

Reflections on 2021 & Predictions for Next Year

by SUSAN BUCHANAN, TPC Executive Director

Thus far 2021 has been an incredibly busy and very productive year for all of us at Tall Pines. COVID presented many formidable challenges for us to creatively navigate. These include producing our very first virtual fundraising event (featuring Michael Perry) in February; holding constant Zoom meetings (for just about everything); hosting four events in less than two months (so they could be held outside); and physically serving food for the Ride to the Barns after party through doors!

PLUS, our staff has also been managing four considerably complex land protection projects (totaling 1000 acres) that are both exciting and incredibly challenging. In other words, we've been up to our eyeballs in work! With that said, I am so pleased to report that due to our resiliency and dedication – and YOUR unwavering support – we have survived seeing ourselves on Zoom (too many times), wearing masks constantly, serving food at our events with masks, gloves and tongs, hand sanitizer everywhere, staying our distance, and providing as much virtual support to land-owners as we can to make these projects happen!

(continued on PAGE 2)

Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park

FOSTERING OUR COMMUNITY... *By Working Together to Provide No-Cost, Passive Recreation Opportunities*

At Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park, you and your entire family can renew your mind, body and spirit!

Take a contemplative journey along our Healing Nature Trail, travel to a scenic overlook atop the second-highest spot in all of Waukesha County, identify native plants, birds and other wild-life – and hike along a path that will connect you to the larger Ice Age Trail system. It's all here in one convenient location.

Isn't It Time You Paid a Visit?

ORCP is located at W307N8280 Laskin Road in the Town of Merton.

There's a paved parking lot near the entrance – and signs to direct you to the various park features. You can also watch a video and download a map and

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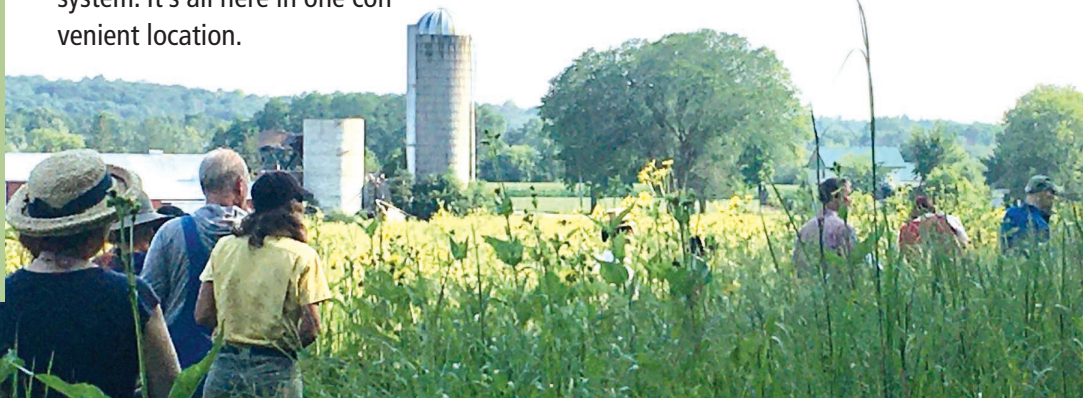
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**Join Tall Pines
Conservancy!**

Get involved and join TPC today.
Visit www.tallpinesconservancy.org
or call 262-369-0500.



Reflections on 2021 & Predictions for Next Year... (from PAGE 1)

Take that and add a second powerful punch from Delta, and we're all hoping that 2022 is a much easier year in which to do our important work.

We are super excited to be working on the four permanent protection projects previously mentioned. They include the donation of a conservation easement and fee acquisition of 2 farms in the Village of Waukesha totaling 300 acres; the donation of a conservation easement on a 550+ acre farm in Neosho; and the purchase of development rights and a conservation easement on 100 acres of farmland just off of Beaver Lake. It is our plan to close on these projects by the end of 2021. In 2022 we have already dressed our plate with more donations of easements on 2 farms – one in the Town of Oconomowoc and the other in the Town of Ashippun totaling approximately 300 acres. And, that's just the beginning of 2022! If all goes well, we should reach our goal of 2500 more acres PERMANENTLY protected by 2025!

