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Visit [www.tallpinesconservancy.org](http://www.tallpinesconservancy.org)  
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## Protecting More Farmland, More Quickly, In Wisconsin

Tall Pines, American Farmland Trust & The Natural Resource Conservation Service Announce Exciting Program

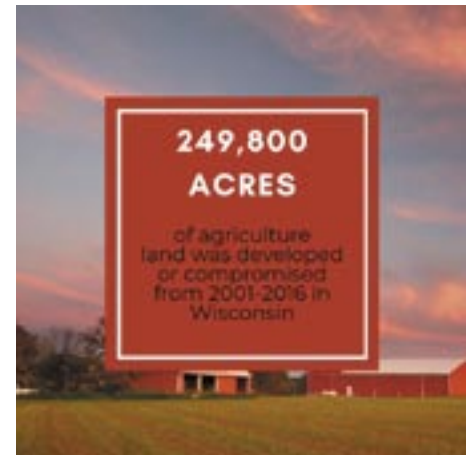
by SUSAN BUCHANAN, TPC Executive Director

**Did you know? Wisconsin has some of the best agricultural land in the country, with 61% of the state's farmland considered nationally significant!** Unfortunately, we're also losing this irreplaceable land at an alarming rate. In comes Tall Pines, shepherding a plan to form a statewide coalition to apply for national funding to protect our farms!

As a leader in farmland protection, TPC is thrilled to announce an unprecedented \$7 million partnership, with lead organizers American Farmland Trust (AFT) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which will dramatically increase the number of ag acres permanently protected in Wisconsin, improve soil health and water quality as well as address climate impacts. The "Wisconsin Farmland Protection Partnership Project" was created to support farmers who are working hard to keep their land in agriculture by addressing the pressing need for agricultural conservation easement funding in the state.

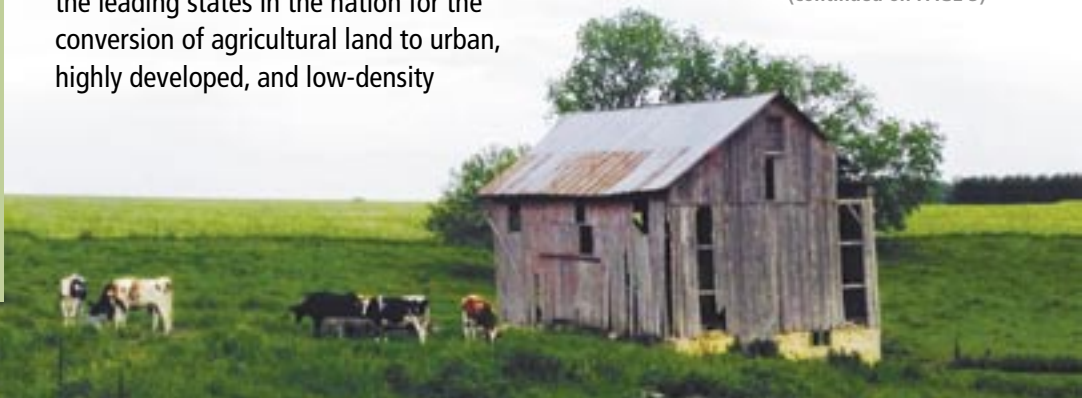
According to AFT, Wisconsin is among the leading states in the nation for the conversion of agricultural land to urban, highly developed, and low-density

residential land use. In fact, between 2001 and 2016, nearly 250,000 acres of land was converted out of agricultural use—lost land that could have generated \$190 million in annual revenue.



The Wisconsin Farmland Protection Partnership Project will leverage more than \$7 million in partner contributions for an additional \$7 million in federal funding to stem farmland loss, incentivize the increased adoption of regenerative practices on protected land, and identify farmland access opportunities for historically underserved producers.

