



To protect and restore the lands and
waterways of Walworth County

Winter 2022

CONSERVANCY SPEARHEADS NEW GENEVA LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Geneva Lake Conservancy began work in the fourth quarter to update the 2008 Geneva Lake Management Plan as a result of new issues facing the lake, including rising phosphorus levels, new invasive species and increased boat traffic. The 2024 Geneva Lake Management Plan Update will include a survey of property owners in the lake's watershed and a public meeting to kick-off the plan, which will be held January 11 at 4 p.m. at Horticultural Hall in Lake Geneva.

"While Geneva Lake's water quality continues to be excellent, we want to be proactive rather than reactive in protecting the lake and addressing the problems caused by increased development, climate change and more boat traffic," said Tom Nickols, Conservancy Vice Chair and Co-Chair of the Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake.

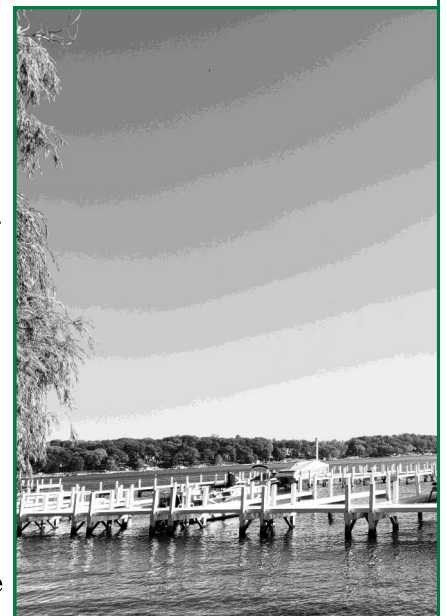
The new management plan is partially funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) that the Conservancy received earlier this year. The Conservancy staff will work closely with the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission (SEWRPC) and the Geneva Lake Environmental Agency (GLEA) to complete the plan.

The lake's phosphorus levels were the second highest on record this spring. The management plan will analyze the many sources of phosphorus in the lake – from agricultural runoff to lawn waste to septic systems — and make recommendations on how to reduce this runoff. It will also examine the invasive species that are impacting aquatic life and how they can be controlled or eliminated. Drone photos of boat traffic on summer weekends will be studied to determine if new or different regulations would be helpful. Various data on Geneva Lake from other private and public agencies will be gathered to include in the plan, which will be drafted by SEWRPC.

The Conservancy has hired University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (UW-W) student Savannah Thomas to assist in gathering data for the plan. The Conservancy will also use recent water tests of tributaries of Geneva Lake completed by UW-W Professor Dale Splinter and his students that include two years of data.

"Our mission is to protect the lakes and waterways of Walworth County," said Karen Yancey, the Conservancy's Executive Director. "We hope to take the lessons we learn from completing this plan for Geneva Lake and provide similar assistance to other lakes in the county."

If you are interested in attending the January 11 meeting to provide comments regarding the issues facing Geneva Lake, please email ktheys@genevalakeconservancy.org.



The view of the lake from Williams Bay.

CONSERVANCY TO CLOSE ON SEVERAL NEW LAND PROTECTION PROJECTS

The Geneva Lake Conservancy board and staff have been working throughout 2022 to protect three additional parcels totaling approximately 100 acres.

SCENIC FARM – The first of these is a beautiful 29 acre farm with a tributary to the White River that contains more than 100 species of native wildflowers and plants along its banks. The tributary area is part of a Primary Environmental Corridor that provides habitat for wildlife. The property also has approximately 20 acres of prime agricultural land and several historic and well-kept buildings including a stone barn. The Conservancy expects to sign a conservation easement with the owner to forever protect this property from subdivision or other degradation by year end.



The kettle pond at Bromley Woods pictured on a wintry day. Bromley III is located just south of Greening Rd, while Bromley I (where the kettle pond is located) and Bromley II are located on the north side of the road.

LAKE IVANHOE WETLANDS – The Conservancy is working with two landowners of a 39-acre wetland on Lake Ivanhoe that contains several rare fens and a Tamarack swamp. The fen and swamp contain a number of rare and important native plants identified by Zach Kron, a Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission scientist. Several rare bird species have also been identified there. One of the landowners is a descendant of the original founders of the Lake Ivanhoe community. The property will be purchased with a generous grant from the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Fund and Ducks Unlimited, as well as private donations.