It's Not Just All About Acres

It's also about our important work in the watershed through our productive partnerships with the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program that has coordinated over 1200-acres of fall cover crops together with Farmers for Lake Country, completed two projects protecting lake water quality, and is planning two major stream restoration projects. Our partner Lake Country Clean Waters brings important information on issues directly effecting our lakes. Together we are accomplishing so much to keep the rural character in Lake Country that we all cherish so much – and we couldn't do it without your support. So please know that your annual gift DOES make a difference!

In this newsletter, you'll find stories from Development Manager, Beth Hoefer-Jezo, about how your support allows TPC and its partners to continue fostering our community through a variety of projects, events and initiatives. Plus, you will get a first-hand account of how serving as a rest stop host for Ride to the Barns encouraged one family to pursue a conservation easement with Tall Pines. Enjoy! ▲

Thank you,



TPC, Executive Director



Sustainability Fair

FOSTERING OUR COMMUNITY... *By Serving as a Resource at Local Partner Events such as the Waukesha County Green Team's Sustainability Fair*

TPC and the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program often team up to host informational tents at outdoor events. This year, in addition to the Sustainability Fair, we were invited to participate in Pewaukee's Lake Country Clean



Darrell Smith, OWPP, and Chris Gutschenritter, TPC at the Green Team's Sustainability Fair at Retzer Nature Center.

Water Festival, Richfield Historical Society's Thresheree and the Waukesha County Land Conservancy's Oktoberfest. We love the chance to talk about upcoming events and share program updates, but we especially enjoy answering questions from attendees on how they can help make a difference in improving our local land and waterways – from how to address fallen trees to the type of plants best suited for a shoreline restoration project. Didn't catch us at one of these events? Please e-mail info@tallpinesconservancy.org or call 262-369-0500 with any questions. ▲

Healthy Lakes Conference & Farmers for Lake Country Meeting

FOSTERING OUR COMMUNITY... *By Connecting People Who are Committed to Improving Our Local Land and Water Quality Resources*

For the past six years, TPC and OWPP have partnered with Lake Country Clean Waters in presenting the Annual Healthy Lakes Conference. Usually, this event occurs in June, but after a successful (though virtual) event in 2020 and a series of online quarterly meetings, we were committed to meeting "live" in 2021. So, just like many local events, we moved our conference to September. Online communications have been an important tool for keeping connected over the past 16-plus months, but sitting in front of a screen is too often a one-sided conversation.

"I am so happy we were able to come together to celebrate the importance of our waters. It was inspiring to see residents of a variety of lakes networking, communicating, and having important discussions about the happenings on each of their waterbodies. This is where the real problem-solving begins."
—Brad Steckart, LCCW



Nate Rice accepts the 2021 Lake Country Clean Waters Lake Recognition Award from Brad Steckart at the 2021 Healthy Lakes Conference, which was held on September 17. Approximately 50 people representing 25 organizations were in attendance.

Wayne Fredericks, a farmer from Osage, Iowa, spoke to a joint meeting of Farmers for Lake Country and Waukesha County Farmers for Clean Water on Wednesday, August 11th at the City of Oconomowoc Community Center (below). Wayne presented his experiences with no till, strip till and cover crops on his 750-acre farm in northern Iowa. Wayne has documented how the organic matter of his soil has improved

over 20 years, mostly from reducing soil disturbance and having a living plant growing year-round through the use of cover crops. More recently, he has begun "planting green," seeding into a growing cover crop and maximizing the soil protection and soil health benefits. Wayne has seen yield volatility level out, making for a more predictable and resilient farm crop, all while meeting or exceeding average yields in his county. ▲

Wayne makes a strong case for conservation-minded farming in the Upper Midwest and is an inspiring example of practices that can be adopted here. Wayne has kept meticulous data and believes his conservation farming methods have resulted in soil changes that hold real dollar value to the farmer, while also benefiting water quality."

—Darrell Smith, FFLC

Dr. Kris Wright gave the event's keynote speech – "The Way Water Works!" Dr. Wright offered an entertaining overview of the intricacies beneath the hulls of our boats and around our waders by providing a base knowledge of water and the lakes, rivers, and streams we cherish in Wisconsin. Other programming included sharing the results of a Starry Stonewort Efficacy Study and efforts in Wisconsin to address this emerging invasive species within our waterways. A highlight of the session was a presentation on the Drone-Based Wave Study commissioned by the North Lake Management District.





