

Ravensholme on the River – The Epicenter for Saving the Planet

by ANITA RANSOME-KUCHLER

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Join Tall Pines
Conservancy!

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

My parents, Ralph and Dorothy Ransome, and I lived in Chicago, Illinois. While I was growing up there, I heard my mother's stories about life in Greenwood, South Carolina. Her father lost his 400-acre farm there in 1929 and she recalled having to move to the other side of town because he had lost everything.

While my mother was going to George Williams College in Illinois, she met my father. Six months later they were married. She and Daddy had hard times in the 30's, and then in the 40's my father was drafted to fight WWII. He was gone for 2-1/2 years. Upon his return to Chicago, he went into business and saved enough by 1948 to buy two farms in Waukesha, one on River Road and the other on Point Drive. My parents were drawn to Waukesha, at the time known as Cow County USA, because my mother's brother lived there. It became apparent to me that the loss of my grandfather's farm in Greenwood, S.C., was a significant reason for purchasing these farms.



From left: Beth Hoefer-Jezo (TPC); Susan Buchanan (TPC), John Koepke (TPC Board President), Attorney Mark Blum, Chris Gutschenritter (Gathering Waters)
Seated: Anita Ransome-Kuchler

Daddy and Mother promised Hilda Hahn, a descendant of the original owner, that they would renovate the 1848 farmhouse. Over the next year or so, they kept their promise. They put in all new, real plastered walls, eighteen new windows, hardwood floors and much more. They also made an upstairs apartment for the hired hand.

During those first years, they bought a dairy herd, and started farming in earnest while still running their

(continued on PAGE 5)



Volunteer with Tall Pines to Restore Audley Creek Preserve

by BY PAUL MEUER, TPC Land Protection Manager

It's a cold Saturday morning and the woodlands at Audley Creek Preserve are quiet, save for the occasional scurry of a squirrel along the snow-covered forest floor or the swaying and creaking of the white pines in the breeze. Off in the distance you hear the familiar sound of a two-stroke chainsaw start up and the loud braaapbraaapbraaap as it cuts down a tree. Suddenly, a whole chorus of chainsaws fills the otherwise silent woods and you round the corner to find a group of people laughing and joking as they appear to be clear cutting the entire forest.



What's Going on Here?

On January 21, Tall Pines Conservancy hosted a Volunteer Stewardship Day at our Audley Creek Preserve near Delafield. Led by Paul Meuer, our Land Protection Manager, several volunteers worked to clear invasive brush from the woodland floor. The workday was part of a larger ecological restoration effort that Tall Pines Conservancy will be undertaking to restore the preserve and protect the

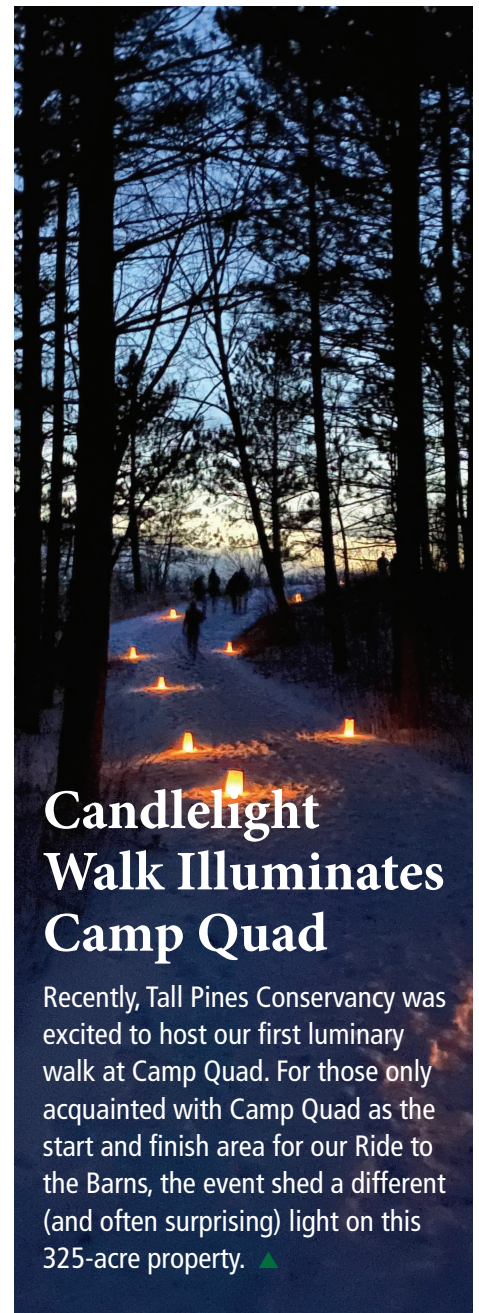
important habitat and water resources within. Removing invasive brush such as buckthorn and honeysuckle is an important first step in opening up the forest floor and allowing native trees and plants to reestablish.

