

Geneva Lake Conservancy Connections

Preserve and advocate for Walworth County waterways, natural areas, and working lands

Summer 2020

GENEVA LAKE CONSERVANCY HONORED AS 2020 LAND TRUST OF THE YEAR

Gathering Waters, Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts, has honored Geneva Lake Conservancy as the 2020 Wisconsin Land Trust of the Year for its outstanding conservation work.

From its humble beginnings in 1977, as the Committee to Save Geneva Lake, the organization has grown to protect and manage environmentally significant land in Walworth County, including waterways, natural areas, and working lands.

While the Geneva Lake Conservancy has been in existence for many years, its positive impact has increased exponentially in terms of acquisitions, contributions, and membership during the past year," said David Bretl, retired Walworth County Administrator. "Its efforts in land preservation, public education, and mobilization of support truly merit the designation of Land Trust of the Year."

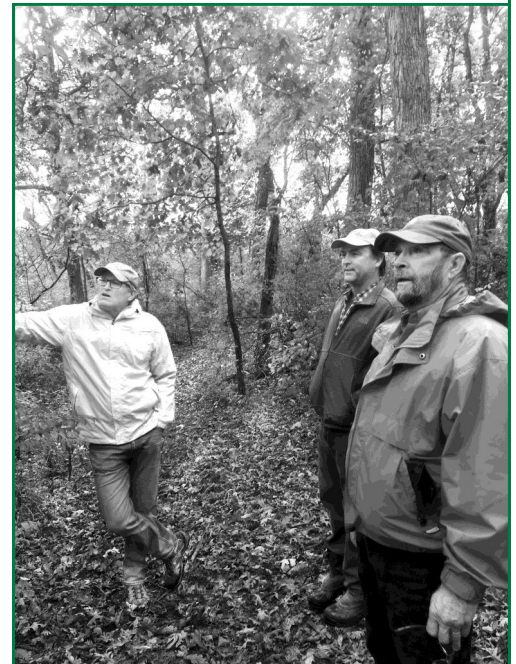
In 2019, Geneva Lake Conservancy protected 556 acres known as the Holzinger Memorial Preserve. The area is habitat for the Blanding's Turtle, a species of special concern in Wisconsin, and the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake. The conservation easement was the largest recorded by a land trust in Wisconsin in 2019.

The Conservancy also purchased Bromley Woods in the town of La Grange. This 40-acre public preserve boasts an oak forest, kettle pond, rare oak savanna, and an established trail system.

Along with land and watershed protection, another Conservancy goal is to engage the community and introduce people, especially children, teens, and young adults, to the wonders of nature.

With a generous donation from Jack Rohner in memory of his late wife, Geneva Lake Conservancy completed the Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park in Williams Bay. The park with its trout stream is the only wildlife area and nature center in Wisconsin dedicated to teaching children how to fish and appreciate the wonders of nature.

"We want to thank our board and staff, as well as our generous members, donors, volunteers and partners, who have all helped make these last few years a time of great growth and success in realizing the Conservancy's mission," said Kevin Brunner, Geneva Lake Conservancy's chairman.



Chairman Kevin Brunner (right) and board members Chris Todd (center) and Mark Bromley hike Bromley Woods, which was recognized by Gathering Water's as one of the GLC's achievements.

Gathering Waters Names Charles and Dianna Colman Wisconsin's 2020 Conservationists of the Year

Gathering Waters, Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts, has named Charles and Dianna Colman as the 2020 Conservationists of the Year.

The Colmans' commitment to protecting special places in and around the Geneva Lake area and their impressive leadership have earned them the award.

Charles served on the Conservancy's Board of Directors for 16 years before retiring in December 2019. He chaired the Board for four years and led advocacy and accreditation committees. During his tenure, the Conservancy protected over 2,000 acres, received accreditation from the National Land Trust Accreditation Commission, and advocated for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.



Charles and Dianna Colman

"The Colmans use their talents and insights to protect and enhance conservation in Walworth County," said Janet Happ, the Conservancy's director of development. "From sharing their love of the environment with children to raising money to help organizations continue conservation work, and protecting their own property forever, they share their love of conservation and lead by example."

In 2015, the Colmans made a personal commitment to conservation by permanently protecting the 28-acre oak forest surrounding their home with a conservation easement. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that limits land use to protect its conservation value.

In addition to his time with Geneva Lake Conservancy, Charles served as president of the Friends of Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy, a group that supports the unique 212-acre conservancy in Williams Bay. He also serves as chairman and commissioner of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC).