(continued on PAGE 3)



# A Perfect Match: Historic Preservation and Farmland Conservation

by BETH HOEFER-JEZO, TPC Development Manager

As both next-door neighbors and contributors of their time and talents to the organization, Herb and Sharon Lofy have been long-standing supporters of the Richfield Historical Society (RHS). That's why they donated their rich agricultural land, which is prominently situated at Hwy. 164 and Pleasant Hill Road in the Village of Richfield, Wisconsin, to the Richfield Historical Society (RHS) subject to a life estate that will allow the Lofy family to call their farm



"home" for the remainder of their lives. The Lofy family was also determined to permanently protect their ancestral property from future development through a conservation easement with Tall Pines Conservancy.

For those of you who are not familiar with RHS, this all-volunteer organization is responsible for restoring and maintaining numerous historic buildings located on the 33-acre Richfield Historical Park, which is part of the Village of Richfield park system and is adjacent to the 92-acre Richfield Nature Park. RHS hosts a variety of popular events, such as the annual Thresheree & Harvest Festival, and the property contains hiking trails, picnic tables and benches that are available for visitors to enjoy. The beautiful Coney Creek meanders among various wooded areas on this property as well as through the Lofy Farm. In fact, one of the reasons the Lofy Farm is such a solid candidate for conservation is that best

*"Sharon and I are equally pleased that a portion of our farm is now covered with a conservation easement through Tall Pines. Being that this part of the farm is a life estate with Richfield Historical Society as the beneficiary, we felt that a conservancy would provide a "win-win" situation for everyone. Development has certainly taken many farms in Richfield out of production. One hundred years from now this may be one of only a few open spaces left in Richfield."*

—Herb and Sharon Lofy

# Beyond Land Conservation

## The Farm Legacy Program Provides Much Needed Support for the Next Generation of Farmers

by CHRIS GUTSCHENRITTER, Land Protection Manager

Tall Pines Conservancy is excited to announce the launch of a new program designed to honor the agricultural legacy of Southeastern Wisconsin and secure its future in our community. The Farm Legacy Program will work to protect, increase access, and improve the stewardship of farmland as it transitions to the next generation of farmers.

Widely reported over the last few years is the fact that Wisconsin farmers are facing increasing economic pressures impacting the viability of their businesses. In 2019, 10% of Wisconsin's dairy farms succumbed to these pressures and the State led the nation in farm bankrupt-



Photo courtesy of Three Brothers Farm

cies. Making an already untenable reality more difficult, the average age of a Wisconsin farmer is 56 years old and the number of farmers over 65 outnumbers farmers under 35 by a margin of 6 to 1. Understanding these staggering statistics helps to explain why many leading researchers predict that more than 40% of all American farmland will change

(continued on PAGE 7)

(continued on PAGE 7)



# Chaos Returns to an Oconomowoc Farm Field this Fall In a Good Way!

by DARRELL SMITH, OWPP Program Director



Have you found your life to be in a bit of disarray this past year? Well, let's put a little order in all that chaos! Start with your favorite cookbooks and get those recipes ready—we have the solution to your vegetable needs. After a very successful, small scale trial in 2020, the Chaos Garden returns in 2020 – to a new, more prominent location within a larger footprint.

Thanks to the generosity of the Koepke family and a grant from the Kettle Moraine Garden Club, the Chaos Garden will take root on a spacious 1.5 acre parcel of farmland located just north of the City of Oconomowoc, where Highway 16 passes under Highway K. The garden will be planted in late summer in a field that usually grows grain corn, soybeans, or winter wheat. This year, after the wheat is harvested, short-season vegetable crops will be sown and allowed to grow – with Mother Nature's help – into a community "free pick" garden plot.

The Chaos Garden will allow you, community members, to harvest FREE HEALTHY food while connecting you to the farmland and farmers who sustain our rich rural heritage. It doesn't get any better than that!

Signage and online community resources will provide visitors with insight into soil and water conservation, and the many efforts local farmers are taking to preserve and sustain our natural environment.

Here's the plan! Vegetables and edible flowers will be planted in early August and will grow until frost and, for some varieties, after frost into late October/early November. Varieties include spinach, kale, bush beans, peas, lettuce and bok choy. Edible flowers will include nasturtium, calendula, and sunflowers. Watering will be done by Mother Nature since no piped water exists on site. This is in keeping with the true spirit of "chaos gardening" and farming overall in our area. WE plant the seeds and YOU harvest whatever nature supports as its bounty.

