

## in this issue:

From the Executive Director - p2

Land Legacy Gathering 2010 - p2

GWC's 1<sup>st</sup> Photo Contest - p3

Land Trust Staff & Board Retreat - p4-5

Welcome! New Board Members- p6

GWC's 1st International Tour - p6

Intern Season - p7

nature photos: Gil Gribb



# gathering waters conservancy

## A Tribute to Harold "Bud" Jordahl

by Vicki Elkin, Gathering Waters Conservancy's former Executive Director

By now, I'm sure most of you have heard of the passing of Bud Jordahl, founder of Gathering Waters Conservancy and one of Wisconsin's greatest environmental stewards. Bud died May 11 at age 83.

Without question, Bud Jordahl's work was legendary: helping to create the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and the Namekagon–St Croix National Wild and Scenic Riverway; working with Senator Gaylord Nelson on the first Earth Day; and establishing the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund.

But while the public knew that side of Bud, behind the scenes he was an inspirational teacher and mentor to a new generation of environmental leaders. Bud loved this role and Gathering Waters benefitted from his generous spirit, sage advice, and enthusiastic encouragement.

I met Bud Jordahl for the first time in 1998 at my interview for the Executive Director position at Gathering Waters.

Bud was an incredibly kind, considerate, and generous person but he could also be tough as nails and he ran me through the wringer that day.

Bud focused on my Masters thesis on the Town of Dunn's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program, asking challenging questions about my research and questioning the validity of my findings. He was harder on me than any member of my thesis committee.

Bud ended the interview by asking me to meet him for coffee early the next morning. He had more questions about my thesis. After that first cup of coffee, I realized that Bud wasn't testing my mettle—he was genuinely interested in what I had learned from my research. He was always thinking about new ways to preserve Wisconsin's landscape and PDR held promise for Wisconsin's working farms and forests.

Thus began a relationship that included weekly Wednesday morning coffee dates at McDonald's. I discovered during those regular meetings that Bud was genuinely interested in what I had to say. Here I was, fresh out of graduate school, face-to-face with one of the great conservationists of our time, and he valued my opinions!

Gathering Waters was a lean organization in those early years. I was the only full-time staff person and Bud frequently helped share the workload. Together, we traveled the state from Ashland to La Crosse; Door County to River Falls.

We met with landowners, toured conservation projects, offered assistance to fledgling land trusts, and asked donors to support our efforts.

We also found time to canoe the St. Croix River where Bud had courted his wife Marilyn decades earlier. I cooled my feet in the water as Bud reminisced about the past. Much to my horror, I ended up covered with leeches. Bud found this endlessly amusing and never let me forget!

Yet while the work was fascinating, the best part was having Bud as a friend and mentor. I learned a lot about Wisconsin's environmental history but also learned what it meant to be a leader.

As Gathering Waters grew, Bud took a personal and professional interest in each and every staff member, including the interns and volunteers. Even with all the demands on his time, Bud always was available to lend an ear and offer advice to this young group of eager conservationists.

A frequent visitor to the office, Bud would treat the staff to milkshakes at a local diner. He hosted retreats, camping trips, and more! hunts at his beloved farm in Richland County. Bud had donated a conservation easement on the farm to Gathering Waters and our annual monitoring trip became a much-anticipated event. The trip always involved a long, bumpy tour in "Butch," an old Isuzu Trooper "convertible." Bud had removed the roof for a better view.

(continued on p3)

Gathering Waters Conservancy's founder Harold "Bud" Jordahl

Gathering Waters Conservancy's mission is to help land trusts, landowners and communities protect the places that make Wisconsin special. Our goal is to increase the amount of protected land in the state through private voluntary action.

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**From the Executive Director's Desk...**

Gathering Waters is a Community Catalyst, or a Community Convener, or (if I don't care about the alliteration) a Community Facilitator. Whatever catchy description we choose, among the most important roles we play here at Gathering Waters Conservancy is to be a hub, a center point for the powerful and dynamic group of land trusts protecting Wisconsin's special places.

