

## Winter 2025

Protect and restore the lands and waterways of Walworth County and Beyond

## GENEVA LAKE MANAGEMENT COMPLETED; PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR NOV. 20

The new Geneva Lake Management Plan Update 2025 will be available for public review and comment beginning November 1, 2025 on the Geneva Lake Conservancy (GLC), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission (SEWRPC), and additional lake organization websites with an option for the public to comment on the plan.

In addition, the Geneva Lake Conservancy and its partners will host a public meeting to present the plan and answer questions and solicit comments on Thursday, November 20, 2025 from 5-7 PM at Chapel on the Hill, N2440 Ara Glen Drive, Lake Geneva.



Geneva Lake, credit: Rick Jessen

The update to the lake's Management Plan was commissioned by the Conservancy and drafted by SEWRPC. The Conservancy funded the plan update with grants from the Wisconsin DNR, Otzen Family Foundation, Stearns Family Foundation and other private donors.

“The new plan provides 90 recommendations that all the organizations involved with the lake will help implement,” said Tom Nickols, GLC Vice Chair. “The challenge will be raising the funds to pay for these projects over the next 5 to 10 years.”

The recommendations serve as a catalyst for various lake organizations to work together to lower phosphorus levels, prevent invasive species invasions, restore wild shorelines to help fish populations, protect groundwater and its recharge areas, and better control boating and water sports to prevent damage to the lake.

“Geneva Lake has some of the best water quality and fisheries in Wisconsin and our goal is to keep it that way,” said Don Parker, GLC Chairman. “In taking the lead on this plan, the Conservancy wanted to ensure that all the lake organizations could act proactively rather than reactively to address changes in the lake.”

These changes over the last decade include algae blooms, new invasive species like Starry Stonewort and quagga mussels, increased density and development in the watershed and new water sports like wakeboarding. The last update to the Geneva Lake Management Plan was completed in 2008.

The public comment period will be open for 30 days. Beginning in December, the DNR will take an additional thirty days to review public comments and the plan before issuing a final document.

Because of its 345-page length, the plan will include an Executive Summary that focuses on priority issues to be addressed. The plan also provides a list of grant opportunities to fund some of the projects.

“We are so grateful to all the government and private organizations and individuals who contributed to developing this plan,” said Karen Yancey, GLC Executive Director. “There are so many people who care about Geneva Lake and we now have a road map to help ensure its future health.”

## **VOLBRECHT CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROTECTS OAKS AND CRITICAL BIRD HABITAT**

The Geneva Lake Conservancy has completed a 49-acre conservation easement on a scenic farm, oak woodland and globally important bird habitat that ensures the land will not be subdivided and developed.

The property has been owned by the Vollbrecht family for more than 40 years. Elizabeth Vollbrecht and her son Tom worked with the Conservancy to complete the conservation easement, which is surrounded on three sides by the Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit and ensures that no development will compromise the ecological health of the state park.



Vollbrecht barn

“This beautiful property in the heart of the Kettle Moraine State Forest could have been divided into nine homesites with many of the oaks gone forever,” said Chairman Don Parker. “Instead, it will remain as an essential habitat providing food and shelter for many endangered migrating and forest interior birds, such as warblers.”

The property is part of a Primary Environmental Corridor and also provides habitat for more than 400 other mammals, birds, insects, and amphibians.

“Our family has loved and gathered at this farm for many years,” says Betty Vollbrecht. “We hope to keep it in the family, but if they choose to sell it someday, we know that the oaks and scenic beauty will be preserved.”

Jim Jackley, real estate acquisition specialist for the DNR, said that this was one of the top 5 properties that the DNR had slated for protection in Walworth County because of its critical location in the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

“We are so pleased that this property has been protected by the Conservancy,” said Jackley. “Inappropriate development would have harmed the entire ecosystem in the area.”

The property contains a brick house and historic 1906 barn as well as several out buildings. Under the conservation easement, only one house can be located on the property and all future building must be in the 3-acre building zone. The family also retains a campsite on the property.

“We are so blessed to have enjoyed the beauty of the natural world on this property for so many years and now we know that future generations will experience the wonders of nature as well,” said Betty Vollbrecht.

