



## Claudeen McAuliffe Shares Her Land Conservancy Journey

by CLAUDEEN MCAULIFFE, TPC Conservation Easement Donor

**This past quarter century began on a sunny spring afternoon in May, 1997, when I fished a discarded real estate newspaper section out of the trash. A photo caught my eye.** Sitting on a snowy hillside, it looked like a Swiss chalet. Since I didn't feel much like working anyway, I called the number in the ad. The property is still available. The dogs and I jumped in the car and drove out to Dodge County.

There was lots of farmland, yet there seemed to be no trees here. But as I reached the apparent tree line on the crest of the hill, I looked with wonder on a wooded acreage that sloped down to the Rubicon River. The tree line was only the edge of that expanse.

The seller greeted us warmly and invited us to walk the property. The dogs and I slowly wandered among the trees. Formerly a cow pasture, and part of the surrounding 500+ acre working farm, the land was brushy with an abundance



Nancy Bonniwell, Claudeen McAuliffe and Susan Buchanan.

of buckthorn, gooseberries, honeysuckle, and other prickly invasives. But towering above the thickets were a good number of very old oaks, maples, hackberries, and what I much later learned were basswoods. "Mother trees," trying to maintain the integrity of a tiny patch of southern mesic forest that established itself at the end of the last glaciation. I could live here!

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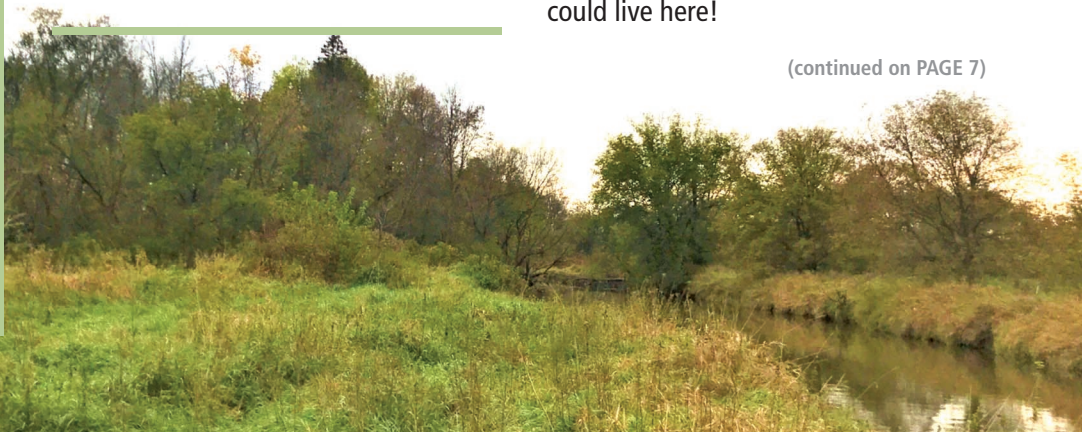


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Conservancy!**

Get involved and join TPC today.  
Visit [www.tallpinesconservancy.org](http://www.tallpinesconservancy.org)  
or call 262-369-0500.

*"When I met Claudeen years ago, it was clear that she was a special person who was committed to protecting her slice of nature's wonderment for future generations. I am thrilled that TPC could help her achieve her goal!"*

—Susan Buchanan,  
*Executive Director*



## The New Year Brought Changes to Our TPC Board and Staff

**John Koepke has been named President of the Tall Pines Board of Directors. He is a 5th-generation dairy farmer and co-owner of Koepke Family Farms of Oconomowoc.** In addition to serving on the Tall Pines Board, John is also a member of the Town of Oconomowoc board and a past recipient of the prestigious Aldo Leopold Award. The Leopold Conservation Award Program recognizes agricultural landowners actively committed to a land ethic.

John succeeds Nancy Bonniwell who will remain on the board as well as serve on the TPC Executive Committee. Nancy did an exceptional job leading the organization as we acquired several new conservation easements (including Dukelow Farm – our largest to date) as well as successfully navigating the challenges of COVID. Thank you, Nancy!

