that they may not have. By the time they get to Wisconsin, their fat reserves have been significantly depleted,” said Land Program Director Jesse Koyen. “Having these places to stopover and feed—especially these very rich sites with a lot of mayflies and caterpillars that hatch out in the spring—are necessary for these birds to continue with their migration to their breeding ground.”

As forest birds are dependent primarily on insects for fuel in the spring, the timing of bird migration ideally coincides with the peak of the insect hatch. While mayfly hatch depends on water temperature, other insects feed on the sap of budding trees. Timing is everything. Annual weather variability and climate change presents a huge challenge to migrating birds.

“Without the islands, birds would need to fly further to refuel, costing them energy that they may not have... Having these places to stopover and feed...are necessary for these birds to continue their journey to safe breeding grounds.” - Land Program Director Jesse Koyen

host half of North America's bird species and up to forty percent of the continent's waterfowl during migration. As part of the lands connected within the flyway, Door County is a crucial stopover for birds to complete their migration, which directly affects their survival.

Door County's shoreline and lands with surface water offer migratory birds opportunities to find food, particularly insects, and shelter. Chambers and Washington Islands extend the resources that are found along the peninsula's shoreline, providing stepping stones for respite after venturing over water for several miles.

“With climate change, there is a potential for mismatch of when peak insect hatch occurs and the migration of the birds begins,” said Koyen. “Different tree species bud out at different times, affecting insect hatches and food availability for birds, and that's why it's essential to protect diverse forested lands. Birds will shift their nesting locations if habitat and food isn't available, which could affect Door County bird populations.”

The Land Trust's efforts to protect suitable habitat on Door County's islands is demonstrated by its management of interior forest and wetlands in the Chambers Island Nature Preserve. On Washington Island, the Land Trust owns and



Like Washington Island, Chambers Island (above) hosts hundreds of avian species that migrate every summer to their breeding grounds in the north. Among the winged visitors are the Yellow Warbler (left) and Whimbrels. Bird photos by Naseem Reza. Chambers Island photo by Dan Eggert

manages land within DNR state natural areas, including Coffey Swamp and Big and Little Marsh. The island’s Little Lake Nature Preserve contains Lake Michigan shoreline and Little Lake, the only lake on the island. A recent land donation is adjacent to the Land Trust’s Stillpoint Natural Area, connecting two protected properties.

For the link that Door County provides for migration, there is some good news. “Being near a large body of water means that habitats in Door County will probably be more resistant to the effects of climate change,” Koyen said. “Lake Michigan is going to be a good moderator.”

A Motus Wildlife Tracking System receiver was installed in July at the Domer-Neff Nature Preserve and Bird Sanctuary on Washington Island. The data provided by the receiver—which includes local population size, critical habitat, and migration patterns—will help the Land Trust identify areas of concern for migrating birds. Understanding migration patterns will influence the types of habitats the Land Trust prioritizes for protection in the future.

Loss of suitable habitat is the single greatest threat to birds in North America. As Door County is part of the Mississippi Flyway, problems that impact migration along the route also impact the health of the migratory birds in Door County. For example, a combination of dams, locks, and levees have reduced the Mississippi River to less than ten percent of its original floodplain. An estimated nineteen square miles of delta wetlands are disappearing annually.

“When it comes to migratory forest birds on the land, the quality of those lands for habitat will impact species survival,” said Koyen. “We are just part of the story and what we do here matters; it is a global responsibility. We cannot do it on our own. All along the flyway stopover habitat is needed. The time is now to protect the places that are necessary for these species to survive.”



Little Lake on Washington Island is an important stopover site for migrating birds. Photo by Julie Schartner



Budburst volunteers monitor pollinator interactions with plants at Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal. Photo by Paige Witek

## Citizen Science: Connecting Volunteers to Field Research

For volunteers, citizen science is a numbers game. Volunteers collect data in the field, which helps researchers and the Land Trust discover trends that guide our work.