"Charles has long demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to land conservation in Southeastern Wisconsin," said Kevin J. Muhs, SEWRPC Executive Director. "He is an excellent leader and brings knowledge, resources, and experience to his efforts to help the region's environment. Charles is a committed citizen-leader."

Dianna served as President of the Lake Geneva Fresh Air Association, which operates Holiday Home Camp. The camp introduces between 500 to 700 low-income youth from urban areas to nature each year. Dianna raised funds for cabins, addressed lakefront concerns, and built a health center. Holiday Home is the oldest camp in the United States still operating in its original location.

Her most recent accomplishment was the preservation of the historic Yerkes Observatory property, the birthplace of modern astrophysics and home of the largest refracting telescope in the world. In 2018, the University of Chicago announced it was closing the Observatory and seeking a new steward. The Williams Bay Community thought they would lose the iconic structure that has overlooked the village since 1887 forever.

Then Dianna stepped up to lead the Yerkes Future Foundation, a nonprofit group dedicated to protecting the Observatory and the lands surrounding it. She led a team that spent two years negotiating with the University. In May 2020, the University transferred ownership of the Yerkes Observatory and 49 acres of critical habitat to the Yerkes Future Foundation. Now the public can continue to enjoy these open spaces, wooded areas, and tour the magnificent building for generations to come.

CONSERVATION@HOME VOLUNTEERS VISIT 40 PROPERTY OWNERS

Conservation@Home volunteers visited 40 property owners this spring and summer and certified 18 for meeting criteria for an ecologically healthy property.

“Both our volunteers and property owners really seemed to enjoy the one-hour consultations,” said Shelby Best, the Conservancy’s community outreach specialist. “Our volunteers have the expertise to answer their questions and point out areas of their property where improvements can be made to help create a more ecologically healthy environment.”



Karl Otzen, Conservation@Home sponsor, after his property was evaluated by Kathleen Renowden and Shelby Best. Otzen said that he funded the program because it promotes and recognizes best landscaping practices, which protect our watersheds.

The Conservancy’s volunteers include Kathleen Renowden, Joan Rost, Rebecca Ellis and Gerri Green who all are Master Gardeners or have worked for years in horticulture. The Conservancy also wants to thank Karl and Lucy Otzen and the Otzen Family Foundation for underwriting the program. If you are interested in a Conservation@Home visit this fall or in spring 2021, email glc@genevalakeconservancy.org.



Louise and Richard Tuma of Williams Bay are one of the homeowners who became certified under the Conservancy’s new Conservation@Home program.

CONSERVANCY LAND TRUST OF THE YEAR (continued from page 1)

The Conservancy also reaches out to private property owners with informational and action-based programs.

“Keeping It Blue” is one of those initiatives. The educational program has built community awareness of the dangers of phosphorus run-off and blue-green algae blooms in Walworth County lakes. In conjunction with the program, the Conservancy leads the Geneva Lake Task Force to proactively address rising phosphorus levels, help prevent and monitor invasive species and reduce agricultural runoff.

“As Walworth County’s conservation needs grow due to increased density and climate change, the teamwork displayed by our board, staff, members, volunteers and partner organizations is allowing us to address these needs and protect our scenic beauty and ecological health,” said Karen Yancey, the Conservancy’s executive director.



Geneva Lake Conservancy staff (left to right) Janet Happ, Karen Yancey, Jodi Karow, Izabelle Krieger and Kiera Theys, Not pictured Shelby Best.

“Geneva Lake Conservancy is making a tangible, positive impact in Walworth County,” said Mike Carlson, executive director of Gathering Waters. “Through land acquisitions, conservation easements, and hosting educational programs and public events that engage the community, Geneva Lake Conservancy helps people understand the value of getting involved in conservation.”

The award will be presented at the Conservancy’s August 29 Road Rally.

GENEVA LAKE TASK FORCE CHANGES NAME AND EXPANDS FOCUS

The Geneva Lake Task Force changed its name this summer to the WATER ALLIANCE FOR PRESERVING GENEVA LAKE'. The Water Alliance includes representatives from the Conservancy, Geneva Lake Association, Geneva Lake Environmental Agency, Walworth County Conservation Office, Department of Natural Resources, UW-Whitewater, and local municipalities.