Southern Tamarack Swamps, like this one pictured on the Ivanhoe property, are common in and around the ancient lakebed of Glacial Lake Wisconsin.

BROMLEY III – The final 23 acres of Bromley Woods, a beautiful oak forest and kettle pond, is expected to close in the next few months. All of the private donations for this purchase have been raised and a Knowles Nelson grant has been approved, but the Conservancy is waiting for federal funds through a Ducks Unlimited grant to complete the purchase. This property expands the size of the Conservancy's Bromley Woods preserve from 60 to 83 acres and provides several new hiking trails.

Several other conservation easement projects are pending, including one that would add additional protection to a Geneva Lake estate, preventing the development of several lots. The Conservancy thanks all our members who have donated to these projects and expects to raise the remaining funds needed for the Lake Ivanhoe purchase with a paddle raise at the December 3 Holly Ball.

CONSERVANCY ADVOCATES FOR HILLMOOR AND AGAINST SOUTH STREET AND LINN PROJECTS

The Conservancy has worked to step up its advocacy efforts in 2022. Conservancy reps spoke in favor of purchasing the Hillmoor golf course property as a new public park and nature preserve in the City of Lake Geneva as well as testified against several projects that would harm the environment.

The Conservancy spoke in support of the Lake Geneva City Council’s purchase of the Hillmoor property for \$6 million at an October city council meeting and volunteered to develop a master plan for the 90 acres of floodplain on the 200-acre property. The Conservancy toured the property in October and plans to lead volunteer work days on the site to remove buckthorn and other invasive species this winter after the city’s purchase of the property has closed.

“The Conservancy appreciates the persistent efforts of Mayor Klein and the Lake Geneva City Council to prevent another dense mixed-use development in the city that would have added to traffic, density and pollution,” said Karen Yancey, the Conservancy’s Executive Director. “Instead, the city will have a new 200-acre park and nature preserve that will help protect water quality, lower density and provide an oasis for residents and visitors where they can hike, view wildlife and pursue a variety of recreational activities.”

The Conservancy also worked with South Street resident Carol Brady throughout 2022 to defeat a proposal by the City of Lake Geneva to construct a 10-foot-wide bike trail along South Street. The federally funded path would have required removing more than 40 oak and maple trees. The cement bike paths would have negatively impacted water flow along the street and into Geneva Lake. The path would have also funneled bikers down to South Shore Drive near Big Foot Beach State Park, an already congested area along Geneva Lake’s shoreline.

Finally, the Conservancy testified against a development proposal in the Town of Linn that would have placed approximately 40 homes on an 80 acre parcel adjacent to Reek School. The developer requested a zoning change from the 5-acre lots allowed on the property, and also proposed cutting down most of the woodland on the property that is part of a Primary Environmental Corridor for wildlife.

Several residents suggested that the developer, who is from Arizona, work with the Conservancy on a revised plan that preserves the environmental corridor and respects the low density, rural character of the Town of Linn where most of the land is in agriculture.

“As we see increased pollution problems caused by overdevelopment in Walworth County, the Conservancy is stepping up its advocacy efforts to ask for appropriate development that respects the scenic beauty and high conservation values of our remaining open land,” said Chris Todd, Chair of the Conservancy’s Advocacy Committee.



The Save South Street Trees campaign, championed by Carol Brady and other concerned Geneva Lake residents, marked the trees that would have been removed with yellow ribbons.

2022 HERITAGE OAK TREE CONTEST WINNERS

Every year, the Conservancy holds a Heritage Oak Tree Contest to celebrate the majestic oaks of Walworth County. Oaks are one of the most ecologically important trees in the Midwest: they provide superior benefits to wildlife and help sequester carbon in our Earth’s atmosphere. With only seventeen percent of our old-growth oak trees remaining, it is vastly important to conserve these trees and the natural lands they live on.

We want to recognize those landowners who care for their beloved oaks. We have three categories of winners: Oak Tree Associated with the Best Story, Most Beautiful Oak Tree, and Oldest Oak Tree. This year, winners will receive a plaque that they can stake into the ground next to their tree, recognizing it as a Heritage Oak.

OAK TREE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BEST STORY

The Oak Tree Associated with the Best Story was awarded to Chuck Haubrich. According to Chuck, “A magnificent red oak lies on the southeast corner of my woods below a 50 foot high ridge. The high ground ensures it receives plenty of moisture and provides protection from north and west winds. The crown is in excellent condition with only a couple lower dead branches.”