Current board member Kyle Zwieg has been elected Vice President of the Tall Pines Board of Directors. He is a 7th-generation farmer and co-owner of Zwieg Maple Acres of Ashippun. Kyle and his wife Rachel are the recent recipients of the Wisconsin Jaycees' Outstanding Young Farmer Award and are now in the running for the national award.

Alan Scrivner is the newest member of our Board of Directors. He is a self-employed consulting engineer who together with his wife Linda own and live on a 350-acre property they have named Wetland Woods Farm. For the last 15 years, they have been working to return the wetlands and the woods to their native state and to remove invasives.

Board members Troy Giles, who was an integral member of the Conservation Committee, and Jeanna Schwinn, who served on our Outreach Committee and as a strong advocate for Ride to the Barns, have completed their terms on the board. Thank you, Troy and Jeanna, for your service to Tall Pines!

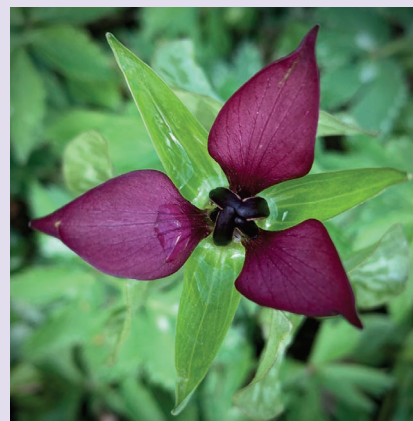
Chris Gutschenritter has been named Director of Land Protection & Stewardship. Chris is an attorney specializing in environmental law and has worked for Tall Pines in varying capacities for the past 6 years. He is a contributing author of the Model Conservation Easement for the State of Wisconsin and is a certified farmland succession planner.

Beth Hoefer-Jezo has been named Director of Development & Outreach. She has been with Tall Pines since 2013 and is responsible for leading the organization's marketing, communications, fundraising and event management initiatives, as well as meeting the standards of the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation program. ▲



*We welcome, Alan Scrivner, our newest TPC Board of Directors member.*

## ARTservancy



**ARTservancy began in September of 2018 and has now grown to include partnerships with five conservation organizations within southeastern Wisconsin.** Tall Pines Conservancy was delighted to host photographer Frankie Garr, whose residency focused on Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park, Kopeke Farm, Serenity Farm and Camp Quad.

In this program, artist residents create a body of artwork inspired by the property they have selected, culminating in a month-long exhibition at Gallery 224 in Port Washington. Programming is offered throughout their residency year, include an ongoing blog featuring the artist on A Wealth of Nature, on-site tours, performances, workshops and demonstrations. Frankie's exhibit will be featured during the month of July, with an artist reception held at the gallery on July 9th.

ARTservancy encourages collaborations with community partners to highlight access and give permission to create in natural spaces, breaking down the gates of a metaphorical Walled Garden. ARTservancy's mission is to protect and establish empathetic roles in these spaces, while advocating for equal, safe and innovative artwork. Visit [gallery224.org](http://gallery224.org) for more info. ▲



# A Model Example of Quiet Leadership

## Dukelow Family Donates Largest Conservation Easement in TPC's History

by CHRIS GUTSCHENRITTER, Director of Land Protection & Stewardship

Since the early 1970s, the Dukelow family has demonstrated a commitment to sustainable agriculture as a craft and a way of life. Over the years, the three brothers have dedicated the floodplains of the Rubicon River to permanent cover where other farmers may have tilled in these areas in favor of high yields promised by the rich soils. Similarly, they maintain over 300 acres of otherwise prime agricultural land in upland hardwood forest to provide wildlife habitat and ecosystem services immediately adjacent to over 200 acres of prime farmland. In the face of the unstable agricultural economics, the Dukelows recommitted time and again to achieving financial stability without compromising their commitment to the land and water.