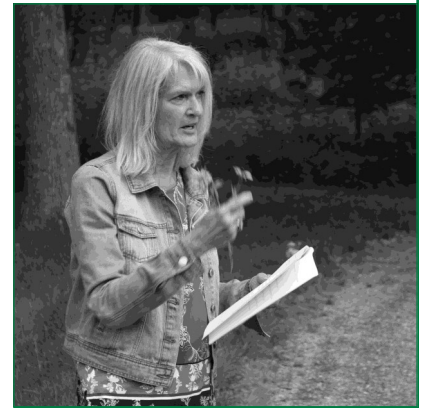
## CONSERVANCY SAYS GOODBYE TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After nine years with the organization, GLC's Executive Director Karen Yancey announced she will retire at the end of the year. The Board of Directors has begun a search for her successor to be in place by January of 2026.

"Karen joined GLC and hit the ground running and with the valuable assistance of former Development Director Janet Happ guided GLC through an initial accreditation process by the national land trust association," said Don Parker, Chair. "Accreditation raised our profile in the eyes of both conservation-minded landowners and the DNR's Knowles-Nelson program and has led to the protection of almost 3,700 acres.

Under Yancey's leadership the Conservancy preserved many vital and environmentally sensitive land and water projects including:

- Procured an easement protecting 90 acres of The Preserve on the former George Williams College property in Williams Bay;
- Purchase and development of Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park;
- Acquisition of 81 acres of the Bromley Woods preserve in Whitewater;
- Acquisition of the Anglin Family Nature Preserve near Lake Ivanhoe;
- Joint leadership with other environmental groups to update the Geneva Lake Management Plan



Executive Director, Karen Yancey

"All of the important conservation work we have completed over the last decade would not have occurred without our great team of very talented staff, board members, and the support of our donors," said Yancey. "I am so fortunate to have worked with such a committed group who understand how crucial protecting our open lands and clean water is to future generations."

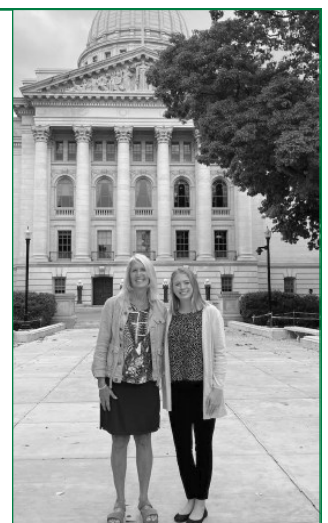
"The Conservancy has a lot of work to do now and in the future to protect and restore our lands and waters and ensure that they thrive," said Parker. "We wouldn't be in the position to advance in this important work had it not been for Karen's dedication, knowledge and tenacity over her 9-year tenure with us. She will be greatly missed."

## KNOWLES NELSON FUNDING ENDANGERED

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program's funding was recently excluded from the 2025-2027 state budget, which means it will expire in 2026 unless new funding is approved. There is effort by lawmakers to find a bipartisan agreement to keep the program alive.

The Conservancy has relied on Knowles-Nelson funding for the protection of several of their public preserves such as the 77-acre Hansen Preserve, the 81-acre Bromley Woods, and more. In Wisconsin, there are 650,000 acres of land protected by Knowles Nelson funding. In Wisconsin, 99% of residents live within five miles of a Knowles Nelson funded site.

If you would like to get involved and support Knowles-Nelson, reach out to your legislators and urge them to compromise on a Knowles-Nelson agreement. Your support shows our legislators how important it is to preserve Wisconsin's land and beauty. For more information, visit [Knowlesnelson.org](http://Knowlesnelson.org).



GLC's Karen Yancey and Kiera Senese along with Chairman Don Parker visit legislators to encourage them to renew Knowles Nelson funding.

## WATER EXPERT TIM ASPLUND DISCUSSES CLIMATE EFFECTS ON LAKES

On September 5 the Conservancy held its Reflections on Water summer fundraiser, hosted by Mark and Patty Aschliman at their lakefront estate.

