

Landings *News Splash*

Winter 2018-2019 Newsletter from the Door County Land Trust

*"The earth, like the sun,
like the air, belongs to
everyone and to no one."*

-Edward Abbey

*Thank you for helping to
protect Door County's
wild things and wild places.*



Door County Land Trust

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

Wood Thrush on Nest Chambers Island

Protecting stretches of contiguous forest is amongst the top priorities of the Door County Land Trust, and for good reason. Forest fragmentation is the primary cause of the decline of the Wood Thrush, one of many birds requiring a range of hardwood forest habitat. The sight of a nesting Wood Thrush on Chambers Island is a positive sign of the quality of forest and wildlife habitat protected within the Chambers Island Nature Preserve.

Peregrine Falcon Door County Dolomite Cliffs

During this ‘Year of the Bird,’ aptly named for the centennial of the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act, conservation work has no better symbol of success than the Peregrine Falcon. The use of pesticides like DDT in the 1950s and 60s caused the falcon to become an endangered species over much of its range. Efforts to breed and reintroduce birds into the wild led to their overall recovery. Though the Peregrine Falcon was removed from the U.S. Endangered Species list in 1999, they had not been confirmed in Door County until 2015. Read more on page 14.

Cover photo by
Melody Walsh



***“The Wood Thrush is
an icon and barometer
of forest conservation
in the eastern
deciduous forests.”***

**-Wisconsin Bird
Conservation Initiative**



THE FINAL FRONTIER? NO SUCH THING IN DOOR COUNTY

Dear friends,

Enclosed within this issue of *Landings* —*News Splash*, we share stories of the life thriving on our peninsula and islands, and of efforts to care for this exceptional corner of the universe. These stories of conservation are made possible by members, volunteers, conservation partners, and our community who love Door County.

With your help the Door County Land Trust has protected more than 8,000 acres and is diligently improving native habitat across the peninsula and islands.

Why does it matter? Peregrine falcons that have not been nesting in Door County since the 1950s are returning. Rare Pitcher's dune thistle is making a comeback at the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal Nature Preserve. Species never before documented in Door County are being found for the first time. Undiscovered realms are literally in our back yard.

Citizen scientists, volunteers, and staff at the Door County Land Trust are gearing up for 'The Year of Discovery' and a fresh look at the lands and waters—and the plants and animals protected within.

Join us for the journey....



Tom Clay, Executive Director
Door County Land Trust

Photo by Naseem Reza



NEWLY PROTECTED! ISLANDS IN A LAKE... ON AN ISLAND IN A LAKE

Lake Mackaysee, the larger of two inland lakes on Chambers Island, holds two small islands with stopover habitat for birds. In September 2018, the Town of Gibraltar purchased the islands from the Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands and then sold the islands to Door County Land Trust for permanent protection. The islands are the newest additions to the Chambers Island Nature Preserve.

Protecting the islands will maintain the integrity of the nature preserve and the larger landscape. Efforts to eliminate invasive *Phragmites* and non-native cattail on the shoreline of Lake Mackaysee began in 2018 thanks to a US Fish and Wildlife Service partner grant and a Cellcom Green Gifts grant.

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE AWARDS CHAMBERS ISLAND GRANT

The island's rich biodiversity led conservation partners to place it as a top priority for land protection. We are excited to announce the Environmental Protection Agency has tentatively awarded a \$208,500 grant through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).

The grant will partially fund the purchase and permanent protection of 85 more acres by the end of the year, bringing the total to 689 acres protected on the island. Efforts are underway to secure private donations for the protection of additional parcels in 2019. The nature preserve ensures Chambers Island remains untrammelled and remote, the perfect wayside stop for migrating birds and a microcosm of the various plant communities found across northern Wisconsin and Door County.



“ Ship Canal is probably the most healthy population of Pitcher’s thistle... It’s really, truly remarkable. And in part, it is because of the incredible restoration work the Door County Land Trust has been doing there.”