“Citizen science projects help us understand the relationships between living things and this insight helps us determine how we can better protect and manage lands for those creatures,” said Community Conservation Coordinator Paige Witek. “By submitting the information to larger databases, we are linking volunteers to a larger conservation effort.”

The Land Trust is engaged in two citizen science projects, with a third to be introduced this summer. One of the current projects involves observing pollinator insect interactions with plants at the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal Nature Preserve. The second is nest box monitoring, which takes place at five of the Land Trust nature preserves. The Land Trust begins a third citizen science project with the Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade (WBBB) this summer.

The pollinator observation data collected by volunteers at Ship Canal Nature Preserve is organized by Witek and then submitted to the Chicago Botanic Garden’s (CBG) Budburst platform. The Budburst program gathers data from volunteers nationwide and is now showing the relationship between seasonal changes of plants and insect pollinators. Of particular interest to the Land Trust is the interaction between insect pollinators and the federally threatened Pitcher’s dune thistle (*Cirsium pitcheri*)—found only on the shores of Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior—and at the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal Nature Preserve. Armed with new data from the Ship Canal pollinator observations, the Land Trust and Chicago Botanic Gardens are better able to conduct targeted habitat restoration work.

In the Land Trust’s other current citizen science program, volunteers monitor 28 Eastern Bluebird boxes, six American

“Citizen science projects help us understand the relationships between living things, and this insight helps us determine how we can better protect and manage lands for those creatures.”

- Paige Witek, Community Conservation Coordinator

Kestrel boxes, and seven Wood Duck boxes. The monitoring schedule is determined by the temperament of each species. “The chicks and parents of some species become more nervous than others, and we don’t want to disturb them,” said Ecological Restoration Manager Tina Lee.

Bluebird boxes are visited once a week, American Kestrels every couple of weeks, and wood ducks are checked via trail cameras when it is convenient for the volunteer.

Volunteers gather data that tracks avian development from egg to fledge. Lee submits the volunteers’ observations to the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW)

and the American Kestrel Partnership. Eastern Bluebirds and American Kestrels, both cavity nesting birds, are seeing positive comebacks thanks to nest box programs. The benefit of the nest box program is two-fold: the boxes add breeding sites, while the monitoring ensures that the young are protected from disease, parasites, and predators.

The Land Trust will launch a third citizen science program this year, the Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade. Coordinated by the Wisconsin DNR, the program conducts monitoring of the state’s native bumble bees. In Wisconsin and throughout the world, many bumble bee populations are in trouble. The Land Trust’s Bumble Bee Brigade training will be held in June and counts are scheduled for July and August.

Witek said a volunteer’s conservation ethic grows as their knowledge increases. “During a project, a volunteer becomes motivated to take further action to protect what is observed,” she said. “These projects are an important way to involve volunteers on a personal level in the work of the Land Trust.”

To join Land Trust’s citizen science programs, please visit [DoorCountyLandTrust.org/science](https://DoorCountyLandTrust.org/science).

# Free Guided Walks, Events & Workdays

Registration required at [DoorCountyLandTrust.org/events](http://DoorCountyLandTrust.org/events)



**Color Key:**

**Stewardship Workdays**

**Guided Walk**

**Members Only Event**

April 16, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Bear Creek Nature Preserve  
Tree Planting.

April 20, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Door County Geology Hike**  
with Brian Forest  
Lautenbach Woods Nature  
Preserve

April 23, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Oak Road Nature Preserve  
Tree Planting. Become part of The  
Big Plant!



April 26, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
**Discover Door County's Frogs  
& Toads** with Jane Whitney  
Location TBD, depending on  
spring water levels.

May 3, 8:30 pm - 10:00 pm  
**An Evening at Nature's Opera:  
Frog Chorus**  
with Marilyn Hansotia  
Ephraim Preserve at Anderson Pond

May 4, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Creation of a Preserve: Leaving  
a Legacy of Land**  
with Terrie Cooper  
and Thomas Stasiak  
Legacy Nature Preserve

May 11, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Spring Wildflowers**  
with John Swanson  
Erskine Woods Natural Area  
Members only

May 14, 8:30 am - 11:30 am  
**Birding By Ear and Habitat**  
with Carl Cochrane, Bill Utley  
Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal  
Nature Preserve

May 18, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Spring Wildflowers**  
with Mary O'Grady  
Gilson-Peterson Forest  
Natural Area  
Members Only

May 21, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Bear Creek Nature Preserve  
General cleanup.