Tim Asplund, Co-Chair of the Water Resources Working Group with the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts and Manager of Water Quality Monitoring for the Wisconsin DNR spoke on “Preparing Our Lakes for Rising Temperature and Weather Extremes.” According to the Wisconsin DNR, Wisconsin is becoming warmer and wetter, resulting in warmer winters and a change in water cycles.



Tim Asplund speaks at the Reflections on Water event.



Tim Asplund noted that many of the measures that can be taken to prevent climate change are being implemented by organizations such as GLC. He mentioned focusing on aquatic invasive species prevention & control, fisheries management, prevention of eutrophication, and restoring shorelines habitat as some of the ways we can curb climate issues.

To learn how you can help your local lake, we encourage you to sign up for Keep it Blue or Conservation@Home (pg. 7) at [www.GenevaLakeConservancy.org](http://www.GenevaLakeConservancy.org).



Pictured above from left: John St. Peter, DeeDee Goggin, Kevin Goggin, Lisa Lynne Kirkpatrick and Karen Mathis

## THE CONSERVANCY CELEBRATED OPENING OF BOARDWALK



GLC's Executive Director Karen Yancey, Irene Anglin, Chairman Don Parker, and Paula Anglin at the celebration.

On October 18, Geneva Lake Conservancy celebrated the restoration of Anglin Family Nature Preserve. This included the completion of hiking trails and a new boardwalk that allows visitors to view historic Lake Ivanhoe and experience the wetlands that feed it.

The Conservancy purchased 41 acres of the preserve in 2023 working with the granddaughter of Frank Anglin, one of the three Chicago businessmen who came to Lake Ivanhoe in the 1920s to create an African American Resort Community. Frank and his family originally owned all the land that now makes up the Anglin Family Nature Preserve. Frank was an avid gardener, and his eight grandchildren spent many happy hours fishing, swimming, and hiking on the land, according to his granddaughter, Paula Anglin.

At the opening, Executive Director Karen Yancey and Chair Don Parker welcomed the attendees and thanked them for their support. Paula Anglin and her cousin Irene cut the grand opening ribbon of the boardwalk to officially open the public preserve (pictured to the right).

The Conservancy is proud to have unveiled the new boardwalk and trails—the first of what it hopes will become many trails that will allow Lake Ivanhoe residents, school groups, and the broader public to experience and enjoy this special place.

A special thank you goes out to the Knowles Nelson stewardship Fund, Ducks Unlimited, Wagner Essman Foundation, Griffith Family Foundation, the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin and many private donors.



Don Root, Jaden Nickelsen, Tai Thompson, and Kiera Theys pose in front of the Anglin preserve kiosk.

## THE CONSERVANCY THANKS TO EDDIE GRECO

The Conservancy held its first ever Donor Appreciation Party on July 24 at the Greco Estate in Fontana. The evening consisted of hors d'oeuvres by Celebration on Wells, cocktails, music from A Tribute To Old Blue Eyes, and much appreciation to our supporters.



A huge thank you goes out to Eddie & Lisa Greco (pictured to the left), members of the Conservancy, for hosting. Our Donor Appreciation Party will take place in July of 2026 at the Greco Estate for those who are part of our Stewardship Society, donors of \$1,000 or more. Please email [Outreach@GenevaLakeConservancy.org](mailto:Outreach@GenevaLakeConservancy.org) if you would like to receive an invitation for this event for 2026.

## THE CONSERVANCY REMEMBERS JOHN K. NOTZ

On July 22, John Kranz Notz, Jr., a former Conservancy board member, passed away. John served on the GLC board for many years and had a fundamental role in establishing the Mill House Native Plant Preserve and donated generously to the landscape design.

John practiced law for nearly 40 years specializing in corporate, securities, and non-profit law. After he retired in 1996, he focused on architectural and landscape history and helped preserve landmarks and estates in the Geneva Lake region. John held many roles in cultural, historical, and community organizations in Wisconsin, particularly around Geneva Lake, of which he was a lifetime resident. Among his accolades was serving in the U.S. Air Force in the 1950s, utilizing his historical research to aid in converting Black Point into a Wisconsin State Historic Site, and holding a longtime director role of the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education.