	6/28/06	5/23/11	10/15/18	9/23/22
Circumference at breast height, ie.4 ft	143.75	147.5	150.5	157.0
Increase in circumference from last measurement		3.75	3.0	6.5
Annual increase in circumference from last measurement		0.94	0.38	1.6
Total increase in circumference		3.75	6.75	13.25
Diameter	45.8	46.1	47.9	50.0
Increase in diameter from last measurement		0.3	1.9	2.1
Annual increase in diameter from last measurement		0.073	0.23	0.5
Total increase in diameter from 2006		0.3	2.1	4.2
Average annual increase in diameter from 2006		0.3 inches per year	0.2 inches per year	0.26 inches per year



Chuck's dog, Bebop, sits next to the large red oak.

“Over 16 years, I routinely measured the circumference of the tree at four feet above the ground and calculated the diameter. The tree increased an average of 0.26 inches annually, from 45.8 in 2006 to 50 inches on September 23rd of this year.”

MOST BEAUTIFUL OAK TREE

The Conservancy awarded three submissions in the Most Beautiful Oak category.

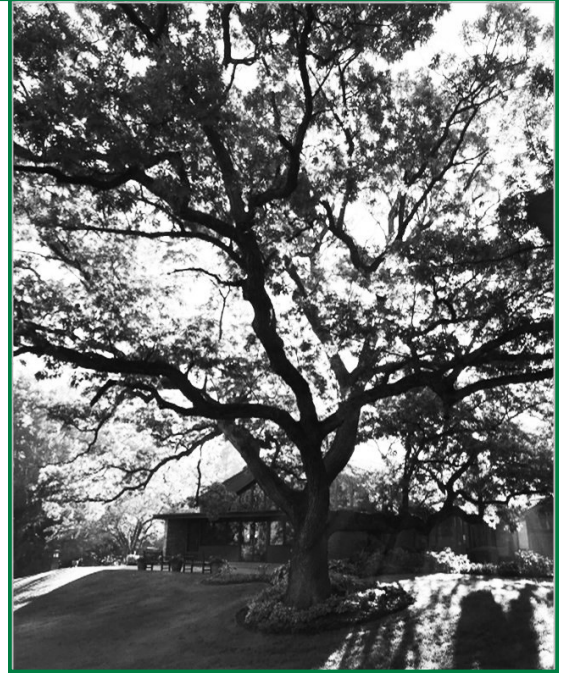
In first place was Pastor Sean Walker’s submission for Chapel on the Hill’s prominent 210-year-old oak tree. According to Pastor Sean, “This tree is at the northwest corner of our sanctuary in our main building. It is estimated to be 210 years old and has a circumference of around 11 feet at 3 feet from the ground. One of its distinctive features is a long arm extending perpendicularly to the ground, providing a great climb for kids who have visited the tree over the years!”

In second place was Dan Nelson’s submission. He stated that the neighborhood children can usually be found playing under the tree’s large branches, and that a local arborist referred to it as a “dinosaur” after visiting. The tree measures 158 inches around and is in Delavan.

In third place was Lynne Igyarto-Cole’s tree, which measures 12.8 feet around and is in the middle of her pasture in East Troy.

OLDEST OAK TREE

The award for Oldest Oak Tree is a tie, with three first place winners with different species of oaks. A second place winner in the bur oak species was also named. Due to the extraordinary size, variety, and beauty of the trees, the Conservancy is thrilled to showcase the four winning trees. The 2022 entries display three different species of oak: – bur, white, and black.



The Chapel on the Hill oak tree stands tall on campus.

Bur Oak

Kathy and Lee Reynolds – approximately 408 years old
(Powers Lake)

Rita and Bob O’Brien – approximately 355 years old
(Geneva Lake –
South Shore)