June 8, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Creation of Oak Road Nature  
Preserve: Farm, Frogs and  
Forests** with Terrie Cooper, Jack  
Finger

June 11, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal Nature  
Preserve  
Hand pull forget-me-nots.

June 15, 10:00 am - 12:00pm  
**NEW Southern Door's Oak Bluff  
Natural Area**  
with Terrie Cooper and  
Brian Forest  
Directions with registration  
Members Only

June 18, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Gilson-Peterson Forest  
Natural Area  
Hand pull forget-me-nots.

June 21, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Heins Creek Aquatic Creatures  
Discovery Adventure**  
with Terrie Cooper, Paige Witek,  
John Swanson & Kris Smith

June 27, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
& 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
**Washington Island  
Preserves Open House Hikes**  
with Terrie Cooper, Jesse Koyen  
Directions with registration

July 11, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
and July 13, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Creation of Bay Shore  
Blufflands Nature Preserve,  
Making the Impossible,  
Possible** with Terrie Cooper

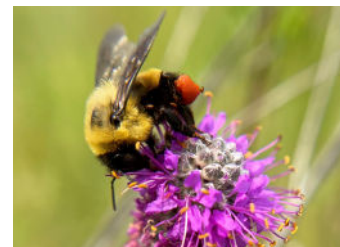
July 16, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Heins Creek Nature Preserve  
Cleanup, boundary markers,  
garlic mustard, and trail  
maintenance.

July 18, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
**Schmidtke Conservation  
Easement Hike in Southern Door**  
with Drew Reinke,  
Erich Schmidtke  
Directions with registration  
Members Only

July 19, 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm  
**Saving the Bats at  
Three Springs Nature Preserve**  
with Marilyn Hansotia

July 25, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
and July 27, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**NEW Bear Creek Nature Preserve**  
with Brian Forest  
and Terrie Cooper  
Directions with registration

August 3, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
**The Buzz About Bees**  
with Emily Roedl, Jody Selenica  
& Linda Moore  
Oak Road Nature Preserve

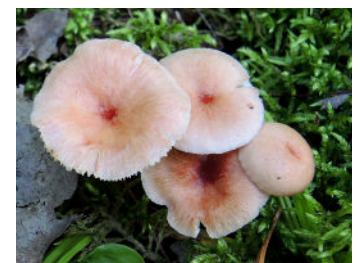


August 15, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
**Explore Door County's Forests**  
with Roxanne Hanney and  
Rob Watson  
Lautenbach Woods Nature  
Preserve

August 20, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Hibbard Creek Natural Area  
Trail maintenance, updating  
signs, general cleanup.

August 24, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Creation of the Kangaroo Lake  
Nature Preserve**  
with Lucy Klug, Terrie Cooper

September 4, 8:45 pm - 10:45 pm  
**Tour of the Dark Sky:  
Deep Sky Astronomy**  
with James Krumenacher  
Directions with registration  
\$15, Members Only



September 7, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**NEW Hibbard Creek Natural Area**  
with Brian Forest, Terrie Cooper  
Directions with registration  
Members Only

Sept. 17, 10:30 am - 1:15 pm  
Varies, depending on ferry times.  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Washington Island, Domer-  
Neff Nature Preserve and  
Bird Sanctuary  
Clearing brush.

September 19, 1:00 - 3:00 pm  
**The Fungus Among Us: Fungi &  
Mushrooms**  
with Charlotte Lukes  
Lautenbach Woods Nature  
Preserve, \$10

October 5, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Creation of the Sturgeon Bay  
Ship Canal Nature Preserve**  
with Terrie Cooper

October 12, 9:00 am - 11:00 am  
**Fall for Autumn Foliage**  
with Jane Whitney  
Kangaroo Lake Nature Preserve

Oct. 15, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**Stewardship Workday**  
Oak Road Nature Preserve  
Seed Collection.