-Pati Vitt, Chicago Botanic Garden



DUNE PLANTS ATTRACT POLLINATORS

Researchers Kayri Havens and Pati Vitt from the Chicago Botanic Garden study the Pitcher’s dune thistle at a number of Great Lakes sites, and have years of data showing the Pitcher’s thistle is thriving at the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal Nature Preserve!

Vitt attributes the thistle’s rebound to the near-complete eradication of invasive spotted knapweed and bouncing bet. She says, “When you get rid of those invasive species what you end up doing is opening up the landscape for this very important native species. The species will respond. And that’s what we’re seeing here.”

That’s a success story for sure! But, it’s only a piece of the story. From late June to mid-July, the only native bloom on the dunes is the Pitcher’s thistle. Without Pitcher’s thistle, pollinators like native bees do not have a steady food source and 9 of the 29 dune pollinators at this site would be lost. Door County’s cherry and apple orchards rely on native pollinators too. The effect of losing the Pitcher’s thistle causes ripples far beyond our shorelines.

Watch Havens and Vitt present at the 2018 Annual Gathering online at www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org/Thistle

Native bee illustration by Steve Buchanen is available as print poster for sale online at pollinator.org

Dune goldenrod**Philadelphia lily****Invasive spotted knapweed**

LIFE ON THE DUNES

Imagine hot, dry sun, winds whipping off the lake, few nutrients available in the soil and sands blowing across the horizon. Life on the dunes can be tough. It's even harder if your neighbor is an invasive plant with toxic roots.

Spotted knapweed has purple to pink thistle-like flowers, tough stems and a tap root that withstands drought and wet soil equally well. It's enemy number one on the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal dunes. With the help of volunteers, we've been battling the spotted knapweed for six years—and the dramatic results show how native plants are now flourishing.

Eliminating spotted knapweed benefits native and rare plants like dune goldenrod, thickspike wheatgrass, and Pitcher's dune thistle. Carl Cochrane, retired biology teacher and preserve steward at the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal, closely monitors new appearances of rare plants, such as fringed gentian, Mingan's moonwort, dunewort, and Philadelphia lily. Among his findings last year is the hairy-necked tiger beetle.

**Mingan's moonwort**



Longnose suckers



WHERE LAND MEETS WATER

From the lands surrounding Little Lake on Washington Island, to the creeks at Three Springs Nature Preserve and the Southern Door headwaters of Keyes Creek, every acre of land protected has a connection to the water of the streams and creeks that feed Green Bay and Lake Michigan. And, those streams are teeming with fish!

Dr. Karen Murchie at the Shedd Aquarium Center for Conservation and Research began studying Lake Michigan suckers at Heins Creek and Keyes Creek in early spring 2017. Suckers provide early spring nutrients in streams, kick-starting the food-web for other fish.

Volunteers from Door County Land Trust and The Ridges Sanctuary collected data for a long-term study that will compare sucker migration, water temperatures, stream flow, and other factors to determine what prompts the suckers to spawn—and if climate change is affecting this key in the food-web. Interested volunteers may contact us at volunteer@doorcountylandtrust.org.



Photo by Dan Eggert

2018 CHAMBERS ISLAND BIOBLITZ

This past summer, 32 scientists led a four day study to inventory the plant and animal species during the first-ever Chambers Island BioBlitz. Assisted by more than 70 volunteer citizen scientists, they recorded a breathtaking 560+ species.

Milwaukee's Urban Ecology Center (UEC) coordinated the collection and analysis of the incredible amount of data recorded during the event. Jessica Orlando, GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and Field Data Coordinator at UEC said, "It's remarkable that a small island has such a rich representation of species, some not even found on the [Door County] mainland."

During summer months, it is unusual to see so many species of birds. 69 bird species were documented during the BioBlitz, which is a high number for the late-summer breeding season. The high count is evidence of the number of breeding birds nesting on Chambers Island during the summer. State endangered Caspian Terns and four state special concern species were documented, confirming that Chambers bird habitat provides incredible diversity.