The mission of the alliance is to proactively address water quality issues that threaten the ecological health of the lake. This summer the Water Alliance is overseeing the following:

- Testing water from tributaries of Geneva Lake to identify streams bringing excess phosphorus into the lake with the goal of identifying and fixing sources of excess phosphorus.
- Working with the GLEA to remove Starry Stonewort from Geneva Lake and develop the personnel and systems to clean boats to prevent more invasive species from entering the lake.
- Testing septic systems in the Geneva Lake Watershed to determine those that are not working properly and adding pollution to the lake.
- Addressing storm water issues from a gravel pit in Williams Bay and runoff from State Highway 50 that are carrying pollutants into the lake.
- Providing farmers in the Geneva Lake watershed with funds to plant cover crops to reduce the runoff from agricultural fields into the lake.
- Educating property owners on Geneva Lake on how they can help reduce phosphorus and chloride entering the lake with the Conservancy's "Keeping It Blue" and Conservation@Home program.

Watch for our "Keeping It Blue" column in the Lake Geneva Regional News for more information on the Water Alliance's efforts or visit the Conservancy Website at www.genevalakeconservancy.org.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

September 26—Join us for seed picking at the Turner Tract in the Hackmatack Wildlife Refuge from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. For more information, see our Website.

October 17 and 24 – Join us to plant oak trees at the new Oak Savanna being created at White River County Park. See page 10 and 11 for more information.

CONSERVANCY WELCOMES SUMMER INTERN IZABELLE KRIEGER



This June Izabelle Krieger joined the Geneva Lake Conservancy as their 2020 summer intern. She has just completed her second year at University of Wisconsin Stout, where she is studying Environmental and Plant Science. At school, Izabelle volunteers at the campus garden and greenhouse.

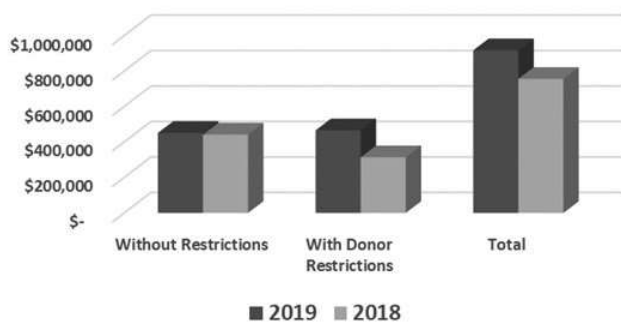
Izabelle is from Richmond, Illinois and is the 4th generation in her family to spend summers in their home on Lake Geneva. She is excited to be taking action in the community through working with the Conservancy on beneficial projects.

This summer Izabelle managed the Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park, installing the new butterfly garden, and learning to monitor and report conservation easements. Please join us in welcoming Izabelle to GLC!

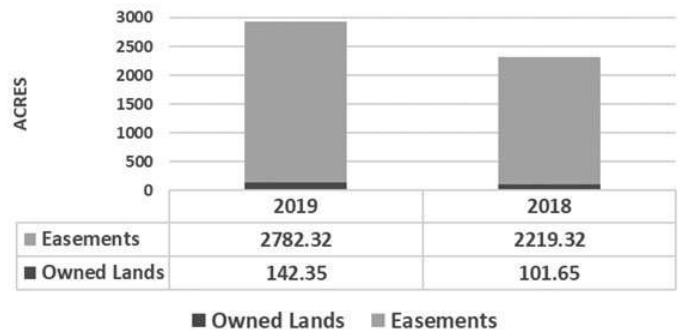
GLC 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

	2019			2018		
	Without Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues						
Contributions	355,409	339,725	695,134	309,180	188,783	497,963
Special Events Net of Expenses	93,391		93,391	99,727		99,727
Donated Land		125,920	125,920		125,000	125,000
Other	2,376		2,376	234		234
	<u>451,176</u>	<u>465,645</u>	<u>916,821</u>	<u>409,141</u>	<u>313,783</u>	<u>722,924</u>
Expenses						
Land Protection and Advocacy	223,946	87,782	311,728	226,985	60,546	287,531
Management and General	125,759		125,759	92,288		92,288
Fundraising	82,279		82,279	82,625		82,625
	<u>431,984</u>	<u>87,782</u>	<u>519,766</u>	<u>401,898</u>	<u>60,546</u>	<u>462,444</u>

GLC Revenue



Conservation Acres



Land Protection Accomplishments:

- **2016:** 28 acre Colman Woods conservation easement
- **2017:** 82 acres purchased, Helen Rohner Children’s Fishing Park (5) and Hansen Preserve (77)
- **2018:** 83 acres, Yggdrasil conservation easement (79) and Stevens Family Land Trust property (4)
- **2019:** 604 acres, Holtzinger Preserve (556), Bromley Woods (41), 2 Geneva Lake easements (7)

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed a 556-acre conservation easement protecting Blanding’s turtle habitat to be known as the Holzinger Memorial Preserve
- Signed and recorded two conservation easements on the North Shore of Geneva Lake that prevent further subdivision of the properties and protect remnant oak forests.
- Protected a 40-acre oak forest in the Town of LaGrange through a purchase and donation by the Bromley family that opened as a public preserve in May 2020.
- Launched the “Keeping It Blue” program to reduce phosphorus runoff to Walworth County waterways and organized the Water Alliance for Preservation of Geneva Lake to address problems in the lake and its watershed.
- Welcomed 200 new members and raised more than \$900,000 in grants and donations.