# Joy Found in Nature Inspires Legacy Circle Gift

On paper, Bob and Ann Anderson may seem unlikely candidates for the Legacy Circle. They have yet to hike the trails, go to events, or volunteer with the Land Trust. But they do possess a trait that makes the couple a logical choice: a belief in the mission of protecting land.

“We both like animals and nature,” Bob said. “We have 75 acres south of Sturgeon Bay and planted 40 acres in tall grass prairie. We wanted to include the Land Trust in our estate plan to support the protection of natural properties in Door County.”

Bob received a degree in freshwater ecology from UW-Stevens Point. After graduation, he headed to California to act as a river guide before becoming a metal sculptor. He met Ann, who worked in human resources, in Sacramento. The Andersons remained in California until 2003 when they moved to Door County after finding affordable land that provided space for his sculpture studio and land to enjoy living within nature.

Their desire to conserve land was influenced by living in California and witnessing constant development. That experience inspired them to join the Land Trust’s Legacy Circle. “A lot of land gets developed in California, so we were thinking if we can protect more land that would be a good thing,” Bob said.

The Andersons learned of the Land Trust through friends, the *Peninsula Pulse*, and *Landings* newsletters, as well as owning a house across the street from the former Land Trust offices. Before making the decision to include DCLT in their will, the couple did some online research regarding the Land Trust’s business practices as a nonprofit. Gaining confidence with what they found, they took the next step and put the Land Trust in their will.

“We wanted to include the Land Trust in our estate plan to support the protection of natural properties in Door County.”

- Bob Anderson, Legacy Circle member

With land in Southern Door for Bob’s business, the Andersons reside in Algoma. The

property south of Sturgeon Bay, which is on the Ahnapee Trail, gave the couple the opportunity to take conservation into their own hands by converting an agricultural field to prairie.

“We do notice a big difference between having an agricultural field and a grassland as far as wildlife is concerned and we’re enjoying it,” Bob said. “I walk through the prairie and find several bird nests. We also see a lot more insects in the area—be it grasshoppers or dragonflies—and a lot more mice and voles. Raptors cruise our fields all year long.”

By joining the Legacy Circle, the Andersons have made a commitment that will honor their passion for wildlife forever. In this way, the sharing of their joy is guaranteed. For more information about the Legacy Circle, please visit [DoorCountyLandTrust.org/LegacyCircle](https://DoorCountyLandTrust.org/LegacyCircle).



Ann and Bob Anderson with one of Bob’s crane sculptures on the land they restored to native prairie. Photo by Kay McKinley

# 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](http://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 and waters. Contact Cinnamon Rossman to learn more. [giving@doorcountylandtrust.org](mailto:giving@doorcountylandtrust.org) or (920)746-1027

**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](http://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 about planned giving at [DoorCountyLandTrust.org/LegacyCircle](http://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.

## Join us in thanking our Annual Business Members!

Platinum sponsors



Gold sponsors



Silver sponsors



Ashbrooke Hotel  
Door County Eye Associates  
Door County Nature Works Ecology  
The Garden Lady, Beth Coleman

Gills Rock Stoneware  
Glidden Lodge Beach Resort  
Grasse's Grill  
Impressions Printing & Graphics  
Jack & Jill's Landscape Co

Jerry's Flowers  
Lautenbach Orchard Country  
Meissner Landscape, Inc.  
Nicolet Bank  
Samara Jewelry, LLC

Smile Designs of Door County  
Dr Timothy Tishler, DDS  
True North Real Estate  
Wagon Trail Campground  
Washington Island Ferry Line  
Zero Sum Door County



## Door County Land Trust

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

(920) 746-1359 • [www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org](http://www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org)