13th Annual 2021 Ride to the Barns

What is Ride to the Barns? For some, it's simply an awesome opportunity to gather together with friends and enjoy delicious local food and beer while taking on the challenges of pedaling some pretty monumental hills. Many riders, particularly those who have supported the event for two, three or even ten or more years, also view the ride as a unique chance to reconnect with our hosts – farm families who have worked the land for generations. In hearing their stories, these riders have gained a growing understanding of the importance of protecting land for both recreation AND sustainable local food production – while recognizing the development and other pressures local producers face. Whatever reasons you ride – for fun, for the food, for bragging rights, to see old friends and meet new ones – you and the other 500+ enthusiasts who joined you in 2021 are making a difference in protecting local farmland. And for that, we say THANK YOU! ▲

**Save the date for 2022!
Our 14th Annual Ride to the Barns is Saturday, August 13th!**

A Favorite Host Shares His Story on Ride to the Barns & the Importance of Farmland Conservation

by GEORGE MONIS, Monis Farm

It was through two mutual friends, farmer Kyle Zwieg and writer Michael Perry, that we met Susan Buchanan from Tall Pines Conservancy and learned of the organization's mission to preserve farmland.

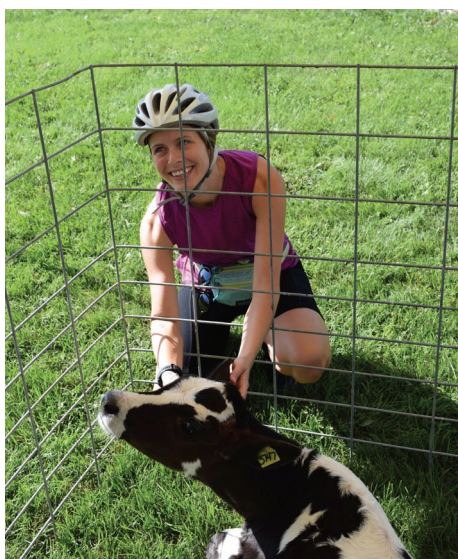
That was in 2011, when the Zwieg Family hosted the TPC Fall Harvest. The following year, in 2012, we hosted our first Tall Pines Ride to the Barns rest stop and our relationship with this event has continued to this day. It's something that our family looks forward to each year – and even during last year's DIY ride we found opportunities to connect with the riders.

Having lived on our family farm for almost 175 years, the idea of land preservation and stewardship is close to our "hearts." Seeing farmland disappear at alarming rates, it is imperative that we recognize the importance of our land. Recently, 80 acres of farmland in Iowa sold for \$22,500.00 per acre! That shows how valued farmland has become.

Close to home, the mission of Tall Pines has become more important daily as development pressures have increased. Loving the land and what it means to us is more important than the almighty dollar. We hope that our children and their descendants will always appreciate the land that our ancestor purchased in 1867. We're excited to announce that, In the very near future, our land will become protected forever through Tall Pines Conservancy! ▲



George and Elaine Monis are ready to greet riders as they stand next to one of their prized tractors.



SAVE THE DATE!

14TH ANNUAL

Ride to the Barns

AUGUST 13TH 2022

**A FUNDRAISING
EVENT TO BENEFIT
LAND CONSERVATION**

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CONSERVANCY**

**PRESERVE
where
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A UNIQUE
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AND GIVE A
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**GIFT CERTIFICATES
AVAILABLE AT:
tallpinesconservancy.org**

Q&A with TPC Board Member Nancy Bonniwell

How & Why Did You First Become Involved with TPC?

My first experience with Tall Pines Conservancy was a meeting with Charlie Brumder, a long-standing champion of TPC, and Susan Buchanan, the Executive Director. Charlie was a friend, and we had worked on some projects in other endeavors in the past. TPC had a need for an attorney and for someone who could provide guidance on legacy and estate planning to our organization. I fit the bill, accepted the request, and was elected as a new member on the board of directors.