As this newsletter describes, in April we hosted our largest Land Trust Retreat ever. On a beautiful, breezy spring day, we ended the retreat with a hike of North Central Conservancy Trust's very special Mumford easement which straddles the Eau Claire River near Wausau. As I walked with and listened to land trust staff and board members, I was struck by the fact that all our work to provide training, promote land trusts, and influence public policy is fundamentally dependent upon the people who dedicate themselves to what we call the "Land Trust Community."

Whenever I speak in public or make a new acquaintance through work, I describe what Gathering Waters Conservancy is and does. I share the facts: our mission statement, program descriptions, etc. Then I explain that the best part of my job is the opportunity I have to travel the state interacting with the great people who energize the land trust community in Wisconsin. It probably sounds like a line to some people, but I couldn't be any more sincere.

After the retreat and hike in Wausau, I'm convinced that this community is not just the best part of my job, it's also the most important.



At the retreat and throughout the year we provide tangible, measurable services to Wisconsin land trusts. Through workshops, email lists, online bulletins, and over the phone we deliver information about emerging issues, best practices, and technical aspects of land conservation. But, at least as important is the not-so-tangible project of creating and sustaining our community. We design our retreat to provide land trust leaders an easy opportunity to celebrate one another's success, commiserate about challenges and to develop the friendships and professional connections that help us all advance the work of protecting Wisconsin's special places.

Running a land trust is rewarding work. It is also complicated, critical, and needs to last forever. The responsibility that all our land trust leaders carry is great. By supporting the community of land trusts in Wisconsin we know we make them stronger. I also hope we make the weight of that responsibility a little lighter.



**Michael Strigel**, Executive Director

**Land Legacy Gathering 2010**

On an April Saturday that threatened rain, Gathering Waters Conservancy hosted land trust friends and supporters at our Land Legacy Gathering in River Falls. For this, our 3rd annual Gathering, it was a pleasure to partner with the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT) – the 2009 Land Trust of the Year and Wisconsin's first accredited land trust. Although the weather was iffy, spirits were high as we honored the people supporting land conservation in Wisconsin.

The clouds parted in time for a guided tour of a KRLT protected property in the Kinni River gorge—an inspiring example of an oak savanna restoration and what one dedicated landowner has accomplished in over two decades of patient stewardship. We moved inside to a reception at the riverfront home of Kinnickinnic River Land Trust President Dan Wilkening.

The Land Legacy Gathering continues to be a wonderful way to welcome the spring and to acknowledge the people without whom our work would not be possible.

The event itself was made possible by generous support from: The City of River Falls, the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, State Bank of Cross Plains, Door County Land Trust, Michael Briselli and Jeannee Sacken, Terrence Knudsen, George and Jeanette Rogers, and Eric and Jane Schumann.



Eric Forward, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust Land Protection Specialist, explaining prairie restoration efforts in the Kinni River watershed



2010 Wisconsin Land Trust Retreat participants enjoyed lunch on property protected by the North Central Conservancy Trust along the banks of the Eau Claire River

## Our First Ever Photo Contest

We're trying something new, and we'd love your help! We're looking for images of Wisconsin's protected places and the people who enjoy them. We're interested in what you find beautiful about the landscapes that make us love Wisconsin.

National Geographic Magazine Senior Photo Editor, Sadie Quarrier, has offered to select the winning images. Winners will receive cash prizes and their photographs will be printed, framed, and given as the awards at the 2010 Land Conservation Leadership Awards Celebration on September 30, 2010 in Madison.

### Contest Categories

Gathering Waters Conservancy will award one overall winner and winners in each of the following categories:

**People Protecting Wisconsin:** any image of people enjoying Wisconsin's great outdoors.

**Wisconsin's Land Trusts:** any images taken from lands protected through the actions of a non-profit land trust or conservancy.

**Stewardships' Successes:** any images taken from lands protected with funds from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

**Student Submissions:** we're excited to receive submissions from students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade – college.

Full photo contest details are on our website at [www.gatheringwaters.org/photocontest](http://www.gatheringwaters.org/photocontest). Spread the word to your outdoor-loving, shutter-happy friends about this opportunity to help people protect Wisconsin's special places! The deadline for submissions is September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## A Tribute to Harold "Bud" Jordahl (continued from page 1)

Bud would fill "Butch" to capacity with staff, interns and volunteers. Sometimes our kids even jammed into the well-worn and damp foam seats. The tour was inevitably followed by a generous spread of food and long, lively chats with Bud on his front porch.