Located adjacent to Lapham Peak State Park and within the Nagawicka Watershed, the biologically diverse preserve contains mature oaks and pines, remnant wetlands with rare plant species, and provides habitat for a long list of animals, including amphibians and reptiles not commonly found in the area.

Audley Creek Preserve was generously donated to Tall Pines Conservancy in 2019 by Chloe and Ross Wandschneider, who said they chose to donate the land because they *"realize that the purpose of our journey here on earth is to be temporary custodians of the planet"* and that *"this donation provides preservation assurance – forever – for the land, the creek, and all the wonderful critters and wildlife that inhabit the land."*

Volunteers play a tremendous role in making ecological restoration efforts successful. Tall Pines Conservancy will be hosting another Volunteer Stewardship Day at Audley Creek Preserve. Pizza and refreshments will be provided. Please visit the TPC website to register and receive the latest information.

If you have questions about volunteering with Tall Pines Conservancy, or if you would rather support our restoration efforts by donating equipment or funds, please reach out to Paul Meuer at paul@tallpinesconservancy.org or by phone at 262-369-0500. ▲




Candlelight Walk Illuminates Camp Quad


Recently, Tall Pines Conservancy was excited to host our first luminary walk at Camp Quad. For those only acquainted with Camp Quad as the start and finish area for our Ride to the Barns, the event shed a different (and often surprising) light on this 325-acre property. ▲

} *"A magical luminary winter's hike filled with a star-struck sky, roaring bonfire, s'mores, chili and cornbread, and piping hot cider. Ran into old friends and made new ones too! Thanks Tall Pines for a wonderful night."*
—Frankie Garr

Photo by Susan Wilcox



**15TH ANNUAL
Ride to the Barns**
AUGUST 12TH, 2023
A FUNDRAISING
EVENT TO BENEFIT
LAND CONSERVATION



**PRESERVE
where
you RIDE**

BIKE TOUR OF LAKE COUNTRY
REST STOPS AT LOCAL FARMS
TASTE LOCAL FOOD
30 | 45 | 60 MILE ROUTES

Registration thru August 7th: \$85*
August 8th & after: \$100*
Ask about team discounts!

Register online at:
tallpinesconservancy.org
Or email:
info@tallpinesconservancy.org

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

Join Us for the 15th Annual Ride to the Barns

Saturday, August 12th

Who could have guessed in 2009, when our very first ride was held, that 14 years later this event would be hosting 500 participants each year – and that we'd have three different routes. OR that live music, as well as locally-sourced food curated by farm-to-table chef Earl Gesling of The Natural Way, would be featured at each rest stop. OR that a delicious, full buffet meal with Brewfinity Beer would be served at our post-ride party at Camp Quad! It's all due to the incredible support provided by you – our riders, volunteers, hosts and sponsors!

Please know that we have worked diligently to keep our pricing structure the same since 2016. Rising food, rental and other expenses have caused us to increase our registration fee to \$85 to ensure you are experiencing the same high-quality event you know and love. The late registration pricing of \$100 begins on Tuesday, August 8th.

We've got some surprises up our sleeves for our anniversary year that you won't want to miss, so don't delay – register today! We are strictly limited to 500 riders. Last year's Ride to the Barns sold out early, and this year's registrations are already off to a fantastic start. Visit our website at tallpinesconservancy.org for more information. ▲

Mark your
calendar for our
Ride to the Barns
Online Silent
Auction!