Model Easement offers farm families an example of perpetual land conservation tailored precisely to the landscape it serves to protect. Using multiple management zones, the Dukelow Dairy Farm Conservation Easement permanently protects the buffers, riparian zones, upland and floodplain forests, and highly erodible lands, while also ensuring that the land best suited for agriculture will forever remain available for production.

The easement goes further by creating two management zones where improvements necessary to adapt and grow an agricultural enterprise are permitted to be constructed. These two management zones overlay areas on the farm where the Dukelows have already



to address land access barriers for new and underserved farmers. With soaring land prices, the Dukelows are keenly aware that a next generation farmer would likely not be able to afford the entire 540-acre farm but would have a better chance at affording a smaller number of acres.

In donating their thoughtfully crafted conservation easement, the Dukelow family recommitted to the agricultural craft and way of life. Their donation secures an agricultural and conservation legacy for their family, their land and their community in a way that is sure to withstand the tests of time. Tall Pines Conservancy is grateful to the Dukelow family for their quiet leadership, innovative thinking and ongoing partnership helping us to achieve our conservation objectives and securing a place for agriculture for generations to come.

If you would like to learn more about this project or the Wisconsin Model Easement, or if you are interested in being a part of securing an agricultural



*Chris Gutschenritter, Joe Dukelow, Dave Dukelow, Bill Dukelow and Susan Buchanan.*

As early adopters of conservation practices, including maintaining organic certification for nearly 30 years, the family has set a steadfast example. It is perhaps natural, then, that the Dukelow farm is among the first to be protected in perpetuity by the new Wisconsin Model Conservation Easement. The WI

developed agricultural infrastructure and may serve as the nerve center for two separate farms in the future, should the Dukelows choose to exercise a reserved right to split the farm into two smaller farms. The family's decision to reserve this right and include these two areas of development was rooted in their desire

(continued on PAGE 6)



## Owl Prowl Returns!

Saturday, May 21st • 7pm-9pm

TPC is delighted to continue our partnership with the Catholic Ecology Center and Wanakia Wildlife through the return of this popular event.

Bring your family and friends and learn all about our amazing owls up close and personal! Wanakia Wildlife will be showcasing their educational animals, which are sure to delight. After the program, join us on a twilight owl prowling hike to call for several species of owl. The evening will conclude with a bonfire and smores.



This year's Prowl will be hosted the evening of May 21st at the Catholic Ecology Center, a nearly 60-acre property located in Neosho. Part of a 225-acre preserve complex, the landscape features diverse habitats that include prairies, forests, the Rubicon River, Otter Creek and organic gardening areas. For many years, this environmentally important property served as Girl Scout Camp Winding River.

Advance registration is required. For more information, please visit [catholicecologycenter.org/events](http://catholicecologycenter.org/events). Members of Tall Pines Conservancy and the Catholic Ecology Center receive a discount at time of registration. ▲

## Lake Country Clean Waters' Annual Healthy Lakes Conference

Friday, June 3rd • 9am-3pm

Lake Country Clean Waters' Annual Healthy Lakes Conference is a place for members from different Lake and River organizations to come together to learn from a variety of experts, share ideas, network with each other, and enjoy our local waterways together. This year's conference will be held on Friday, June 3rd from 9am–3pm at the Oconomowoc Community Center and is being presented in partnership with Tall Pines Conservancy and the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program through the support of Gallagher Lake Country Real Estate.

Registration and additional information is available now by visiting the LCCW website at [lakecountrycleanwaters.org](http://lakecountrycleanwaters.org). ▲



## 8th Annual OWPP Paddle

Saturday, July 9th • 9am

Join OWPP and TPC for a fun and functional morning as we paddle and clean up the Oconomowoc River. We will be traveling downstream from the Wisconsin Avenue Boat Launch in the Village of Oconomowoc Lake. As we paddle, we'll gather any trash we find or if you'd rather, simply come along for the ride! This is an ideal project for families, student groups or anyone who is interested in helping to



improve the water quality of the river. Around 12:00pm, we'll gather back at the launch for unloading and a free lunch – and we'll award a prize for the most unusual item rescued from the water!