Becoming involved in TPC took me back to my many visits as a child to the 100-acre farm on Monches Road in Colgate that my Great-Uncle Barney and Great-Aunt Rose, along with their son Jim, farmed for most of their lives. My four sisters and I visited the farm often and we were so proud that a cow was named after each of us! The only part of the farm that we were not allowed to visit was the corner of the barn where the bull lived. When I joined Tall Pines, I really felt that I was doing a small part to preserve the farms in the area that so easily could disappear.



What is Your Most Memorable Experience as a Volunteer for Ride to the Barns?

With the support of my law firm, von Briesen & Roper, s.c., I helped to sponsor a rest stop on Ride to the Barns. I have had the good fortune to volunteer at the Zwieg farm along with Kyle, Rachel, Kyle's parents Joe and Lisa, and his grandmother, Shirley. Although I was so happy that our riders truly enjoyed the beautiful setting and great food, the high point for me was the participation in the day's activities by the three future farmers, Kyle and Rachel's sons, Theodore (age 6), Logan, and Landon (both age 4). These very young men greeted the riders with enthusiasm and rode their little

(continued on PAGE 7)

Thank You to All Our Sponsors, Partners & Rest Stop Hosts

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REST STOP HOSTS:

Catholic Ecology Center
Pam & Paul Conway

Gagliano Farm
Koepeke Family Farms

Mayer Family Farm
Monis Family Farm

Quad
Zwieg Maple Acres

Eschweiler Event

FOSTERING OUR COMMUNITY... *By Recognizing the Contributions of Those Who Protect Our Precious Local Resources*

It was a typically warm late July evening, but lake breezes and the natural canopy offered by majestic trees resulted in the ideal atmosphere for the tour and cocktail reception hosted by Liesel Eschweiler Lavery at her ancestral property in Chenequa.

Stewardship Society members and other special guests were able to experience this one-of-a-kind wildlife habitat, which features a unique isthmus between Cornell and North lakes with stunning views of Lake Country. The easement property's remote location, which one guest likened to being in the Northwoods, often conceals this hidden jewel



Mike Carlson, Executive Director of Gathering Waters, presents "The 2021 Rod Nilsestuen Award for Working Lands Preservation" to John Gehl. Pictured left to right are: Michael Gehl, John Gehl and Mike Carlson of Gathering Waters, JoJo Gehl Newman and Lori Gehl Ferris.

from the general public. In fact, there is no real opportunity for Tall Pines Conservancy to identify the property by installing an easement sign. However, Liesel's extensive restoration work over the past 15 years, including the ongoing removal of buckthorn, controlled burning of the understory, grazing the property



Liesel Eschweiler Lavery shares a history of her ancestral property.

with goats, and planting native plants, is very significant in cultivating a rich bird habitat, encouraging oak ecosystems and improving water quality.

We hope her diligence inspired others to tackle invasives and promote native plants on their own properties.

OCONOMOWOC WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays
9am-1pm
November 6, 2021—March 26, 2022
(No market on November 27,
December 25 and January 1)
Park Lawn Elementary
300 Parklawn Street, Oconomowoc

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The evening concluded with Mike Carlson of Gathering Waters presenting "The 2021 Rod Nilsestuen Award for Working Lands" to John Gehl.

The remarks below were received in his nomination letter by TPC Land Conservation Manager, Chris Gutschenritter. ▲

"John's lifetime dedication to preserving working lands across Wisconsin, and especially in Southeastern Wisconsin, is evidenced not only by the increasing number of working farms proudly bearing the Faye Gehl Conservation Foundation signage throughout our community, but also by John's constant pursuit to be a better steward of these working lands. John's personal and organizational interest in the health and regeneration of our working lands is as impressive as it is inspiring."

—Chris Gutschenritter, TPC Land Conservation Manager

OWPP Paddle

FOSTERING OUR COMMUNITY... *Through Recreation Opportunities That Bring People Together to Share in the Wonders of Water as a Resource*

Typically, the OWPP paddle highlights one body of water within the watershed. This year's route was unique in that it followed the pathway of water that the Oconomowoc River takes through the lakes – from Okauchee Lake to Oconomowoc Lake to Fowler Lake. People of all skill levels were encouraged to participate – and options for a more leisurely loop within Okauchee Lake, as well as time for fast paddlers to explore Fowler Lake – were offered.