2020 GOALS

- Introduce Conservation@Home to improve the ecological health of private property, particularly bordering lakes and waterways, and complete at least 30 visits by volunteer teams.
- Complete 2 to 3 land protection projects, including the purchase of 20 additional acres bordering the Bromley Woods preserve.
- Lead the Water Alliance to address lake’s ecological issues and continue implementing the “Keeping It Blue” program.
- Work with landowners to replant oak trees and restore oak forests and savannas.
- Continue to work with landowners in the Hackmatack focus area to protect open lands and restore ecological health.
- Expand community outreach programs at Helen Rohner Children’s Fishing Park and Conservancy nature preserves to involve younger audiences.

GLC Membership by Categories

For January 1 to December 31, 2019 (new members in green)

Conservation Society - \$10,000 & above

Bromley Woods LLC
 Charles & Dianna Colman Charitable Foundation
 Sarah and John Cobb
 E.C. Styberg Foundation
 Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
 Griffith Family Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Haubrich
 Mr. and Mrs. Allen C. Hermansen
 The LIZ Peace Fund
 Mr. and Mrs. Karl Otzen & the Otzen Family Foundation
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Parker, Jr.
 Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Foundation
Pheasants Forever, Inc. S.E. Wisconsin Chapter #190
 The Richard H. Driehaus Charitable Lead Trust
 Mr. Jack Rohner
Mr. Dean Taylor
Joan Thompson
 Ventas Charitable Foundation
 Wisconsin Power & Light Co.

Preservation Society - \$5,000 to \$9,999

A.G. Cox Charity Trust
 Bartlett Tree Experts
 Carol Bernick
 Brent & Sharon Brodeski Charitable Fund
 Ulla E. Brunk
 Daniel C. Ferguson Charitable Trust
 Mr. and Mrs. Steve Diamond
 Wendy Perks Fisher
 Jeff and Molly Keller
Mariani Landscape
 Mr. John K. Notz, Jr.
Pheasants Forever Walworth County Chapter #53
 Philip W. Hagenah Family Fund
 Susan and John Major Donor Advised Fund
 Williams Bay Lions Club



Stewardship Society - \$1,000 to \$4,999

The Abra Wilkin Fund
 Adreani Family Foundation
 The Alben F. and Clara G. Bates Foundation
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 Anna Emery Hanson Charitable Trust
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 Kristin L. Anderson Charitable Foundation
 Lake Geneva Blind Co. LLC
 Lake Geneva Garden Club Foundation
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Memorial donations for Gregory Trimberger

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Mr. and Mrs. Jim Wilson

Gregory Trimberger had a love of the outdoors where he found beauty, peace and fulfillment, particularly along the White River and the White River County Park. He often kayaked the river, filing trash bags with litter along the way.

When Gregory passed away at age 33 in December, his parents asked that donations be made in his memory to the Geneva Lake Conservancy to be used in support of the White River County Park.



We greatly appreciate each gift given in support of the Geneva Lake Conservancy, and we have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this listing.

Please notify Janet Happ, Director of Development, of any inaccuracies or omission by contacting her at janethapp@genevalakeconservancy.org or (262) 275-5700.

We regret any errors.

Thank you to our Sponsors!

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GLC CELEBRATES OAKTOBER

The majestic oak savannas and woodlands of Walworth County are disappearing. Only 17 percent of oak trees that were here prior to European settlement remain. You can help preserve and replace these oak trees by participating in one or all of three special Conservancy activities this fall: 1. Our annual Heritage Oak Contest; 2. Oak tree sale for property owners and 3. A special opportunity to help plant an oak tree in our new oak savanna at White River County Park.

HERITAGE OAK CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Enter one of three categories: **Oldest Oak Tree, Most Beautiful Oak Tree, and Tree Associated with best story.** Winners will be announced at the Conservancy Fall Fundraiser and receive a plaque and one hour free consultation from a tree expert on their oak tree.