Learn more about the garden and scheduling at TPC's Facebook page and stay tuned for updates! ▲

## Protecting More Farmland... (from PAGE 1)

The program also incorporates six other Wisconsin-based land trusts, the Town of Dunn, Town of Greenville, Rock County, Jefferson County, The Savanna Institute, Gathering Waters, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, UW-Division of Extension, UW-Dept. of Agronomy, WI Land + Water, and Dept. of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection.

*"We're thrilled to be a part of this significant and innovative statewide partnership project. Land Trusts that have been working diligently to protect farmland across the state will now have this critical tool available to them to preserve more agricultural land that is essential to our state's economy and defines our rural character for which Wisconsin is known."*

—Susan Buchanan,  
TPC Executive Director

It is TPC's intent to use this funding to protect another 1000 acres of farmland in our area. Stay tuned for more details on local projects coming soon! ▲



### 2020 Annual Report Available Online

Please visit  
[tallpinesconservancy.org](https://tallpinesconservancy.org)  
to view the 2020 Annual Report, which will be posted by June 30th. ▲



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### **OCONOMOWOC FARMERS MARKET**

Every Saturday  
May through October • 8a–12p  
Bank One Campus  
155 W. Wisconsin Avenue

### **LAKE COUNTRY CLEAN WATER FESTIVAL**

Saturday, June 26  
Pewaukee Lake  
[cleanwaterfestival.com](http://cleanwaterfestival.com)

### **OWPP PADDLE**

Saturday, July 10  
[oconomowocwatershed.com](http://oconomowocwatershed.com)  
[tom@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:tom@tallpinesconservancy.org)

### **OPEN HOUSE AT OCONOMOWOC RIVER CONSERVANCY PARK**

Wednesday, July 21 • 5–7:30p  
[tallpinesconservancy.org](http://tallpinesconservancy.org)  
[info@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:info@tallpinesconservancy.org)

### **13TH ANNUAL RIDE TO THE BARNS**

Saturday, August 14  
[tallpinesconservancy.org](http://tallpinesconservancy.org)  
[info@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:info@tallpinesconservancy.org)

### **WAUKESHA COUNTY GREEN TEAM SUSTAINABILITY FAIR**

Saturday, August 28  
[waukeshacountygreenteam.org](http://waukeshacountygreenteam.org)

### **LCCW HEALTHY LAKES CONFERENCE**

Friday, September 17  
[lakecountrycleanwaters.org](http://lakecountrycleanwaters.org)  
[info@lakecountrycleanwaters.org](mailto:info@lakecountrycleanwaters.org)

## **OWPP Chain of Lakes Paddle Event!**

Saturday, July 10th, 2021 • 9am

Ever wondered how our Lake Country lakes are connected? Tall Pines and the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program are hosting the 7th Annual Paddle Event this year – with a twist!

Participants in the “Chain of Lakes” OWPP Paddle will travel from Okauchee Lake to Oconomowoc Lake to Fowler Lake. We will be following the pathway of water that the Oconomowoc River takes through the lakes and getting a new perspective on our Lake Country environs. There will also be a trivia and scavenger hunt en route! Start time will be 9am at the Town of Okauchee Lake public landing, with a picnic celebration at our ending spot at Riverside Park, near Fowler Lake. For those who want a shorter paddle, there will be options for a loop within Okauchee Lake. Fast paddlers will have time to explore Fowler Lake as well.

Bring your own canoe or kayak or we can assist you in making rental arrangements in advance. The event is free and open to everyone, but we ask that you please RSVP online by visiting the Events page at [tallpinesconservancy.org](http://tallpinesconservancy.org). Lunch is being provided by your hosts. Paddlers will be ferried back to cars at the start location. ▲



## **Lake Country Clean Waters Moves Conference to September 17th**


We're thrilled to bring you the 6th Annual Lake Country Clean Waters Healthy Lakes Conference this year – in person – once again! The



conference has been rescheduled to **Friday, September 17th** at the Oconomowoc Community Center along the shores of beautiful Lac La Belle. The move from June to September was made to facilitate a safe in-person gathering where speakers and attendees can freely share ideas and strategies to promote improved water quality within the greater Lake Country region. We have a great new agenda – speakers will cover a broad array of topics, including tackling Starry Stonewort and other Aquatic Invasive Species, and the North Lake Management District Drone Water Study assessing lake conditions and the impact of various types of watercraft on local shores.