But it was Bud's unwavering commitment to the Gathering Waters mission and his passion for conservation that stood apart. He challenged the staff to set ambitious goals and pushed us hard to reach them. His standards were high but always just within reach. Working with Bud was rewarding and exhilarating.



Gathering Waters Conservancy's founder Harold "Bud" Jordahl, a pillar in Wisconsin's conservation movement, passed away on May 11

Most importantly, Bud was always quick to recognize a job well done. Our bulletin boards were filled with thank you notes and words of encouragement, forcing us to become experts in deciphering Bud's handwriting.

In a world where it's easy to be cynical, Bud gave us the courage to believe that we could make a difference. He saw the potential of land trusts at a time when they were barely on the radar screen in Wisconsin. Thanks in part to Bud's vision and leadership there are now 50 land trusts in Wisconsin.

And many Gathering Waters "graduates" have carried on Bud's vision. Some have remained here in Wisconsin. Others have moved to different parts of the country and the world. With few exceptions, all have continued their careers in conservation, applying what they learned from one of Wisconsin's conservation legends.

We'll miss you Bud, but we'll never forget all you taught us.

## Thank You.

As always, we have many people to thank:

**Godfrey & Kahn** for exhibit space

**Natural Heritage Land Trust & WI DNR** for phone loans

**North Central Conservancy Trust & Tall Pines Conservancy** for coordinating conference exhibits

**Paul Sandgren & KMSF-SU, UW Spooner Ag Research Center, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, DeWitt Ross & Stevens, Stafford Rosenbaum, and the City of River Falls** for meeting spaces

**Dan Wilkening, Eric Forward, Robert Chambers & Nelson French** for LLG hospitality

**Debbie & John Murphy** for staff housing

**DiAnne Hatch** for delicious snickerdoodles

**John Haack, Kevin Schoessow, Otto Wiegund and Anne Murphy** for contributions to the northwest regional land trust meeting



## Where's Vicki?

Vicki Elkin, Gathering Waters Conservancy's former Executive Director, then Policy Director is now Policy Initiatives Advisor at Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, where she moved last winter to work on farmland preservation issues, including the significant project of building the first state-wide Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program. Her departure is Gathering Waters' loss, but an advance for land conservation. She brings to the Working Lands Initiative her long tenure in the land trust community and expertise about conservation easement programs. For updates on Working Lands Initiative programs, visit [www.wisconsinfarmland.org](http://www.wisconsinfarmland.org).

## Land Trust Staff & Board Retreat—The Biggest Yet!

Wisconsin land trusts have taken on incredible responsibilities to the lands they protect and the public they serve. To ensure lasting land protection, land trusts must ensure their own sustainability, effectiveness, and credibility, too. Running a land trust well is an increasingly interesting, challenging job. Land Trust staff and volunteer directors need some support.

And that's where Gathering Waters Conservancy's flagship program comes into play: our annual Land Trust Retreat is the only statewide opportunity land trust practitioners have to learn from each other and experts in the field. It's been going on for a decade and got record attendance in April this year in Wausau.

"We hear this event praised each year largely because we offer the opportunity for colleagues to connect," says Mike Strigel, "and it's a bargain: we offer it for free. In this economic landscape, these opportunities are vital for small nonprofits."

The 2010 retreat revealed how busy and increasingly complex the business of land conservation has become. On the program this year:

- A legal expert shared observations about emerging conservation case-law from around the country that will affect how land trusts work.

- One land trust working with agricultural easements shared ideas about partnering with local governments to protect farmland.

- Staff from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection who are creating and administering the new Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program came to share program details and ask for land trust input.

- Land Trust Alliance staff led a conversation on the finer points of non-profit board governance.

- Lunch along the banks of the Eau Claire River, protected forever by an easement held by the North Central Conservancy Trust.

