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A publication of the Natural Heritage Land Trust Summer 2007



Land Trust board member Johanna Alex and Pam Foster Felt of Gathering Waters Conservancy with Mariana Weinhold near the top of Louis' Bluff.

## Louis' Bluff Permanently Protected

Looking south over the Wisconsin River from Louis' Bluff

**A** Wisconsin Dells landmark has been safeguarded forever thanks to the foresight and generosity of Frank and Mariana Weinhold. In May the Weinholds granted a conservation easement on Louis' Bluff to the Natural Heritage Land Trust.

Louis' Bluff is an impressive sandstone formation rising above the Wisconsin River at the northern end of the Dells of the Wisconsin River State Natural Area. The Juneau County bluff is dominated by huge white pines and is flanked by floodplain forest and 7,000 feet of river shoreline. The conservation easement permanently limits development of this 133-acre privately-owned property to a small area around the old farmstead. The rest of the property will forever remain undeveloped; its dra-

matic scenery will be enjoyed by the many people who boat the Wisconsin River every year.

The property is also a unique part of local history—it is named for an earlier owner, Louis Dupless. Born in France, Mr. Dupless came to Wisconsin in 1846 and is believed to have been the first "pilot" of the Dells, directing lumber rafts through the narrow river passage that gives the Dells its name. He is buried at the base of the bluff.

Louis' Bluff is the 37th conservation easement held by the Natural Heritage Land Trust and a real treasure. Funding for the purchase of the conservation easement was provided by the state's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, with additional funding from Audubon's Land Fund for Wisconsin. ■

The permanent protection of Louis' Bluff was made possible by a partnership between the Weinhold family, the Natural Heritage Land Trust, and state's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. The state legislature is currently debating the reauthorization of the Stewardship Program, which is a vital component of our work to protect Wisconsin's natural heritage. Please voice your support for the Stewardship Program. For legislative updates, check [www.gatheringwaters.org/stewardship](http://www.gatheringwaters.org/stewardship).

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The Natural Heritage Land Trust protects natural areas, wildlife habitat, working farms, healthy lakes and streams, and recreational land to provide a high quality of life in the Dane County region.



## Wilke Prairie Preserve Update

**The prescribed burn at Wilke Prairie Preserve. The preserve is open to the public and is located at the corner of Hwy. 113 and Easy Street just north of Waunakee. A small parking lot is located off of Hwy. 113.**

Thanks to a generous bequest from the estate of Hazel Knudson, the Wilke Prairie Preserve on Hwy. 113 just north of Waunakee has been getting a lot of management attention. Hazel Knudson, who passed away in 2004, was the original benefactor of the preserve, donating the land to the Natural Heritage Land Trust in 1994. The preserve is named in honor of her parents Franklyn and Augusta Wilke and her brother Clarence Wilke.

Last fall, Natural Resources Consulting Restorations, LLC planted the last four acres of the preserve to native prairie, and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association repaired a leak in the berm built ten years ago to restore the wetland. In early May of this year, the prairie and wetland were burned by Natural

Resources Consulting Restorations. Thanks to the burn, and to brush cutting completed in February 2006 by Taylor Conservation, LLC, today the prairie is a verdant, open landscape.

The Wilke Preserve has a new conservation neighbor. Eighty acres directly south of the preserve were purchased this spring by Dane County, as the first project under County Executive Kathleen Falk's new Land and Water Legacy Fund. The Legacy Fund was established by the County Board last year to improve water quality in the county's lakes and streams by protecting and restoring wetlands. The drained wetlands of the neighboring property will be restored and open to the public, with trails connecting to the Wilke Preserve. ■

### Avoid Deferred Income Taxes while Supporting Land Conservation

Last year Congress passed legislation creating a tax incentive for charitable donations from IRA funds. Individuals aged 70½ and older can avoid paying deferred income taxes on contributions of up to \$100,000 each year from their IRAs. This incentive will expire on December 31, 2007. To take advantage of this tax incentive and help the Natural Heritage Land Trust, call your IRA custodian.



NCSW, JACQUELYN NICH  
MARIO QUINTANA

## Afternoon at Cave of the Mounds

Hikers visit the conservation easement at Cave of the Mounds.