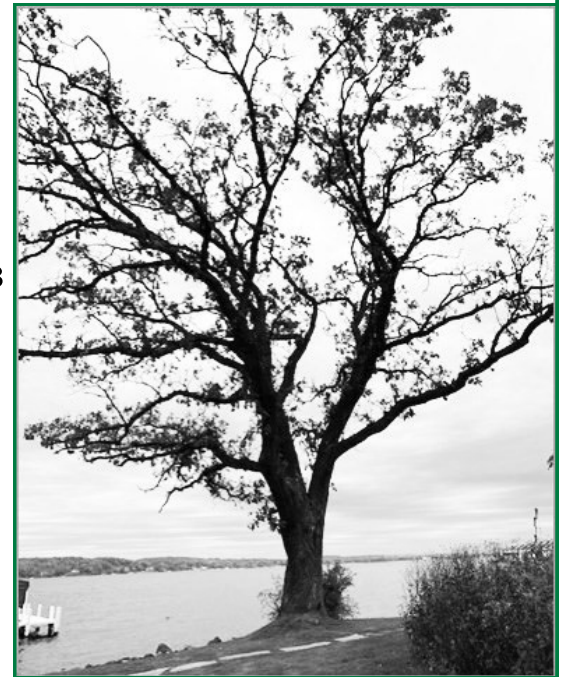
Black Oak

Kishwauketoe
Nature
Conservancy –
approximately 343
years old
(Williams Bay)

White Oak

Lori and Rich
Stearns -
approximately 358 years old (Williams Bay).

All of the trees ages were determined using a growth factor equation and the Morton Arboretum’s tree age identification chart.



Rita and Bob O’Brien’s 355 year old oak on the shores of Geneva Lake.



Kathy Reynolds poses with her 408 year old oak tree.

The Conservancy would like to thank the Griffith Family Foundation, Keefe Kares and an anonymous donor for sponsoring the Heritage Oak Program.

CONSERVATION@HOME

The Conservancy would like to acknowledge the homeowners that received their Conservation@Home certification this year. From seed-grown prairies, lakeshore plantings, and woodland oases, these homeowners have all created significant native habitat, worked to fight against invasive species, and/or helped prevent water pollution. The Conservancy would like to congratulate each of them for their contribution to the environmental quality of Walworth County.

Dale Beyers	Julie and Jim Maher
Greg and Amy Brown	Nancy and Rex Newcomb
Cheryl Bulat	Yvonne Shu
Sonya Dailey	Josh Skolnick
Jim Feeney	Theresa and Gerhard Stegemann
Jack Graham	Toby and Shari Steivang
The Griffith Family	Sybil Lane Association
Linda Houge	Katie VanEgeren
Susan Kapanke	Emily VanLaeys
Susan Lacerra	Howard Zabler



Dale and Ava Beyers pose with their Conservation@Home sign.

If you would like to learn more about Conservation@Home, call the Conservancy office at 262.275.5700 or visit GenevaLakeConservancy.org to sign up.

HEALTHY LAKES

As mentioned in one of the Conservancy's recent 'Keeping it Blue' articles in the Lake Geneva Regional News, a focus on the Healthy Lakes Program remains a priority for GLC.

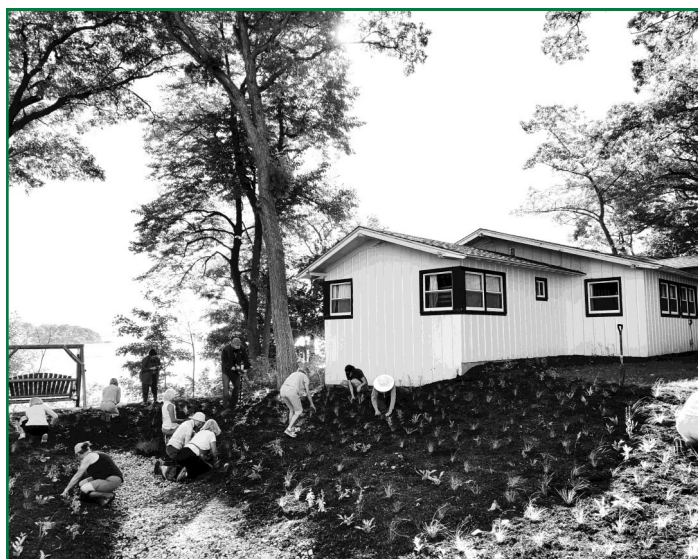
The Healthy Lakes & Rivers program allows for property owners around Geneva Lake to install rain gardens and native buffer strips near the lakefront to improve shoreline habitat & water quality.

This is the Conservancy's fourth year applying for the program. Over the years, it has planted thirty-seven rain gardens and native buffer strips on Geneva Lake and Lauderdale Lakes.

Some familiar groups and properties that have participated in the program over the years include Holiday Home Camp, Conference Point Camp, and Yerkes Observatory.