### Don't Have a Canoe or Kayak?


Rentals are available through KT Kayak, Clear Water Outdoor, Paddleboard Specialists and Sherpers. (Please contact them directly to make arrangements.)

Your registration ensures we have enough food and supplies for everyone. Please visit the event page at [oconomowocwatershed.org](http://oconomowocwatershed.org) for the link. ▲



**TALL PINES CONSERVANCY**

**14TH ANNUAL**  
**Ride to the Barns**  
**AUGUST 13TH, 2022**  
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Registration thru August 8<sup>th</sup>: \$75\*  
 August 9<sup>th</sup> & after: \$95\*  
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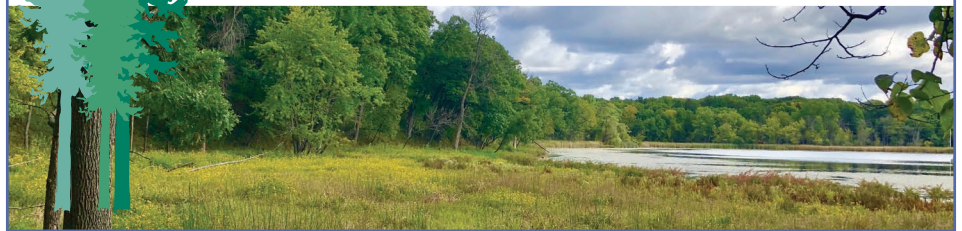
**Register online at:**  
[tallpinesconservancy.org](https://tallpinesconservancy.org)  
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[info@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:info@tallpinesconservancy.org)

\*Tall Pines Conservancy is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Registration is a tax deductible donation.

## Your Support is Critical to Our Success.

In 2021, nearly 700 acres were permanently protected in the greater Lake Country region because of your support. And, your continued contributions to Tall Pines Conservancy will save more valuable land and protect the integrity of our rural landscape – while improving the water quality of our lakes and rivers. These critical conservation projects would not happen without you. **And for that we say Thank You!**

Please use the enclosed envelope or visit [tallpinesconservancy.org](https://tallpinesconservancy.org) to make a tax-deductible donation. ▲



Back in 2020, when it seemed that everything went virtual, our Ride to the Barns silent auction was moved online. And it proved so successful that we decided to keep it virtual moving forward! Hosting this fundraiser online allows everyone (not just our fabulous riders) the opportunity to bid on interesting items – like restaurant gift certificates, theater tickets, clothing and more – from the comfort of their own homes! This year's dates are July 7-18. Look for the link on our home page. And remember to bid high and bid often.

**STARTS**  
**July 7**

**Silent**  
**Ride to the Barns**  
**ONLINE AUCTION**

Interested in donating to the auction? Contact Beth at 262-369-0500 or email [beth@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:beth@tallpinesconservancy.org). ▲