*...our annual Land Trust Retreat is the only statewide opportunity land trust practitioners have to learn from each other and experts in the field.*



*If this looks like the conservation homecoming court, it could be! Attending the 2010 Land Trust retreat were some of the most experienced, dedicated, interesting, and fun-loving people in Wisconsin. From left to right: Jim Welsh, Natural Heritage Land Trust; Sally Gallagher, Ice Age Trail Alliance; Jo Ellen Seiser, North Central Conservancy Trust; Melody Walker; Jodi Milski, Door County Land Trust; Peter McKeever, the BAM Team; Caleb Pourchot, Natural Heritage Land Trust; Rodney Walter, Melody's spouse and Nature Conservancy staff; David Wernecke, Baraboo Range Preservation Association*



*Geneva Lake Conservancy Executive Director Joe McHugh and Gathering Waters' Mike Strigel*

*“All land trusts—all-volunteer groups, large shops with experienced staff, even accredited organizations—benefit from being part of a statewide community and network. This, and a lot of fun, is what the retreat is about every year.”*

*—Mike Strigel,  
GWC Executive Director*

We try to make this retreat address issues relevant to all the organizations in Wisconsin’s diverse land trust community, staffed and all—volunteer organizations alike. This retreat is also extraordinarily valuable to us at Gathering Waters: it’s our chance to sit in on peer-to-peer conversations about current concerns and to learn how we can serve land trusts best. Here’s some of what’s hot in the land trust world:

**Accreditation** The Land Trust Alliance created the Land Trust Accreditation Commission in 2006. This independent, voluntary program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet high standards for excellence, uphold the public trust, and work to ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

There are now 93 accredited land trusts across the country, including Wisconsin’s Kinnickinnic River Land Trust. In the next two years, at least another half-dozen Wisconsin organizations are considering applications.

The application process for Accreditation is a significant undertaking, and preparing to apply is an equally significant organizational commitment. The Accreditation Commission scrutinizes the applicant’s compliance with laws governing non-profits and runs a fine-toothed comb through internal policies, project files, record keeping systems, conservation easement-holding programs, and more.

Applications consume significant organizational human and financial resources (Accreditation applications have a hefty \$2,500 fee), and while many organizations may want to be accredited, they may not be willing to focus their energy and dollars away from other programs to prepare for an Accreditation bid.

Gathering Waters Conservancy, working closely with the Land Trust Alliance, is tailoring our services to help land trusts prepare successful applications without exhausting their coffers and human resources.

**Protecting Working Lands** As Wisconsin’s first statewide Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program gets up and running, the land trust community is exploring ways to leverage that funding to protect working lands in their communities.

At the retreat, Executive Director of the Natural Heritage Land Trust, Jim Welsh, spoke to peers about NHLT’s experience working with several local governments to protect farmland. The land trust has knowledge about negotiating, drafting, and managing a conservation easement program.

That’s a skill set that’s not on staff at many municipalities, and either not available or unaffordable from for-profit consulting firms. The land trust has found a role as a land-conservation program contractor of sorts, and that’s a model we may see growing as landowners and communities look to Wisconsin’s Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program to fund farmland preservation in the state.

**Dessert** No kidding. The Land Trust retreat includes a now-infamous dessert potluck and associated good natured ribbing over the champion cookies. Also integral to the two-day program are mock awards, a field trip, and a party to honor land trusts’ work.

As the land trust community grows larger and ever-more sophisticated, we strive to keep this annual event informal—the kind of meeting where connections among land trust experts are forged and sustained over drinks or dessert, not just in workshops. We consciously strive to keep it fun, though in Wisconsin’s land trust community, fun comes easily. The retreat’s success is due to the energy of the participants who contribute their time and expertise, good humor and great baked goods. We’re already looking forward to next year.

**Thanks to Retreat sponsors** As mentioned above, we strive to make the Land Trust Retreat accessible at no-charge to Wisconsin land trusts. We can do that only because of some generous supporters. The 2010 Wisconsin Land Trust Retreat was sponsored by the Plum Creek Foundation, Wisconsin DNR, River Valley Bank, Janette Sweasy, Barb & Don Frank, D. J. & Mary Clare Freeman, Sally Overholt, and Kathy Powell & Stephen Griswold.