Entries due by September 10

_____ Oldest Oak Tree—please provide age and circumference of the tree 3 feet from the ground

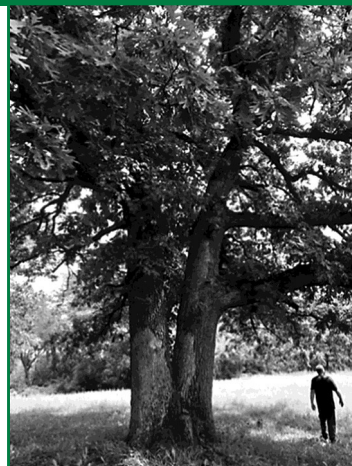
_____ Most Beautiful Oak Tree—please provide a digital photo of your tree

_____ Tree Associated with the best story—please share your tree's story in 500 hundred words or less

Name: _____ Email: _____

Cell phone: _____ Address of Tree's Location: _____

Person submitting entry must be owner of property on which tree is located or be entering a tree located on municipal or other public land. Thank you.



Mark Bromley with his oak tree that won Most Beautiful Oak in 2019.

GLC OAK TREE ORDER FORM

Deadline for ordering is September 15

Proceeds will benefit GLC's restoration efforts.

Please indicate the number of each tree you would like to purchase below.

(Trees will come with planting instructions and oak tree care tips.)

All trees in 3 gallon pots are \$50.00. Trees grown in 5 gallon pots are \$65.00.

_____ 3 Gal Swamp White Oak. (Prefers acidic, moist, well-drained soils. Height at maturity: 50-60')

_____ 3 Gal Bur Oak (Prefers dry, alkaline soils that are well drained. Height at maturity: 70-80')

_____ 5 Gal Bur Oak (Prefers dry, alkaline soils that are well drained: Height at maturity: 70-80')

Both Species provide superior benefits to wildlife, require at least 6 hours of direct sunlight per day, and are tolerant of both drought and poor drainage.

All trees can be picked up at the Geneva Lake Conservancy garage, 398 Mill Street, Fontana, WI between October 1 and October 15.

You may order from our website or send your check made out to the Geneva Lake Conservancy and this form to PO BOX 588, Fontana, WI 53125. For questions, call Bob Nordhaus at 262-949-1185.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Cell phone: _____

PLANT YOUR FAMILY'S ROOTS DEEP IN WALWORTH COUNTY

If you are looking for a meaningful project for your family in this time of social distancing, we invite you to plant your family's roots deep in Walworth County by planting an oak tree in our new oak savanna at White River County Park.

Oak savannas, a group of oak trees, which dotted the prairie landscapes of southern Wisconsin before European settlement, have now become one of the rarest landscapes on the planet. Your family can help heal the earth and recreate an oak savanna, which provides habitat for more than 500 plant and animal species. Oak trees are slow growing and often live 100-300 years.

On Saturday, October 17 or Saturday, November 7, help the Geneva Lake Conservancy and Walworth County Public Works department plant young oak trees in the midst of the prairie restoration at the park. We will be planting 60 oak trees this year to begin the savanna.

You can plant one of these trees by filling out the form below or signing up at the GLC Website at www.genevalakeconservancy.org. We will be planting approximately 30 trees on each of these Saturdays and will provide the shovels and other equipment for your family to plant its tree. Please sign up for one of the times indicated. This will ensure that your family will be properly socially distanced from other families planting a tree. A mask for each family member is required and garden gloves are recommended. All equipment will be cleaned between each use.

To help cover the cost of the trees, we are asking each family to donate \$10. When you finish planting the tree, you will be given a map showing where your tree is located. Keep this with your family's important papers and someday your great grandchild may be looking up at the tree you planted.



A young oak savanna.

NAME _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

CELL PHONE _____ NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS _____

We will plant a tree on the following date and time:

Saturday, October 17 9 a.m. 10 a.m. 11 a.m. Noon

Saturday, November 7 9 a.m. 10 a.m. 11 a.m. Noon

Please mail form and your donation to:
Geneva Lake Conservancy
PO Box 588
Fontana, WI 53125

CONNECTIONS spring photo by Jim Frost. Special thanks to Jim for his assistance with photographs.



Geneva Lake Conservancy

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Our mission is to preserve and advocate for Walworth County waterways, natural areas and working lands.



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Geneva Lake Conservancy

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DETAILS AND REGISTRATION ONLINE at www.GenevaLakeConservancy.org or CALL 262-275-5700.

Drive your car – classic or family favorite through Walworth County countryside to visit GLC nature preserves followed by gourmet picnic box dinner in four seatings and Gathering Waters award presentations at GLC Mill House in Fontana, WI.

*All event plans are subject to change in light of possible COVID19 restrictions.

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