The Natural Heritage Land Trust held its 2007 President's Circle outing on Sunday, April 29th at the Cave of the Mounds. Old and new friends of the Land Trust gathered to tour the Cave, share in conversation, and hike savanna trails.

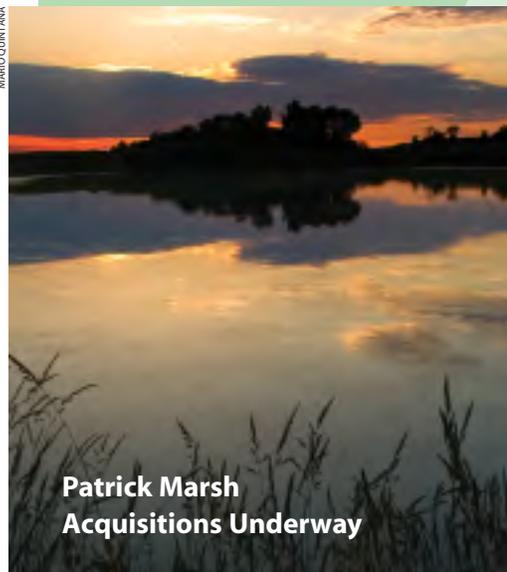
The wooded setting for the Cave is permanently protected by a conservation easement jointly held by Dane County and the Natural Heritage Land Trust. The easement preserves a quarter mile of forest along the Military Ridge State Trail and will one day provide an important link in a biking and hiking trail connecting the Military Ridge trail with Brigham County Park.

Cave of the Mounds owner Mark Rooney hosted the outing and explained how the con-

servation easement enhances the experience of visitors to the cave, which is a National Natural Landmark. General Managers Joe Klimczak and Ann Westcott expertly guided participants through the cave. After the tour, guests enjoyed refreshments and a hike to see big oaks and spring wildflowers.

Special thanks to food sponsors MoCo Market on Williamson Street and Copp's Whitney Way, and photographers John Murray Mason and Jeffrey J. Strobel.

For information about joining the Natural Heritage Land Trust's President Circle, please contact Martha Frey at 608/258-9797 or martha@nhlt.org. ■



## Patrick Marsh Acquisitions Underway

Two additions to Patrick Marsh are in the works. The Natural Heritage Land Trust is working with five landowners to purchase 72 acres of land that would be added to the wildlife area on the east side of Sun Prairie. You can help by making a tax deductible contribution to the Natural Heritage Land Trust today.

### Support Your Local Land Trust Today!

Renew your membership, or become a new member today, and help protect natural areas and agricultural lands in the Dane County region. Please fill out this form and return it to Natural Heritage Land Trust, 303 S. Paterson St., Suite 6, Madison, WI 53703.

\$35    \$60    \$100    \$250    \$500    Other \_\_\_\_\_

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*To make a credit card donation by phone, please call 608-258-9797. Contributions are tax-deductible as provided for by law.*



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: **Mary Schwoch**

Mary Schwoch is an indispensable volunteer and a longtime member of the Natural Heritage Land Trust. She serves as our membership coordinator. Martha Frey of the Land Trust interviewed Mary about her interest in conservation and her work at the Land Trust.

Q: Mary, what inspired your interest in conservation?

A: I have lived in Dane County for almost 40 years. What I liked about the area when I moved here back in the 1970's was all the nearby farmlands. For example, I would pass working farms every day on the way to and from work. Agricultural lands are disappearing all too quickly in our area.

Q: When did you become a member of the Land Trust?

A: My husband and I joined the Land Trust in 1990. We support the Land Trust's work because we want to help preserve natural areas and working farms in Dane County.

Q: What caused you to volunteer at the Land Trust?

A: I began volunteering in June 2004. I learned about the position through RSVP, the one-to-one volunteer referral agency. When I came in for an interview, I liked the staff and was impressed by their commitment to conservation.

The Natural Heritage Land Trust salutes Mary Schwoch for her 700+ hours of volunteer service in support of conservation where she lives. ■

### **Thank you!**

To Shirley Droste for preparing membership mailings.

To Mary Maher of Mary Maher Writing and Creative Concepts for donating an HP Laser Jet 1000 printer.

To Mario Quintana for donating several photographic prints of Patrick Marsh.

To Kevin St. Angel for updating and maintaining our website.

To Jeff Strobel for designing and underwriting conservation easement signs.



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