



Protecting and caring for environmentally significant land and water
in Waukesha County for future generations.

WCLC's 2019 Programs

Protecting and Caring for Land and Water

Magnifying our local and global impact

Our goal is to protect 4,000 acres of environmentally significant land in Waukesha County by 2022. We are actively negotiating with landowners to protect 250 acres of high-quality land and water, and we currently plan to close on two globally imperiled oak ecosystems by year end. To acquire these properties, we need to raise funds from private donors to match government stewardship grants, which will pay 50% of the property values.



311-year-old champion burr oak at Stone Fences Farm

Additionally, in 2019, we will invest \$350,000 in caring for our preserves using science-based, sustainable methods of land stewardship. Recently, we secured a \$75,000 grant to help restore the rare oak savanna on our new Meyer Preserve. We are actively seeking additional government grants that will **double your impact**, so these preserves don't degrade beyond repair. Part of this initiative involves engaging our community members in citizen-science restoration and monitoring activities to restore habitats and improve water quality.

Waukesha County is home to some of Earth's last remnant oak ecosystems, a native "keystone species" that supports 500+ other plant and animal species. For example, the redheaded woodpecker has experienced a 68% population decline because of habitat loss. Because oak ecosystems are globally imperiled (only 1% still thrive across the globe), protecting them is one of our top priorities. We have to act fast: just like you have to maintain a house so that it does not degrade in value, we must effectively steward our oak ecosystems before it's too late.



Left to right: rare redheaded woodpecker, white trillium, tiger salamander, skunk cabbage patch, citizen scientist Karen Freitag holding rare Blanding's turtle



LAND CONSERVANCY

2019 🌳 YEAR OF THE OAK

Thus, we have named 2019 the "year of the oak." This summer and fall, we will host tours of our oak ecosystems to help people learn how to care for these precious resources. The year will culminate in "Oaktober" Fest at Tizza and Glenn Meyer's Stone Fences Farm in Dousman, WI, on Saturday, October 5, 2019. Stone Fences Farm is home to a 311-year-old champion burr oak. Please save the date and join us!

Chief among our restoration activities is prescribed burns, which ensure that oak ecosystems can support abundant biodiversity, that they can self-sustain and self-renew, and that their structures and functions are healthy and unimpaired.

Prescribed burns are a highly effective method of removing invasive species, creating space for native seeds to germinate and grow, and recycling nutrients back into the soil.



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Nature for All

Educating and inspiring the next generation

Our new Community Conservation Partnership (CCP) program focuses on dramatically increasing and diversifying our constituent and volunteer base, enabling more young people and citizens from our underserved Latinx and African-American communities to connect with nature. To better understand the needs of and address the barriers that stand in the way of these underserved communities, we will invite them to join our committees. By making them integral to the development process, we will make our programming more inclusive and welcoming to everyone and engage more members of the community in a highly participatory way.

We believe so strongly in the need for and success of the CCP program that we are hiring a full-time education and outreach manager to lead its expansion and establish strong partnerships with local branches of community-centered nonprofits.

WCLC's experiential learning program is one of the best land trust internship programs in the state of Wisconsin. Over the past four years, over 200 interns have provided over 10,000+ hours of service, significantly increasing our capacity to protect and restore land. Interns help with high-priority projects that are directly aligned with WCLC's strategic plan, mission, and long-term goals. Our interns acquire knowledge and hands-on, field-specific experience that they can use to achieve their career goals.



Julia Robson leads a citizen science lesson for families

We're Stronger Together

Collaborating to collectively maximize our impact



Future scientist Lucia Martinez observing wetland ecosystems

A critical component of the CCP program is creating a strategic alliance of conservation and environmental education organizations so that we can function as one highly skilled entity, eliminate duplicate efforts, and share valuable resources. We've established an extremely strong partnership with Waukesha County Parks (WCP), with whom we are sharing volunteers. Julia Robson, WCP conservation biologist, is training volunteers who effectively contribute to our citizen-science and stewardship initiatives.

We also have a volunteer base of 250+ people from the local community who broadly range in age and background. Our volunteers not only help us achieve our conservation and stewardship outcomes but help us run other aspects of the organization including finance, information technology, education, sales and marketing, and development.

Additionally, we're actively partnering with Tall Pines Conservancy to conserve land and developing an adopt-a-site program for Hartland Marsh with the Ice Age Trail Alliance and the City of Hartland. We're also currently partnering with Carroll University, the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Wisconsin Hero Outdoors—a nonprofit that serves veterans and their families, and The Nature Conservancy.