Registration required with a \$30 fee. Box lunches available for \$10. For a full conference schedule and to register, please visit [lakecountrycleanwaters.org](http://lakecountrycleanwaters.org). ▲





**TALL PINES CONSERVANCY**

**13TH ANNUAL**  
**Ride to the Barns**  
**AUGUST 14TH, 2021**  
**A FUNDRAISING**  
**EVENT TO BENEFIT**  
**LAND CONSERVATION**



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 where  
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**REST STOPS AT LOCAL FARMS**  
**TASTE LOCAL FOOD**  
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Registration thru August 9<sup>th</sup>: \$75\*  
 August 10<sup>th</sup> & after: \$95\*  
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**Or email:**  
[info@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:info@tallpinesconservancy.org)

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

## We've Done It!

### Announcing... The Ron and Mary Preserve at Beaumont Farm Conservation Project

Tall Pines had a once in a lifetime opportunity to protect a 105-acre parcel of rolling pastoral farmland from residential development – and thankfully we've done it!

Revered by generations of families who have called Lake Country home, the bucolic Beaumont Farm is situated near the shores of Beaver Lake. As a result of tremendous generosity on the part of Mark and Tara Bell, Tall Pines Conservancy is purchasing the development rights on the property from the Siepmann family to permanently protect it from development.

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## Ride to the Barns

After a do-it-yourself ride in 2020, TPC is excited to announce the 13th Annual Ride to the Barns will be held **LIVE on Saturday, August 14th!** We're grateful for the large number of registrations that have already rolled in, which tells us you're excited to visit your favorite rest stops and enjoy the local food that makes our event so special. As you might expect, we are integrating some changes this year – and we're asking for your help in making sure our ride is a safe and enjoyable one for all.

- We're strictly enforcing the number of registrations this year, and **won't be offering day-of registration.** Please be sure to sign up early to guarantee your spot. Registration closes at

NOON on Friday, August 13th. The registration link can be found on our website at [tallpinesconservancy.org](https://tallpinesconservancy.org).

- We've added a 45-mile option! Torn between a 30 and 60-mile excursion? Split the difference and join us on this new route.
- You'll enjoy visiting a mix of old favorites and new rest stops!
- The food is still local – the distribution will be different. Help us by following the signs and the direction of our team of volunteers at each of the rest stops. We'll also keep registered riders informed of our guidelines via email.

Email [info@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:info@tallpinesconservancy.org) or call 262-369-0500 with any questions. ▲

### Thank You to Our Sponsors



### Thank You to Our Partners



# Exquisite Chenequa Land Property Protected Forever Through Conservation Easement



by BETH HOEFER-JEZO, TPC Development Manager

**More than 100 years ago, noted architect Alexander C. Eschweiler established his summer home on a picturesque lake property in what would later become the Village of Chenequa. Three generations later, in November 2020, Liesel Eschweiler Lavery generously donated a conservation easement on a portion of this land to**

permanently protect its sacred, unspoiled habitat – not only for future generations, but for birds, fish, turtles and other wildlife who've inhabited this land for centuries.

This ecologically significant land adds three acres to an adjoining six-plus-acre property that was placed in a conservation easement with Tall Pines by the Eschweiler Family in 2004. It boasts a unique isthmus between North and Cornell lakes that offers breathtaking views spanning from Holy Hill to Delafield. Its diverse terrain ranges from swampy wetland to dry upland open oak woodland. Liesel has been working diligently during the past 15 years to cultivate a healthy oak ecosystem and vibrant bird life through the removal of buckthorn, controlled burning of the understory, grazing the property with goats and planting native plants.