Christopher Tyrrell of Milwaukee Public Museum, Owen Boyle of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and volunteers inventoried 155 plant species during the BioBlitz. When compared to a more intensive study done on the island in 2001, an impressive 24 additional native species were documented. The new findings are indicative of the diverse habitat types, including pine barrens, wetlands, inland lakes, hardwood forest, and shoreline among others.

Other data points to the need for ongoing research that would follow trends. UW-Stevens Point professor Chris Yahnke confirmed an active maternity colony of little brown bats. The bat is listed as a species of concern due to fungal white nose syndrome which has decimated populations across the country. The finding might suggest that there are unknown hibernacula that have not yet been infected with white nose syndrome—a positive sign for the imperiled species.

UW-Green Bay arachnologist Mike Draney recorded 18 new-to-Door County spider species. This discovery is proof that there is much to learn right in our own back yards.

The Chambers Island BioBlitz was generously funded by Robin, Susan, and Virginia Squier and Mary Brevard, in memory of John Squier, father and husband, who loved the island.





CITIZEN SCIENTISTS IN ACTION

Clockwise from left: Jessica Orlofske, UW-Parkside, examines a crayfish from Lake Mackaysee. Robin Squier, Urban Ecology Center, prepares a team of volunteers for bird banding. Eight-year-old Claire Kennedy inspects a garter snake found near the Chambers lighthouse. The eight-eyed, mosquito-eating





Photo by Julia Schaeffer



Photo by Julia Schaeffer



Orchard Spider, is one of the only spiders named by Charles Darwin himself. UW-Green Bay entomology professor Mike Draney uses a 'pooter' to examine and collect spiders. Julia Robson, Waukesha County Parks, holds a large Eastern fox snake collected and released near the lighthouse. A team of birders watch a pair of Caspian Terns over Lake Mackaysee.



Photo by Ben Egger



Photo by Jessica Orlando



Photo by Mark Brucato



BAY SHORE BLUFFLANDS DISCOVERIES

Beyond the Bay Shore Blufflands Nature Preserve, hundreds of acres are protected by private landowners through conservation easement agreements. These extraordinary neighboring landowners are partners in protecting the larger landscape. Large stretches of the Bay Shore Blufflands escarpment are protected as intact forest and wildlife habitat.

Dan Collins and Nancy Aten protect their properties in the Bay Shore Blufflands neighborhood with conservation easement agreements with the Door County Land Trust. Experience as native landscape architects also makes them exceptional neighbors. Combined with a love of the land and scientific knowledge, their search for understanding the land has led to remarkable discoveries this past year.

Gibraltar elementary students gathered one day this June to explore the wetlands with dip nets and magnifying glasses. With the help of these students, Dan and Nancy documented a new Blufflands neighborhood discovery, the Central Newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*), and freshwater sponges—a first for Door County.

Photo by Nancy Aten



Photo by Nancy Allen

Central newt



Freshwater sponge



Pine Grosbeak

Photo by John Van Den Brandt

BAY SHORE BLUFFLANDS BUCKTHORN BLAST

In its issue, “Why Birds Matter,” National Geographic Magazine noted that 122 species of birds are forever extinct due to invasive species. Thanks to support from our members, that’s a problem that you are helping to solve every day. Invasive shrubs like common and glossy buckthorn, non-native honeysuckle, and autumn olive each have berries attractive to migrating birds. The berries ripen just as birds embark on their 2,000 mile journey south, but the non-native berries offer little nutritional value and some even cause dehydration.

Through this community conservation effort, neighbors, volunteers and the Bay Shore Property Owners Association, with the help of skilled contractors, continue efforts to eradicate invasive species from the nature preserve, while learning skills they can use on their own properties. With the majority of invasive species removed from the preserve, volunteers will begin pulling new invasive plants when they are young. In 2019 Door County Land Trust hopes to install a planting that features native alternatives landowners might use to replace formerly-popular invasive hedges.