July 7 – July 17

Featuring a great assortment of items donated by local restaurants, businesses and bike shops. Please contact Beth at 262-993-9481 if you'd like to make a donation for the auction. ▲

**STARTS
July 7**
**Silent
Ride to the Barns**
ONLINE AUCTION
**ENDS
July 17**

Thank You to Our Sponsors



Thank You to Our Partners



Oconomowoc Farmers Market

8am–12pm Every Saturday May through October
Bank Five Nine Campus Lot, 155 W. Wisconsin Avenue

Did you know? The Oconomowoc Farmers' Market has been a beloved community tradition since 1980 – and is still managed by the Oconomowoc Area Chamber of Commerce. Market-goers can find a wide variety of goods, including seasonal produce, spices, herbs, soups, handmade arts and crafts, baked goods, plants, honey, cheeses, jams, canned goods, maple syrup, breads, and farm fresh eggs and meats.

Here's just a few reasons why Tall Pines Conservancy has been a proud supporter of this summer staple for the past nine years:

Farmers Markets...

- Benefit both well-established and new farmers by offering a low-cost opportunity to sell products and grow their businesses. Buying directly from farmers gives them a better return for their products and a fighting chance in today's challenging economy. And that, in turn, helps to support the preservation of local farmland.
- Create access to fresh, nutritious local food (both conventional and organic) that is often lower in price than what is offered at supermarkets. Plus, the market features what's at the peak of season, so search out your favorites while sampling new items that will encourage you to stretch your taste buds.
- Provide an educational opportunity for consumers. A regular trip to a farmers market is one of the best ways to get to know your local producers and connect with where your food comes from. According to



the Farmers Market Coalition, four out of five farmers selling at markets discuss farming practices with their customers, and three in five discuss nutrition and how to prepare food.

- Are great for the entire family! Bring the kids, have them help you select produce and get them involved in preparing a meal or snack once you arrive home.
- Create a sense of community. Enjoy connecting with your friends and neighbors as you stroll the market – and be sure to stop and patronize downtown Oconomowoc's restaurants and shops.

Don't forget to bring your reusable bag – and please leave your favorite four-legged friend at home. The Oconomowoc Farmers Market is a pet-free venue (service animals are welcome). ▲



Bug Bonanza Insect Exhibit

Weekend Viewings
March 18–April 2, 2023
Catholic Ecology Center
JP II Hall

This premier insect collection, regarded as one of the best in the country, has been presented at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, Disney's Epcot Center, and universities across the country. TPC is proud to be a sponsor of this exhibit, which contains thousands of insects – large and small – from all over the world. Learn all about these amazing creatures that call our planet home and how you can be better stewards.



You may sign up for a morning or afternoon session, which includes open time to view the exhibit and ask questions. There's also an optional 30-minute presentation given by exhibit curator Dan Capp or a member of the CEC staff.

To learn more and register, please visit the Events page at catholicecologycenter.org. Admission is \$5 for CEC members and \$8 for non-members. Children 4 and under are free. ▲

Ravensholme on the River... (from PAGE 1)

business in Chicago. They worked night and day to get their farm going, but they were dependent on farm help and the farm wasn't doing well. I heard their concerns over and over again while I in the meantime was getting an education. Finally, I married early and left Northwestern University to solve the farm's problems. My husband and I knew very little about what we were getting into, but we had to learn in a hurry because the farm was sinking.

We had to learn how to milk and feed cows. Morrison's Feeds and Feeding was recommended to me, and I read the section on dairy cattle, which we followed to the letter. When we learned about artificial insemination, we decided to breed our cows to the top sires in Wisconsin. Gradually, we developed a prize herd, bred and fed to yield milk. When my dad learned about pipelines that replaced carrying milk by hand, he ordered what was said to be the second longest pipeline in the United States. But we still couldn't make enough money to run the farm, so Daddy had the first barn extension built. Sixteen more milk cows didn't solve the problem so another extension was added, making the barn 200 feet long. When we were milking 80 cows, the farm began showing a profit. In the meantime, producing enough feed to support a herd of over 150 head, counting young stock, was another challenge. We tested our soil and fertilized it appropriately, but we learned that when they say it takes three acres to feed one cow, they had it right. Eighty cows without young stock required 240 acres so we were renting land wherever we could find it to supplement our home crops. Then, where did we store it? So Daddy had three silos built where we could store corn or hay silage.

