



Door County Land Trust

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



Door County Land Trust

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Door County's Newest Conservation Project: 20 Acres Protected at Washington Island's Big and Little Marsh



*Left: Big and Little Marsh as seen from above (Photo by Joe Taylor);
Right: Remnant boreal forest of balsam fir, birch, and cedar (Photo by Terrie Cooper).*

Washington Island, WI – Door County Land Trust completed the acquisition and protection of 20 acres of remnant boreal forest on Washington Island adjoining the Big and Little Marsh State Natural Area which is known for its rare and imperiled coastal wetlands. This property is home to a rich boreal forest blanketed by balsam firs and white cedar. The Land Trust's conservation of this area helps to protect some globally significant coastal wetlands that rank as top ecological priorities within the Great Lakes region.

Big and Little Marsh State Natural Area is listed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI-DNR) as a globally significant conservation area in the *Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (2015-2025)*. Rare wildflowers and orchids call these remarkable wetlands home. The federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly and federally threatened dwarf lake iris are both found here. In addition to native



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wildlife, the wetlands are known to host many species of migratory birds, providing critical stop-over points.

Door County Land Trust executive director Tom Clay said, "When the Land Trust began protecting the peninsula and islands more than 30 years ago, there was great foresight that protected, public lands would be a necessity for future generations. Protected lands offer so much for our health and wellness. Door County Land Trust remains undeterred in our conservation efforts this year, knowing that we have a community-wide obligation to protect wild places while there remains wilderness to protect."

Door County Land Trust now protects more than 700 acres on Washington Island, and will continue efforts to protect more land in the area, including coastal wetlands, forests, and streams, as well as the rare plants and animals that rely on these ecologically important areas.

Conservation of this property will forever protect the land from man-made impacts like development that would affect water quality and wildlife, and maintain the island's scenic beauty, rural character, and ecological diversity. Former landowners, Doug and Barbara Lewis, worked with the Land Trust because of their desire to protect the land and merge it into the larger Big and Little Marsh State Natural Area. This new addition to the Big and Little Marsh State Natural Area is rustic wilderness best suited for research and outdoor education.

A portion of the conservation costs for the property are being funded by the Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and the Fox Valley and Green Bay Natural Resources Council. The Land Trust seeks to raise funds for the conservation costs and long-term care of these properties, as well as 2 more properties on the island and 3 properties on the peninsula in Gibraltar-Ephraim Swamp Natural Area. The Land Trust must raise an additional \$200,000 this year to support these new land protection efforts. Every contribution makes a difference. To contribute to these land protection efforts or watch stunning videos of Washington Island from the air, please visit www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org/Vision.

About the Door County Land Trust

Protecting Door County's Exceptional Lands and Waters...Forever. Door County Land Trust protects the wild places, scenic beauty, and ecological integrity that make the peninsula and islands so special. 14 featured nature preserves are open for hiking, and other low-impact, non-motorized recreational activities--all at no charge to the public. Door County Land Trust is a local, member supported, non-profit organization. Donations make our work possible. Trail maps and more information may be found at www.doorcountylandtrust.org.

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