



2023 Annual Report



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Land Protection

In 2022, Tall Pines Conservancy partnered with lead agencies American Farmland Trust (AFT) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to official launch the Wisconsin Farmland Protection Partnership Project. Tall Pines is in the process of using its share of funding to permanently protect two family farms; the easements are expected to be finalized in 2024.

Tall Pines closed on the donation of a conservation easement of 97-acres of prime farmland located in town of Oconomowoc. We also accepted the donation of an easement on 58 acres of valuable open space in town of Genesee and a third property was permanently protected through an easement donation through a bequest by a private donor.

At the close of 2023, Tall Pines was also grateful to receive the gift of a conservation easement from the Read Family on a 16-acre property, which is our first protected property located in the village of Oconomowoc Lake and is in an area of high development pressure.



LAND PROTECTION, CONTINUED

TPC continues to be a major partner in the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program (OWPP). This program assists landowners within the watershed in implementing sustainable land management practices to reduce phosphorus levels in our rivers, lakes, and streams. The construction portion of the Mason Creek Re-meandering Project was completed in fall of 2022 and in 2023 was celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony and tour attended by more than 50 people.



Tall Pines also continues its collaboration with Farmers for Lake Country (FFLC), a producer-led mentoring group, to educate and implement best practices on lands within the Oconomowoc River Watershed, including the aerial seeding of cover crops. The FFLC footprint was expanded in 2022 to include a considerable number of acres outside of the watershed and Tall Pines supports this significantly larger territory by providing staff support and funding. As a result of this expansion, many more farms (within a new territory of 450,571 acres in comparison to 83,000 acres) are now eligible for cost share funding for water friendly practices such as cover crops, no tilling, and planting green into living cover.

TPC partnered with many other outstanding non-profit organizations and government entities in 2023 to meet mutual land conservation goals. These groups include Ozaukee-Washington Land Trust, Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, the Rock River Coalition, The Nature Conservancy, Waukesha County Land Conservancy, Savanna Institute, Gathering Waters, and the Land Trust Alliance.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Our outreach strategies included working with landowners within the expanded Farmers for Lake Country territory to promote conservation easements and best management practices. TPC continues its annual monitoring of all its properties each fall and conducts invasive species removal and trail building workdays at our property near Lapham Peak.

TPC also maintains a separate fund to support conservation efforts at Camp Quad, which is supported both monetarily and through volunteer hours contributed by current and retired Quad employees.

TPC is in partnership with the Town of Merton to implement a conservation plan for Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park. We are also in the process of finalizing and implementing our plan for agroforestry and an educational center for Ravensholme on the River, our fee simple property located in the village of Waukesha.



Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The year 2023 was filled with a variety of events enthusiastically received by new and long-standing friends of TPC. They included:

- A winter Luminary Walk and Twilight Summer Hike and yoga session at Camp Quad
- Co-hosting the Lake Country Clean Waters Healthy Lakes Conference in September as well as virtual and in-person quarterly meetings
- A special luncheon honoring the donation of Ravensholme on the River by Anita Kuchler
- The 9th annual OWPP Paddle in July on North Lake, which also included a guided nature hike at Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park.
- The 15th Annual Ride to the Barns, a sold-out success in August.
- A prairie tour for members of the Stewardship Society.

We continue to promote our land protection work in the community through sponsorship of the Chamber's Summer Farmers Market in Oconomowoc and the Lapham Peak Ski Club. Tall Pines also conducts presentations for various conferences, garden clubs and community and municipal organizations. This included a gathering of Pine Lake residents to discuss shoreline protection strategies.

Tall Pines staffed informational tables at the June Dairy Month Farmer Breakfast at Zwiég's Maple Acres and the educational Oaktobberfest event at Gwenyn Hill Farm. For Arbor Day, we hosted a very successful tree giveaway at our Nashotah office. We also partnered with Farmers for Lake Country in presenting a community you pick Chaos Garden.



Luminary Walk



Ride to the Barns



OWPP Paddle