Amongst many of the awards he's received, the Conservancy granted the Olmsted Landscape Conservation Award in 2021. The Conservancy appreciates John's lifetime dedication to history and conservation efforts and he will be missed.



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND DONATE TO GLC'S HOLIDAY WISHLIST

This holiday season we've been extra good. So Santa is checking our list! Yes, Geneva Lake Conservancy is officially on the "nice list"—and we have a holiday wishlist of our own. Some key items that would make a huge impact (either used or purchased new) include:

- *Twelve months of support* from you! We encourage you to donate on a monthly basis (\$50 per month)
- *Eleven new loppers* to support our volunteer days at our public preserves (\$275)
- *Ten office chairs* to for conducting meetings (\$1,000)
- *Nine office phones* at our Mill House (\$700)
- *Eight children's nature books* for our free little library (\$100)
- *Seven trail signs* at our public preserves (\$600)
- *Six trowels* for gardening at our preserves (\$50)
- *Five bird feeders* for our furry friends (\$150)
- *Four hiking backpacks* for when staff leads hikes (\$120)
- *Three wetland waders* for our wetland monitorings (\$150)
- *Two new laptops* for our staff (\$1,500)
- **A sturdy pickup truck for our field work!**



Geneva Lake Conservancy's headquarters, the "Mill House."

Your donations, in-kind gifts, and general support makes a lasting impact on the lands and waters that define our community. You can make a financial donation online at [GenevaLakeConservancy.org](http://GenevaLakeConservancy.org) or use the QR code on the right. Thank you!



## UPDATE ON CONSERVATION@HOME

Through its Conservation@Home programs, the Conservancy has reached 300 properties across Walworth County and beyond! Since the program was adopted by GLC in 2020, its personalized site consultations have empowered landowners to create healthy, sustainable habitats on their own land. Native plantings play a vital role in protecting biodiversity, improving watershed health, and supporting the long-term vitality of our local lakes.

Beyond Conservation@Home, the Conservancy is growing a greener, more native Walworth County. If you've been inspired by the C@H program, there's even more you can do—and we'd love your help. Explore our Conservation@Work program, created to bring sustainable, native landscapes to businesses, churches, homeowner associations, and entire neighborhoods. Whether you're a business owner, community leader, or simply passionate about nature, you can make a difference by:

- Scheduling a site consultation for your business, church, or HOA
- Spreading the word to your friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors
- Asking our Conservation@Home specialist to do a presentation for your work, coffee, or church group, or other organization

The more people we inspire, the greater the impact we can make—growing healthy, connected landscapes and protecting the health of our watershed. Learn more and help spread the word at



Karen Johnson receives her C@H sign from GLC

## GET READY TO CELEBRATE—HOLLY BALL IS ONE FOR THE BOOKS!

Geneva Lake Conservancy is gearing up for its annual fundraising gala Holly Ball on Saturday, December 6 at Big Foot Country Club and there is a lot to celebrate.

The Conservancy is awarding Liam Krehbiel, founder and CEO of Topography Hospitality, the Conservation Leadership Award. Topography has developed a plan for the former George Williams College to turn it into a “charming country inn” and create the 90-acre nature preserve with a conservation easement held by GLC.

The evening will also pay tribute to Executive Director Karen Yancey, who will be retiring at the end of the year after her years of dedicated leadership.

Holly Ball is GLC's largest fundraiser of the year, including a paddle raise that contributes to protecting the open lands, scenic beauty, and clean waters of Walworth County. The night includes a gourmet dinner, libations, entertainment, award presentations and dancing to the band “Platinum.”

This year's gala will dazzle under the theme “Holly Ball Goes Hollywood,” reflected in the elegant décor, entertainment, and ambiance of the evening. We invite guests to join the celebration by dressing in Hollywood-inspired attire. The Conservancy invites you to set aside this evening to celebrate and support conservation efforts in Walworth County. Use the QR code to register or visit [GenevaLakeConservancy.org](http://GenevaLakeConservancy.org).



Last year's Holly Ball 'Silver Bells' was a wonderful night!





# Geneva Lake Conservancy

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Our mission is to protect and restore the lands and waterways of Walworth County and beyond.



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