You can catch a glimpse of this beautiful property without leaving the comfort of your own home by visiting the Our Work section at [tallpinesconservancy.org](https://tallpinesconservancy.org) (<https://tallpinesconservancy.org/eschweiler>). Talented videographer Zach Steinbach created a video featuring sweeping aerial images and a poignant interview with Liesel. ▲

## Beaumont Conservation Farm Project... (from PAGE 5)

This donation will enable Tall Pines to place a conservation easement protecting 94 acres (or 90%) of the existing Beaumont Lane farmland, ultimately allowing us to safeguard the water quality of Beaver Lake and ensure a continued treasured view of the rolling, bucolic landscape. Placing this property in conservation also benefits the community by eliminating the noise, traffic and air pollution associated with the construction of 50+ houses as well as the added infrastructure expenses associated with new development.

We still need your help to steward and monitor this land in perpetuity! You can be part of this project and other land protection projects in Lake Country by making a tax-deductible donation to Tall Pines. For more information, contact Susan at 414-559-7460 or visit [tallpinesconservancy.org](https://tallpinesconservancy.org). ▲

## Artist in Residence at Tall Pines Conservancy!

**We're thrilled to announce that photographer Frankie Garr is one of 17 artists participating in a year-long residency program called ARTservancy, an exciting collaboration between local artists, Gallery 224 in Port Washington and area land trusts.**

According to Frankie, she chose TPC because of our watershed approach to land conservation, which includes the protection of local farmland and preserves, as well as a commitment to improving water quality in lake country.



*"It feels part of who I am. My father had a 40-acre maple syrup farm in upstate Pennsylvania and simply loved being outside. I think his farming roots rubbed off on me. I look forward to working with TPC, serving the mission to preserve and protect the heritage of farmland, water resources and natural open spaces in the area. By using my gifts to observe and capture, I will strive to awaken awareness for others who*

*may or may not realize the treasures we have and the responsibility to preserve them for future generations."*

Frankie has a unique connection with TPC – she had a 30-plus year career with Quad and had the opportunity to walk the trails of Camp Quad – a 325-acre property under conservation easement with Tall Pines Conservancy.

Frankie's Instagram feed is [Frankieogarra](#) and check out her website at [www.nextstopphotography.com](http://www.nextstopphotography.com). There will be an exhibition of Frankie's work to be unveiled sometime this fall. Follow us on Facebook for updates Or, email [beth@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:beth@tallpinesconservancy.org) to be added to our email newsletter list. ▲



## Beyond Land Conservation... (from PAGE 2)

hands in the next 15 years. That rate is expected to be higher in more densely populated suburban areas like South-eastern Wisconsin. These trends signal irreversible changes coming to our local economies, the character of our landscape and the natural resources we all cherish.



*Photo courtesy of Mayer Farm*

TPC recognizes that, though vitally important, simply protecting farmland from development is no longer enough to ensure agriculture's place in the fabric of our community. We recognize our unique responsibility to the community as a land conservancy and are committed to supporting our farm families across generations, in addition to the health of the land and resources they depend on.

The Farm Legacy Program will work to help farm families engage in planning for the inevitable generational succession, increase farm viability, expand stewardship and conservation practices, and help to steward the transition of our agricultural resources to the next generation of farmers. This will be accomplished by adopting innovative strategies to secure land for agricultural use, such as our innovative partnership with AFT and NRCS (see page 1). We will also be forging strategic partnerships with regional and national organizations that are paving the way in young and beginning farmer mentorship, regenerative agricultural practices, and creative financial assistance tools.

## A Perfect Match: Historic Preservation and Farmland Conservation... (from PAGE 2)

management practices applied to the agricultural operation present a significant opportunity to benefit both the water quality of the creek AND the Oconomowoc River, which it feeds.

### The Mayer Family Connection

Last year at this time, you may recall, TPC was celebrating the closing of a conservation easement on the 7th generation Mayer Family Farm in the Town of Polk. The Mayer family has deep roots within the community – and those roots on the family tree extend to the Richfield Historical Park and the 150-year old Messer/Mayer Mill! The picturesque three-story structure was constructed in 1871 by Andrew Messer to grind wheat, rye and cattle feed; it was purchased by Johann Mayer in 1876 and was operated by descendants of the Mayer family for 78 years (Fun Fact: In 1901, CW Mayer even set a record by producing 45 barrels of flour in 11 hours!)