PO Box 65, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235



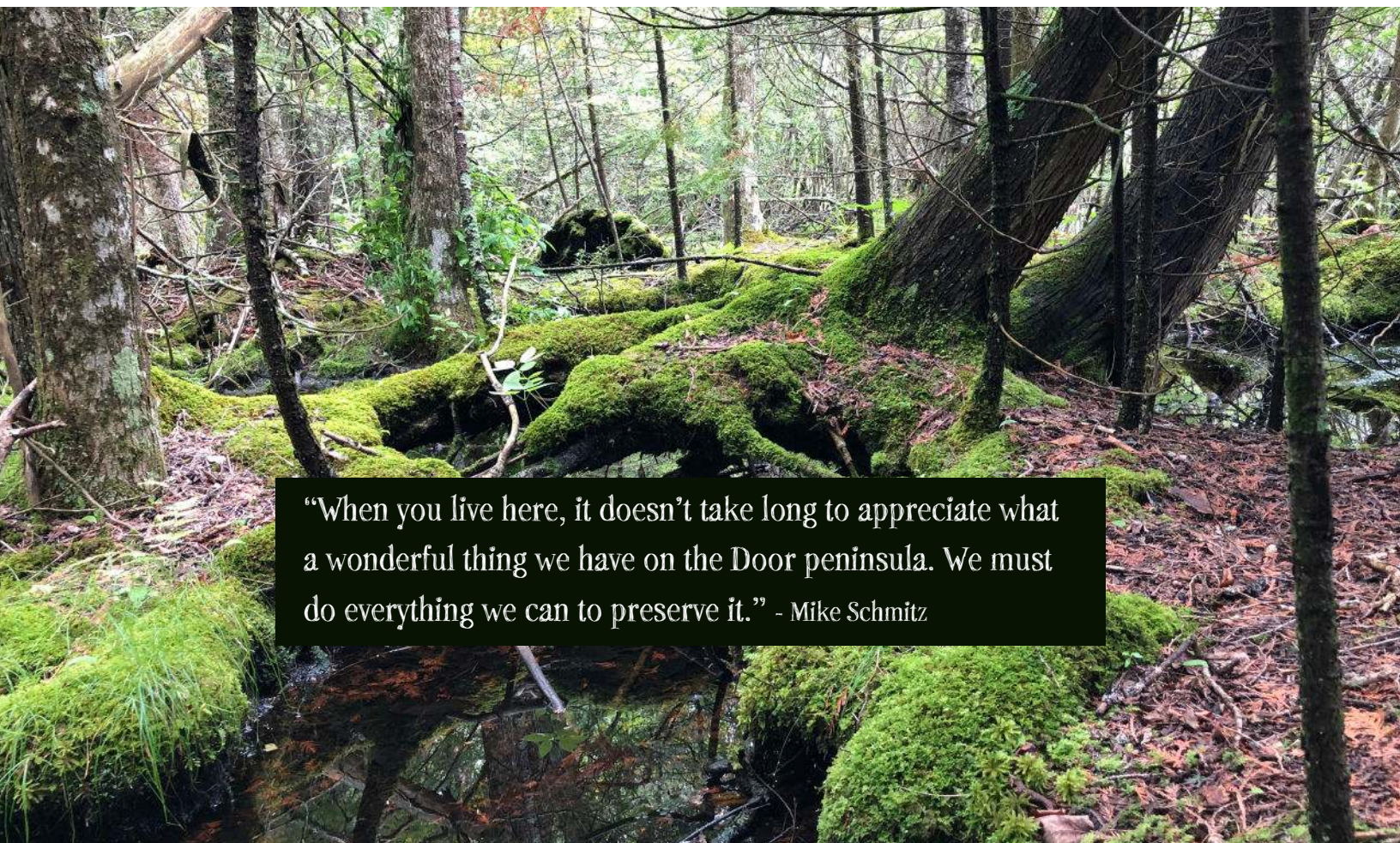
- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship



Following our Trails?

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram!

Find links at [DoorCountyLandTrust.org](http://DoorCountyLandTrust.org)



“When you live here, it doesn’t take long to appreciate what a wonderful thing we have on the Door peninsula. We must do everything we can to preserve it.” - Mike Schmitz