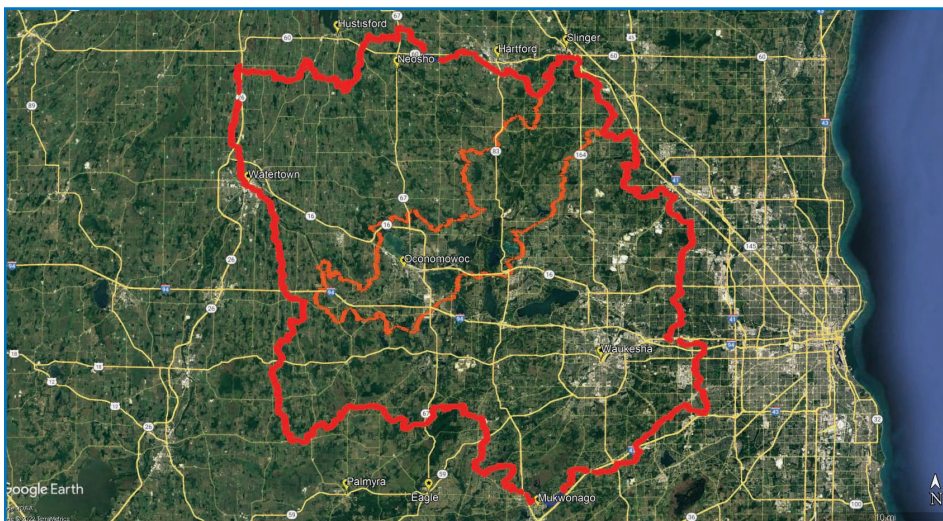
**ENDS**  
**July 18**

### Thank You to Our Sponsors



### Thank You to Our Partners





## Farmers for Lake Country Announces Recent Expansion

Will Now Cover 5x Its Original Geographic Territory!

by BETH HOEFER-JEZO, Director of Outreach & Development

**Farmers for Lake Country has been working in the Oconomowoc River watershed since 2016, sharing information and resources about farming practices that promote water quality and soil health.** Farmers have also benefited from cost share funding for conservation practices with financial support from the OWPP as well as grant sources. These efforts have helped to reduce the phosphorus load in the River by approximately 2400 pounds per year, which by conservative estimates reduces algae growth by more than 1,000,000 pounds!

However, until recently, this financial support has been limited to the 49-mile watershed, which consists of approximately 83,000 acres.

Thanks to additional funding from the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), as well as Tall Pines Conservancy and other private funders, Farmers for Lake Country will be dramatically increasing its footprint into additional watersheds -including the Ashippun River, Bark River, Pewaukee River and parts of the Fox River. The expanded area stretches south to Mukwonago, west to Watertown, and north to Hustisford and Hartford.

As a result of this expansion, many more farms (within a new territory of 450,571 acres!) will now be eligible for cost share funding for water friendly practices such as cover crops, no tilling, and planting green into living cover. We look forward to sharing the positive environmental impact these initiatives will generate.

Moving forward, Darrell Smith will continue to oversee the original OWPP territory, while TPC's Chris Gutschenritter will assist farmers within the expansion area. If you'd like more information about Farmers for Lake Country, please contact Darrell Smith at 414-313-4323. Anyone, regardless of geography, is welcome to attend meetings held by Farmers for Lake Country, as the group seeks to expand its impact. Visit [farmersforlakecountry.org](http://farmersforlakecountry.org) for more information. ▲

## A Model Example of Quiet Leadership... (from PAGE 3)

and conservation legacy for our community by protecting your land, please don't hesitate to email us at [info@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:info@tallpinesconservancy.org).

### What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified organization, such as TPC, that restricts certain uses of the land to protect natural resources, including agriculture, from development.

Land subject to an easement remains privately owned and allows the landowner to farm, educate, recreate and live on that land in such a way that sustains its resources. An easement runs with the land even with a change of ownership, so while owners may come and go, TPC's partnership and commitment to preserve the conservation values unique to that property will always remain.

### How is My Financial Support Important Even When an Easement or Property is Donated?

There are numerous legal, real estate documentation and other fees (as well as staff time) associated with completing a conservation easement and your contribution covers those expenses. Your donation also enables Tall Pines to remain an active partner with the Dukelow family to ensure the maintenance and monitoring of this conservation easement now and for future generations.

To donate, please use the enclosed envelope or visit [tallpinesconservancy.org](http://tallpinesconservancy.org). ▲



## McAuliffe Shares Her Land Conservancy Journey...

(from PAGE 1)

I had a feeling. The river, the trees, the floodplain – and there were creatures who depended on the patch of woods, and the wetland and river. The feeling involved a sense of place, a need to give back, and . . . a vision of what could be. I recall a specific sentiment that I've never forgotten: a commitment to all the living things that depended on this small slice of real estate for their existence and the survival of their species. I made a promise to protect their home in perpetuity.



The reality of buying this property started with emptying my wallet of about \$50, the earnest money, and a fair bit of loot 25 years ago. Over the next two months I lost sleep over taking on a dual mortgage until my current home was sold. My parents laid a heavy guilt trip on me because the move would put more distance between us than they were comfortable with. My boyfriend just rolled his eyes. And unimagined reserves of blood, sweat, and tears have continued to be lost (or perhaps invested) over the years pulling out gooseberries by the roots.