*Bayfield Regional Conservancy Outreach Coordinator Linda Nedden-Durst and Board President Shari Eggleston along the banks of the Eau Claire River*

## The Pros and Cons of Board Term Limits

When we are advising land trusts about ways to keep an organization energized and sustained over time, we recommend very strongly that they institute term limits for board members. Term limits force an organization to keep recruiting leadership, which ensures a steady input of new perspectives, ideas, and resources. Regular turn over on the board is healthy.

Ultimately, it also means you have to say goodbye!

This summer, three long-serving members of Gathering Waters' leadership will rotate off the board. We ask you to help us thank them for many years of their time, talent, and support.

**Trish Stocking** of Madison is an employee of the Nature Conservancy and maintains one of the most lovely, enviable gardens in central Wisconsin. **Tuck Mallery** of Mosinee remains an active supporter of the Lakeland Conservancy in Minocqua. **Chuck Haubrich**, our outgoing treasurer, is also the president of Kenosha Racine Land Trust.

An advantage of board term limits, of course, is a regular infusion of interesting, talented conservation leaders. We're pleased to welcome:



**Ellen Kwiatkowski** — Ellen has been Executive Director of the Bayfield Regional Conservancy since 2008. Prior to her life in Bayfield, her conservation career has taken her all over the hemisphere. For 10 years she held a variety of positions at The Nature Conservancy in the Latin American Division and most recently as Director of Conservation Programs for the Delaware Chapter. Ellen has been a valuable advocate for Wisconsin working lands conservation and serves on the PACE council, the citizen body advising DATCP on Wisconsin's new

agricultural conservation easement grant program. Ellen lives in Bayfield where she and her husband Eric own and manage an organic blueberry farm, Blue Vista Farm, which is protected through the Town of Bayfield's Farmland Preservation Program.



**Eric Schumann** — A businessman his whole career, Eric is the President and owner of Potala Corporation in Racine, WI. He is the past-president of Merit Gear and FAI, Inc. His connection to Gathering Waters Conservancy has grown from his service on the board of the Caledonia Conservancy, of which he is currently the president. Eric is new to our board, but we've been benefiting from his fiscal savvy for over a year as he has been a member of Gathering Waters' finance committee. He is an equestrian, a fitness buff, and lists investments among his hobbies.

## Expanding our Conservation Perspective: GWC's First International Tour

When the Wisconsin winter was at its coldest, a contingent of Gathering Waters Conservancy members fled the snowy north and headed south. Greeted by warm weather, balmy breezes, and more greenery than can be found in the Northwoods, we kicked off GWC's international travel program with a trip to Costa Rica. A diverse group of Wisconsinites (and one Minnesotan!) spent 10 days exploring the mountains, coast, and rainforest and discovering the conservation connections between this small Central American country and Wisconsin. For instance, dozens of bird species that call Wisconsin home spend the winter in Costa Rica—the quality of habitat there directly impacts their survival and reproductive success here in Wisconsin.

Gathering Waters' international travel program is the manifestation of our goal to provide our members with a new perspective on private land conservation. By partnering with an educational and ecotourism organization, we offered our members the opportunity to put Wisconsin conservation in a global context.

Trip participants learned about myriad efforts to conserve Costa Rica's unique cultural and natural resources. A highlight was a visit to Tirmbina Rainforest Center—a biological reserve and science education facility founded by the Milwaukee Public Museum—whose programs promote environmental education and community development.

Built into the cost of the trip were donations to local conservation organizations we visited. "The chocolate and rainforests were fantastic, but our gifts to those local conservation efforts were a highlight of this trip for me," said Kimberly Gleffe, a member of Gathering Waters' Board. Willa Schmidt, a board member of the Northwoods Land Trust and GWC member for over 10 years, said, "The Costa Rica trip was one of the best I've experienced—good company, an excellent guide, a wealth of gorgeous scenery. With 25% of this tiny country's land set aside in parks and preserves, it's a conservationist's dream."

*Willa Schmidt, on the Board of the Northwoods Land Trust, appreciating the woods in Costa Rica last February*



## Summer is Here—It's Intern Season

Actually, it's always intern season. We employ interns year-round. Their labor, creativity and skills are essential to our office routine and special projects depend on them. We've had to part with two recently, and have a team of three on board this summer.