Along the way, 70-plus paddlers competed in a scavenger hunt, a trivia contest and searched to locate and remove the most unusual garbage. The winner found all the pieces of a broken ceramic plate! The diverse collection of retrieved items also included the bottom of a children's pool.

"My wife Lynn and I often travel the same waterways and over the years we've removed our fair share of garbage. It's now gotten to the point where there is nothing left to collect! These small clean-up efforts, over time, do make a big difference."

—Tom Steinbach, OWPP

Watch for details coming soon for our river clean up in 2022! ▲

Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park... (from PAGE 1)



An aerial view of the Labyrinth at the entrance to the Healing Nature Trail at ORCP.

additional information by visiting our website at <https://tallpinesconservancy.org/oconomowoc-river-conservancy-park>

Special thanks to our partners: Town of Merton, OWPP, Waukesha County, Buchanan Foundation, Kettle Moraine Garden Club, Healing Nature Center, Halquist Stone.

Did You Know?

Passive parks actually BENEFIT local ecosystems because they place very little stress on a site's natural resources. That means you can explore the ORCP guilt-free, knowing that the work TPC and its partners are doing to complete the park's master plan is directly in line with our commitment to protecting local land and water resources. ▲

Q&A with Board Member Nancy Bonniwell... (from PAGE 5)

bikes along the Zwieg driveway with the big riders. It truly was a family affair at the farm and everyone enjoyed the festivities.

What Accomplishments are You Most Proud of During Your Tenure as President?

During my tenure as president of TPC, I'm so pleased that the new members we have welcomed to the board have come to us with fresh ideas, have worked hard, and have embraced the mission of Tall Pines. Even more impressive is how the dedication of the TPC staff, Susan, Beth and Chris, has caused our organization to grow and move forward with our current and potential acquisitions, projects, and events.

Through the efforts of the TPC team, we've added more preserved land and placed more streams and lakes under the protective umbrella of Tall Pines. We keep moving forward with opportunities to preserve and protect our community in perpetuity.

Where Do You see Tall Pines as an Organization in the Next 3 to 5 Years?

I see a good future for Tall Pines. Our partners in preservation will increase, as well as the amount of land and waterways we will be able to protect. Our work in conjunction with other conservation nonprofits will continue to grow to make a better environment for us and for future generations. ▲

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SAVE THE DATE!

January 1, 2022

Lapham Peak Unit,
Kettle Moraine State Forest
Nature walk, cross country
skiing, downhill skiing and more!

Watch TPC's website & monthly
e-mails for more information.

Your Support is Critical to Our Success.

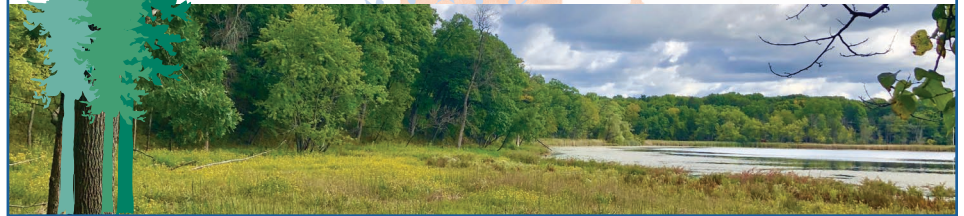
Thanks to you and your continued support, Tall Pines Conservancy is able to offer **real solutions** for saving valuable farmland and protecting the integrity of our **rural landscape** while **improving the water quality** of our lakes and rivers we ALL enjoy.

Your donation to our Annual Appeal is necessary for us to continue our important work.

Please make your year-end contribution using the enclosed envelope.

Prefer the convenience of donating by credit card?

You have the option to provide your donation to Tall Pines Conservancy with a one-time online donation or through a monthly giving program. You can arrange for a recurring monthly contribution of support through your credit card. Your credit card will be charged the amount you indicate on a monthly basis. Simply visit tallpinesconservancy.org and click on the green donate button. Thank you! ▲



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