In 1954, George Mayer, the last mill operator, closed the doors to the mill and set the stage for its preservation by leaving all the equipment intact. Since 1999, the Society has worked tirelessly to restore the mill, including replacing the roof and siding, refurbishing the roller mills and reconstructing the horse shed. To learn more about the Richfield Historical Society, we encourage you to visit [richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://richfieldhistoricalsociety.org).



This type of an alliance is a new one for both non-profit organizations and it took creativity, tenacity, and let's face it – some patience – during the course of several years to see the project to fruition. However, we're excited to report that our persistence has paid off. On Thursday, April 22nd – Earth Day – the 27-acre easement agreement on the Lofy Farm was finalized! TPC looks forward to our new, unique partnership with RHS and we thank the Lofy family for their foresight in preserving their land. ▲

If you and your family value our agricultural heritage and our local farm families, appreciate your local food options, or enjoy spending time at one of the many local farms and farmers markets in our area, consider joining TPC as a Member by visiting [tallpinesconservancy.org](http://tallpinesconservancy.org), or make a tax-deductible donation using the enclosed envelope. To learn more about the Farm Legacy Program, contact [chris@tallpinesconservancy.org](mailto:chris@tallpinesconservancy.org). Stay tuned for more about this new program launch! ▲

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## ■ *Help Us Turn \$150,000 Into \$300,000!*

TPC's first venture into hosting a major virtual fundraising event was a tremendous success! An Evening With Michael Perry, presented by **von Briesen**, was held the evening of February 25th via YouTube and attracted more than 120 viewers. Registrants were treated to gift boxes featuring local goodies from LaBelle Cheese, Mayer Family Farms, Eastshore Specialty Foods and Honey Acres, as well as seed packets sponsored by Ixonia Bank.

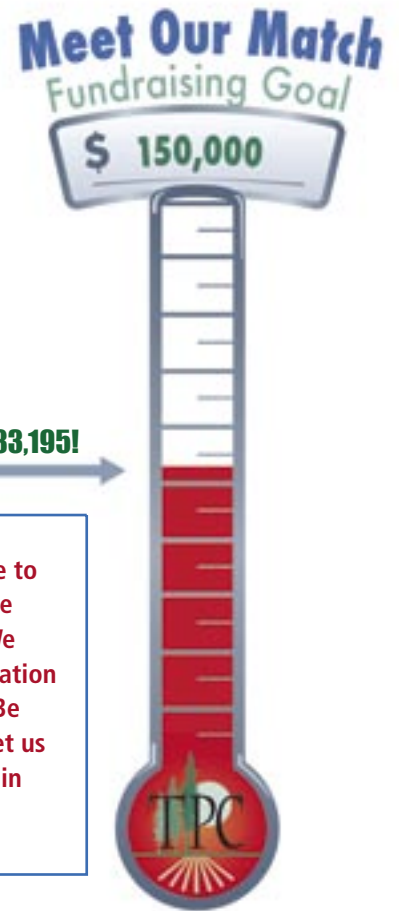
Our silent auction packages, which included such diverse experiences as Riding (and Driving) a Combine at Koepke Farms, a Glamping Package at Heiliger Huegel Ski Club and partaking in a private chef's dinner at Stone Bank Farm Market, generated more than \$8,000 for our land conservation work. Thank you! But, that's not all!

We are also excited to share that, thanks to the generosity of the Ziegler Foundation and a loyal (but silent!) supporter, Tall Pines is

the recipient of a \$150,000 Challenge Grant! During the evening's festivities, we raised nearly half of that amount. However, we need YOUR help to meet our match by the end of 2021. Every dollar you donate that is earmarked specifically for our Challenge Grant will be matched – and will be directed to our Land Conservation Partnership Fund to support farmland conservation easements, improvements at Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park, the Mason Creek re-meandering project and more!

Please use the enclosed donation envelope to make your contribution and be sure to note that your gift is for the Challenge Grant. We also gratefully accept your credit card donation via our website [tallpinesconservancy.org](http://tallpinesconservancy.org). Be sure to use the "Add A Note" option and let us know it is for the Challenge Grant. Thanks in advance for your support of our work. ▲

■ **\$83,195!**



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