These plantings are an excellent example of why homeowners should focus on planting more native species on their properties. Rain gardens and native buffer strips help to hold in the shoreline and combat the vast erosion issues Geneva Lake has been experiencing from extreme storm events. Native plants deep root systems also help to filter water before it reaches the lake, which helps prevent phosphorous pollution, a large contributor to local lake health issues.

To learn more about Healthy Lakes & Rivers and what you can do to protect the health of our lakes, contact Kiera Theys, Land Protection Manager, at ktheys@genevalakeconservancy.org.



Lake Geneva and Fontana Garden Club volunteers helped establish the Healthy Lakes rain gardens at Conference Point Camp in 2021.

CINDY MILOJEVIC AND MARK ASCHLIMAN JOIN CONSERVANCY BOARD

Cindy Noonan Milojevic grew up spending all her summers at Lake Geneva. Once school was out, her family headed to the lake for a summer of swimming, skiing, walks in the woods and time with family and friends. She joined the Water Safety Patrol and for three summers was a lifeguard at George Williams College, Fontana Beach and other locations. Cindy married and thankfully her husband loved the lake as much as she did. They subsequently bought their own home at the lake in 1987.

Since that time, she has actively advocated for the health of the lake and the surrounding area. She is no stranger to the work of the GLC; last year she completed her Master Gardener certification, she has worked with the Conservation@Home program, advocated for and worked with the GLC and Roy Diblik to establish a rain garden at her association, and has been on the Holly Ball planning committee for many years.



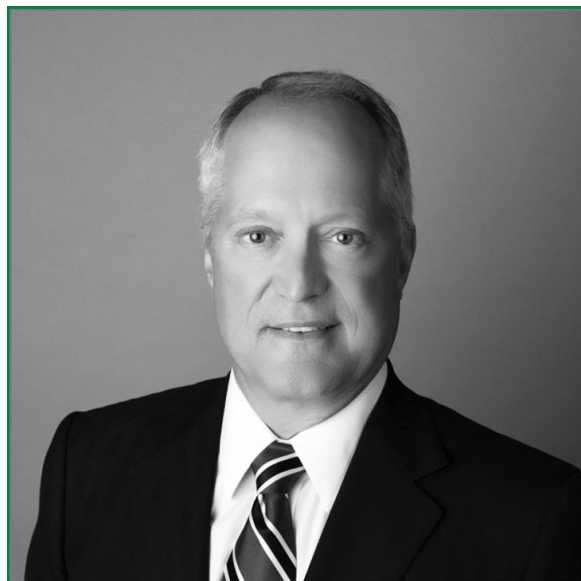
Cindy has a Masters degree in Public Health from Northwestern University, a Masters from Concordia University in Educational Leadership and an undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois. After a lengthy career in the dental business, she migrated into an educational position where she became the Assistant Principal for Student Activities at Oak Park and River Forest High school. She is now retired but still acting as an educational consultant. Throughout her life, Lake Geneva has been her passion and it remains so for her family which now celebrates the fourth generation of family members at the lake. She is excited about joining the Conservancy board and fueling her passion for this special place.

Mark R. Aschliman joined the Conservancy board in October 2022. Since his youth, Mark has spent time on Geneva Lake as has his wife, Patty. The couple currently reside in Williams Bay and Naples, Florida.

A retired orthopedic surgeon who with his wife raised four children in Whitefish Bay, Mark has served on the Geneva Lake Water Safety Patrol Board, St. Monica Parish Council and School Board, Wisconsin Medical Society board, Peter Stathas Dance board, and the University of Chicago Medical Alumni Council among others.

An avid outdoor sportsman, Mark is passionate about habitat, land, and water protection, He is also involved in the Conservancy's Healthy Lakes Program.

Mark looks forward to working on the Geneva Lake Conservancy board and contributing to the environmental protection of Walworth County.





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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GLC SAYS GOODBYE TO COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER

Maddie Olivieri, the Conservancy's Community Outreach Manager, will be leaving her job in December to move to Illinois.

She has been instrumental in growing our Conservation@Home program for property owners, as well as managing our activities at Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park. In her role, she used her excellent tech and graphic design skills to design our newsletter, and manage our email communications and social media. She also led several of our work days and hikes, as well as other community outreach activities.

We will miss her warmth, enthusiasm and technology and conservation expertise. The board and staff wish her much success in her future endeavors.



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