Photo by Melody Walsh

PEREGRINE FALCONS RETURN TO DOOR COUNTY

The last successful nesting peregrine falcons were documented sometime in the late 1950s. Greg Septon, founder of the Peregrine Falcon Recovery Project, began to reintroduce the Peregrine falcon to Wisconsin by releasing captive-raised young in 1986. Since 1992 the population of peregrines has naturally rebounded—and now they are nesting on Door County's cliffs!

Citizen scientists Melody Walsh and Randy Holm of Washington Island sighted a male peregrine flying solo in 2015, but the following year the bird had attracted a young mate. In 2017, the pair fledged two young, pictured top left. And in 2018, the pair fledged four more, pictured below left at three days old, below at 21 days, and right at about six weeks.

Melody and Randy are volunteers and citizen scientists with several organizations including Door County Land Trust. Their work as citizen scientists helps track the health of the peninsula and islands.



Photo by Melody Walsh



Photo by Melody Walsh



DISCOVER, STEWARD, INSPIRE — VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Volunteers contribute to every aspect of the Door County Land Trust. They maintain trails, monitor birds, advise committees, lead events, inspire our community of supporters, and so much more.

Thank you for making the Door County Land Trust mission a part of your lives.

Aten, Nancy	Cubar, Susan	Gilster, Tad	Judd, Robert	McCutcheon, Windsor	Rock, Samantha	Van Gemert, Rob
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Collins, Dan	Gebauer, Tony	Jacobs, Gail	Maloney, Ron	Rintelman, Jim	Thilly, Roy	
Coulson, Andy	Georgenson, Tracy	Jordan, Tom	Martin, Mark	Rintelman, Mary Jane	Utley, Bill	

Your volunteer service deserves to be acknowledged. If we have made an error or omitted your name from the list, please notify us so we may correct it for future publications.

A LEGACY OF LAND FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Your legacy gift ensures the lasting and perpetual care of Door County Land Trust's protected lands.

By making a planned gift to the Door County Land Trust through your will or beneficiary designation, you will be welcomed into the Legacy Circle, a group of benefactors who have indicated that the Land Trust has been included in their estate plans. Many gifts planned by members of the Legacy Circle are designated by the Board of Directors to the Stewardship Endowment Fund to care for protected lands. To learn more about becoming a member of the Legacy Circle, call Development Director Cinnamon Rossman at (920)746-1359.



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Door County Land Trust welcomed five new households to the Legacy Circle this year. Their names are listed in **bold type**.

Thank you!

Join us in thanking our Annual Business Members!

Please patronize these businesses that support land preservation.

And, when you do, please thank them for contributing to the Door County Land Trust.



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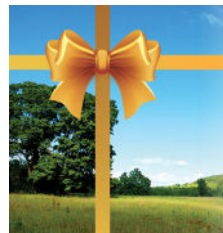
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- Sound Finances
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Your recipient will receive a one-year membership, including a gift package of our most recent newsletter, a Land Trust member decal, *Hiking Trails Map*, and *A Guide to the Places We Protect*, along with a letter informing them of your gift. www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org/Gift



EVERGREEN GIVING CLUB

Setting up a monthly donation from your checking account or credit card is simple, safe and secure. Your monthly donation helps us care for trails, restore native plants, and protect Door County's special places. Whether you donate \$5, \$10, or \$100 per month, your donation adds up and makes a big difference! To begin, visit www.DoorCountyLandTrust.org/Evergreen, click the button to 'Donate Online,' and select 'monthly.' ***Door County's wild things thank you!***



Door County Land Trust

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

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*Protecting
Door County's
exceptional
lands and waters
would not be
possible without
the community
of members and
volunteers who
love this place.*

Thank you.



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