It took three men to run the operation, all on wages, so even with a top farming operation it was tight going, but that was our life and we were determined to make it go.

Over the years, I had three children. Two of them were killed over a nine-year span, between 1963-1972, and that changed my whole way of thinking. I no longer believed that I had control over what was mine. Now, I realized that everything we call ours is on loan.

When Mother died in 1994, my life had to change dramatically. I had to surge ahead without my parents' steady hands and run the entire operation, including the bookkeeping and repairs. Eventually over the next few years, I saw myself getting OLD. (I was eighty-five at the time.) Because I loved the land, I didn't want the land built on or commercialized in any way, so I decided to make my farms into a Christian youth camp. The plan was going smoothly until the virus hit, and the timing ceased to be right. Plan #2 was to make the farms into a park, but unfortunately there was already a park up the road. Plan #3 came about in a very interesting way. I contacted Tall Pines Conservancy and told them that I wanted them to have

my land, but that I wanted many people to benefit from it. Chris Gutschenritter, Tall Pines' Director of Land Protection, was sent by the Executive Director of Tall Pines, Susan Buchanan, to work with me. Tall Pines knew what I wanted, and they came up with the idea of planting trees and using the land as a model agroforestry farm through the Savanna Institute. Then we went a step further, with the tentative plan to renovate the barn into a learning center where people could be taught about the benefit of having trees and vegetation vs concrete and buildings with no areas to breathe. This excited me very much, and now more than two years later, the fat is in the fire, and we are on the way. We closed on the property and as of December 28, 2022, the two farms, including the house and barn, are now owned by Tall Pines Conservancy.

This extensive project will be called Ravensholme on the River named after the early Ransomes' ties to the Vikings.

You, too, can be a part of this plan to save the planet if you so wish. Call Susan Buchanan at 414-559-7460 or email susanb@tallpinesconservancy.org and she will provide help. ▲

Thank You Farmers!

On Wednesday, February 22nd, Farmers for Lake Country teamed up with Cedar Creek Farmers to host "Our Healthy Soils Lunch & Learn" at the Richfield Volunteer Fire Company Station #1. The more than 80 producers who braved the day's wintry weather mix boosted their knowledge on topics such as healthy soils, no-till and cover crops

— strategies that our local farmers use to protect the quality of our local waterways and our way of life here in Lake Country. The afternoon concluded with a fun, interactive farmer panel discussion. For more information about FFLC, please visit farmersforlakecountry.org or contact Paul at 262-369-0500. ▲





AUDLEY CREEK PRESERVE

Thursday, March 16 and

Saturday, March 18 • 9am-12pm

Contact Paul at 262-369-0500 or email paul@tallpinesconservancy.org to sign up. Learn more about this restoration project on page two.

BUG BONANZA INSECT EXHIBIT AT THE CATHOLIC ECOLOGY CENTER

March 18–April 2

Fun for all ages! Be sure to check out the details on page four. catholicecologycenter.org

OCONOMOWOC FARMERS MARKET

Every Saturday

May through October • 8a–12p

Bank Five Nine Campus Lot

155 W. Wisconsin Avenue

Find out more on page four.

oconomowoc.org

9TH ANNUAL OWPP PADDLE

Saturday, July 8

This FREE, family-friendly event includes paddling on the Oconomowoc River in the Monches/Loew Lake area, as well as guided interpretation by a naturalist! We'll enjoy lunch and prairie walk in the afternoon for those who want to explore more of this beautiful Kettle Moraine area. oconomowocwatershed.com

15TH ANNUAL RIDE TO THE BARN

Saturday, August 12

Featuring routes through rolling farmland in Lake Country and rest stops at local farms offering locally sourced food and live music. Post-ride party with full buffet lunch. Check out all the details on page three. tallpinesconservancy.org

ANNUAL LCCW HEALTHY LAKES CONFERENCE

Friday, September 15

Oconomowoc Community Center

Open to all who care about our local water resources. Guest speakers will cover a broad spectrum of topics such as: Aquatic Invasive Species, Research and Management, Wake Boats and Shorelines, Citizen Lake Monitoring and more. Presentation of LCCW's Annual Lake Recognition Award. lakecountrycleanwaters.org

Instagram



Visit Us! tallpinesconservancy.org Join Our Community!



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