From time to time I would think of that commitment to preservation. As time

passed it became more of a priority. Rock River Coalition needed volunteer stream monitors. Through my work for this group and a neighbor, I learned about Tall Pines. Over the next 5 years I continued to pull gooseberries, cut prickly ash and honeysuckle, and plant trees. But now the priority shifted from nice to important. I needed to become more active in advocating for this land to agencies that I knew could help me protect it.

I don't recall if I reached out to Chris Gutschenritter or he to me about 2 years ago. I shared my story and how I needed help to realize my preservation goals.

His enthusiasm and commitment to conservation renewed my resolve, and I immersed myself in my little patch of scrubby woods. I made some amazing discoveries.

One of the criteria to justify the establishment of a conservation easement was a botanical inventory. While I'd become aware of the diverse plant community amongst the more mundane buckthorn and other invasives, I hadn't really given them my full attention, and had never taken the time to identify species whose names I didn't know. I figured I had the responsibility to identify my botanical neighbors. Chris had tried to get an inventory from an

actual botanist earlier in the process, but scheduling issues prevented that, so, like I often do, I did it myself. Reference book in hand, I started identifying plants. When I was done, the result included numerous species of native trees, shrubs, vines, perennials and ephemerals. My most astounding discovery was learning that this botanical assortment characterized a woodland designation known as "southern mesic hardwood forest" which colonized parts of southeastern Wisconsin following the last glaciation. Key indicator species of this forest type: basswood and sugar maple.

I turned the inventory over to Chris who treated it like solid gold. He and the Tall Pines team accelerated the easement process and on December 30, 2021, Susan, Nancy, Beth, and I, with Chris on the phone, sat down together in the TPC conference room and finalized the easement. I was unprepared for the sense of joy and fulfillment this gave me. And to think it all started with a discarded newspaper . . .

But this is not the end of the story. This resource, while secure, needs management. That plan is in process, and gentle feelers are going out to like-minded friends and acquaintances who may help with this considerable management and restoration process. Stay tuned!

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## **OCONOMOWOC FARMERS MARKET**

Every Saturday

May through October • 8a–12p

Bank Five Nine Campus Lot

155 W. Wisconsin Avenue

[oconomowoc.org](http://oconomowoc.org)

## **LIVE OWL PROGRAM & OWL PROWL**

Saturday, May 21

Catholic Ecology Center

W1468 County Road NN • Neosho

[catholicecologycenter.org/events](http://catholicecologycenter.org/events)



## **7TH ANNUAL LCCW HEALTHY LAKES CONFERENCE**

Friday, June 3

Oconomowoc Community Center

220 W. Wisconsin Avenue

[lakecountrycleanwaters.org](http://lakecountrycleanwaters.org)

## **11TH ANNUAL LAKE COUNTRY CLEAN WATER FESTIVAL**

Saturday, June 25

Lakefront Park

222 W. Wisconsin Avenue • Pewaukee

[cleanwaterfestival.com](http://cleanwaterfestival.com)

## **RIDE TO THE BARNS SILENT AUCTION – ONLINE!**

July 7–18

[tallpinesconservancy.org](http://tallpinesconservancy.org)



## **8TH ANNUAL OCONOMOWOC WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM PADDLE EVENT & RIVER CLEAN-UP**

Saturday, July 9

[oconomowocwatershed.com](http://oconomowocwatershed.com)

## **ARTSERVANCY ARTISTS RECEPTION WITH FRANKIE SUZANNE GARR**

Saturday, July 9

Gallery 224

303 N Franklin Street • Port Washington

[gallery224.org](http://gallery224.org)

## **14TH ANNUAL RIDE TO THE BARNS**

Saturday, August 13

Camp Quad

6886 Hwy. Q • Hartford

[tallpinesconservancy.org](http://tallpinesconservancy.org)



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