We have benefited from the efforts of two legal interns who came to us on the recommendation of UW Law Professor Thomas Mitchell. **Alison Volk** arrived last fall to help our work supporting the new Working Lands Initiative and the PACE program, in particular. Fortunately for Wisconsin working lands, she was snatched up in short order by DATCP where she's now Program and Policy Analyst for the Working Lands Initiative.



**Brett Pruess**, a third-year UW-Law student, acted as Government Relations Director Mike Carlson's research assistant on a range of legal issues. Brett wrote several memos on ways to improve the durability of conservation easements in Wisconsin and helped us prepare for sessions at the Wisconsin Land Trust Retreat.



We congratulate **Becky Thompson** on completion of her Master's Degree in Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies this spring. Becky stays atop our database, staffs education and outreach efforts, and this summer will oversee our first Photo Contest. We're happy to report we don't need to say goodbye to Becky for a while!



**Valerie Klessig** began working with us in April as our roving reporter, attending land trust events, interviewing, photographing and collecting stories of people protecting Wisconsin. She's tasked with building slide shows for Gathering Waters new website. Enjoy her handiwork later this summer! Valerie just completed her sophomore year at the UW School of Journalism.



**Jenny Seifert**, a graduate student at the UW-Madison Nelson Institute, joins us this summer as a staff writer and editor. Jenny will edit web copy, help produce multimedia stories of people protecting Wisconsin, post on our new blog, and more.

We accept resumes and inquiries about internship opportunities anytime. When we have resources for paid positions, we post those on our website. If you know driven, talented, conservation-oriented people looking for an internship, please direct them to our website.

## Conference Season Wrap Up

Our office was unusually quiet this spring as Gathering Waters staff hosted or attended several events. Here's where we went, representing the interests of Wisconsin land trusts and collecting knowledge and connections to help us make them stronger.

**Institute for Conservation Leadership's Executive Training** Seattle, WA

**The WI Land Trust Retreat** Wausau, WI

**The national meeting of the Association of Fundraising Professionals** Baltimore, MD

**Land Trust Alliance's Midwest Conference** Columbus, OH

**The Nelson Institute's Conference Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day** Madison, WI



# crosscurrents

a newsletter to serve the land conservation  
community of Wisconsin



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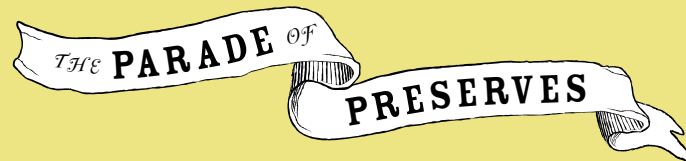
## We can fill your calendar with fun all summer long

For outdoor adventure and conservation celebrations, look to Gathering Waters Conservancy and Wisconsin's land trusts. Save the Dates!

### Barn Dance!

So successful was this celebration last year, organizers of *Partnering for Progress*, an event benefiting farmland conservation, decided to throw it again. On **September 25<sup>th</sup>** at Saxon Homestead Farm in Cleveland, WI, kick up your heels at an old-fashioned barn dance featuring a lively Cajun swing band and locally sourced food. Proceeds from the barn dance benefit Gathering Waters Conservancy, the Council of Rural Initiatives, the Lakeshore Natural Resources Partnership, and the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy & Livestock Farmers.

For more information or to add your name to the invitation list, contact Sara DeKok at 608.251.9131 x 10 or [sara@gatheringwaters.org](mailto:sara@gatheringwaters.org).



### Parade of Preserves

Get outside this weekend! Gathering Waters Conservancy has a continuously updated list of land trust excursions and events on our website. We call it our **Parade of Preserves!** Visit [www.gatheringwaters.org/parade](http://www.gatheringwaters.org/parade) and enjoy some of Wisconsin's most special places.



### The 2010 Land Conservation Leadership Awards Celebration

Our biggest event of the year and the place to be for land conservation supporters statewide will be **September 30** in Madison.



We're on Facebook. We're using our page to share great land trust stories and images of people protecting Wisconsin. Become a fan!