



Door County Land Trust

Celebrating 30 Years of Protecting Door County's Exceptional Lands and Waters Forever

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Lawrence University, Door County Land Trust sign conservation easement agreement to preserve 305 acres of Björklunden property

Baileys Harbor, WI November 18, 2016- An agreement between Lawrence University and the Door County Land Trust (DCLT) will preserve more than 300 acres of Björklunden, the college's 441-acre estate south of Baileys Harbor, from future development.

Representatives from Lawrence and the DCLT signed a conservation easement agreement Thursday, Nov. 17 in the Björklunden lodge that will preserve and protect the natural beauty and ecological integrity of nearly 70 percent of the property - 305 total acres - in perpetuity.

The Björklunden easement is the DCLT's 70th protected parcel and its largest in the past five years. The agreement represents 10 percent of the DCLT's total conservation easement acreage and includes the most shoreline of any of its conservation easements.

The one-time summer retreat of Donald and Winifred Boynton of Highland Park, Ill., Björklunden vid Sjön - Swedish for "Birch Grove by the Lake" - was bequeathed to Lawrence in 1963 by the Boyntons with the understanding that it would be preserved in a way that would ensure its legacy as a place of peace and contemplation. Winifred Boynton referred to her beloved summer residence as a place "far removed from confusion and aggression, it offers a sanctuary for all."

"Our agreement to preserve natural habitat at Björklunden underscores our commitment to Donald and Winifred Boynton who generously gave us these lands close to 50 years ago," said Mark Burstein, president of Lawrence University. "We are grateful for the partnership we have established with the Door County Land Trust which makes this agreement possible."

The Appleton-based college's "northern campus," the Björklunden property has been used for adult, non-credit, Lawrence-sponsored summer seminars since 1980. During the 2015-16 academic year, nearly 2,000 Lawrence students, faculty, staff and guests participated in a weekend seminar. The property is also popular for weddings and business meetings.

A visionary group of leaders from Björklunden, Lawrence and the Door County Land Trust "planted the seed" of a conservation easement 10 years ago explained Terrie Cooper, director of land program at the DCLT. "Now that seed has come to fruition with Lawrence entering into a conservation easement with the DCLT to forever protect 305 acres of the Björklunden property from future development or subdivision."

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“Björklunden’s conservation easement protects in perpetuity more than one-half mile of Lake Michigan shoreline, boreal forest, migratory bird habitat and wildlife habitat, and an expanse of open space along Hwy 57 south of Baileys Harbor,” said Cooper. “The partnership with Björklunden sets a precedent for other conservation-minded organizations and is such a gift to the Door County community and future generations. The Door County Land Trust is honored to assist Björklunden and Lawrence in realizing their vision and upholding forever the terms of their conservation easement.”

According to Drew Reinke, land protection specialist for the DCLT, the protected property contains a variety of habitat types resulting from Lake Michigan’s influence.

“A long list of terrestrial species inhabits the property and the shoreline serves as critical stopover habitat for migratory birds,” said Reinke. “Its forest is one of the most southern extents of boreal forest in Wisconsin with mature to near old growth characteristics. This large tract of land can easily be identified by boaters on Lake Michigan as it is the largest block of forest just south of Baileys Harbor with no development.”

Stephanie Vrabec, a member of Lawrence’s Board of Trustees and current president of the board of the Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, said protecting the property in its natural condition provides unique open space to support Lawrence’s educational mission.

“The Björklunden property is a place where students can ‘retreat’ to learn and grow,” said Vrabec. “It is a working laboratory space for those who gain inspiration and learning from nature. Setting aside conservation land of this significance shows a commitment to long-term environmental sustainability.”

A land trust provides the most common way to protect the conservation values of private land. With approximately 5,000 acres nationally lost to development every day, Vrabec says the establishment of the Björklunden conservation easement “is the right thing to do.”

“Beside preserving the property in a natural state forever, the benefits of conservation lands extend beyond the property boundaries,” said Vrabec. “This agreement underscores our commitment to honor the intentions of the Boyntons and demonstrates our commitment to protect Door County’s incredible natural history and unique environmental quality.”

About Lawrence University Founded in 1847, Lawrence University uniquely integrates a college of liberal arts and sciences with a nationally recognized conservatory of music, both devoted exclusively to undergraduate education. It was selected for inclusion in the book “Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About College.” Engaged learning, the development of multiple interests and community outreach are central to the Lawrence experience. Lawrence draws its 1,500 students from nearly every state and more than 50 countries.

About the Door County Land Trust The Door County Land Trust is a local, non-profit organization working to preserve Door County’s open spaces, scenic beauty and ecological integrity. The Land Trust has protected more than 7,600 acres and is supported by more than 2,200 members. Door County Land Trust nature preserves are open to the public at no charge for hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife observation, some forms of hunting, and other low-impact, non-motorized recreational activities. For more information on the Door County Land Trust and to make a contribution of support, please visit: www.doorcountylantrust.org or call (920)746-1359.

