



# Geneva Lake Conservancy Connections

Protecting the environmental character of the Geneva Lakes area

Spring 2015

## Letter from the Chairman

The Geneva Lake Conservancy had a great year in 2014. Our financial results were in the black thanks to loyal donors, good sponsorships and successful events. I thank our members for their support because, as many of you know in the not-for-profit world, each year is a new year in terms of securing funding. I hope you enjoyed our events and understand the work we do.

The Conservancy now has 1,956 acres under easement (up over 1,000 acres in five years) with the addition of my 28 acre wooded property north of Geneva Lake. Much work is going into restoration of the woods itself and I just didn't want to see its beauty harmed by future development dividing up the property. It's a beautiful woods now but needs new young trees to make it healthy for the long term. I'm happy I have finally been able to focus my time and attention on this work.

We recently finished the first half of a strategic planning update for our organization. We discussed staffing, board leadership, our post recession financial trends, the status of our Stewardship and Legal Defense funding required for Land Trust Accreditation, the growth and increasing diversity of our easements and our advocacy challenges and successes. I'm happy to say the Board desires to push the organization forward to be the recognized leader in the Walworth County Lakes Area in conservation--protecting and treasuring our land, water and way of life. While we don't have all the details of our planning completed yet, it is clear efforts will be made to improve our organization's leadership and discipline and to work hard toward a strong future vision for the GLC.

In our Advocacy role, there is currently significant discussion of plans to upgrade Big Foot Beach State Park. It appears the intent is to convert the park back to a beach focus rather than a camping and recreation location. To do that, there are proposals to reroute the road away from the shore, add parking and a small launch ramp into and through the pond. It would be a big project and we have to think carefully about our position. We are concerned about potential damage to the natural water flow into the lake, a safe beachfront and preservation of the natural areas. But the park does need upgrading after many years of neglect. We clearly need to carefully investigate more of the details of this project to make sure we support what is right for the area.

Work continues with White River County Park in regard to completing a Management Plan for the restoration of the existing natural areas of the park to help guide the work of Walworth County and the Friends group going forward. A good draft of the document has been completed and is being circulated to some experts for a final review before being delivered to the County and the Friends group.

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**GLC's Newest  
Easement**

**Wendy Perks  
Fisher Joins  
Board**

**Page 2**

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**Watershed  
Signs**

**2014 Holly Ball**

**Page 3**

---

**2015 GLC  
Event  
Calendar**

**Page 4**

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**County and  
Brunner  
receive awards**

**Page 5**

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# GLC Welcomes New Easement

By Lynn Ketterhagen, Manger of Land Protection and Operations

“I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want to own.”

– Andy Warhol

The Conservancy recently acquired a new piece of “art,” a 28-acre parcel of woods just off the north shore of Geneva Lake. Colman Woods is now – and will forever be – protected by a voluntary grant of conservation easement.

Nearly every square inch of this beautiful piece of wooded property is designated as a primary environmental corridor, according to Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC).

The property contains a state-designated species of special concern, the American gromwell (*Lithospermum latifolium*). SEWRPC also has designated this property as part of the Peninsula Woods, a natural area of local significance. Having a designation like this requires that these tracts of land be so minimally modified by human activity or that they have sufficiently recovered from any effects of human activity. The land must also contain intact native plant and animal communities, which are believed to be representative of the landscape before European settlement. This alone makes Colman Woods stand out from many other properties in the area as a prime example of land the Conservancy strives to protect.

This is the Conservancy’s 28th protected property, bringing our total acreage of protected land to 1,956. This agreement not only will forever protect the natural, scenic qualities of the property, but assure the sustained and natural capacity of the property to aid in providing a healthy and sustainable forest, wetlands, and biologically diverse landscape, which provides habitat for a large range of flora and fauna. As landowners, the Colmans are very proactive in maintaining and improving this wooded wonderland.

The Conservancy extends our gratitude to the Colman family for becoming a part of our easement family and to have the foresight to permanently protect property that is such a masterpiece.

# Wendy Perks Fisher Joins Conservancy Board

When Wendy Perks Fisher sought a way to give back to the Geneva Lake area community as a volunteer, she homed in on the Geneva Lake Conservancy, seeing common goals of preserving our land and water resources.

Recently Fisher joined the Conservancy board of directors. She brings an executive skill set to the board and a commitment to our organization’s growth, focusing on using our assets to attain new levels of excellence.

Fisher has a lifelong connection to outdoor spaces and nature and, specifically, a love of the Geneva Lake area. Her family has an over 80-year relationship to Geneva Lake. Spending summers here with family, she has memories of enjoying sailing, the outdoors, friendships, and family gatherings.

Four years ago, Fisher moved to Lake Geneva full-time with her husband, Roger, and daughter, Lily.

Fisher, retired CEO of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, is credited with Sportscore One. It is a 179-acre outdoor sports complex that has made Rockford a major destination and recognized Amateur Sports Capital of the Midwest.

Her other professional involvement includes 20 years on the Board of Directors of Eclipse Inc. (retired) and current presidency of the Eclipse Foundation. A Rockford native, Fisher was on the development team for Klehm Arboretum, Anderson Gardens Foundation, and Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens. Working alongside the Rockford Park District, Fisher founded the City of Gardens and is a former member of the board of Anderson Gardens.

Since her retirement, Fisher has independently contracted in the areas of board and organization development, strategic planning, event planning, and sponsorship.



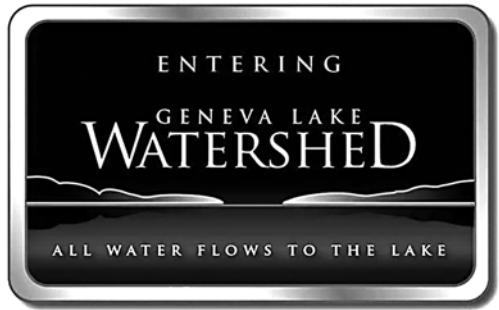
## Watershed Signs

This spring celebrates the seventh anniversary of the installation of the first watershed awareness signs around Geneva Lake. The signs were designed to make residents and visitors more aware of the surface area of the land that drains into and affects the health of Geneva Lake.

The Geneva Lake watershed is 13,121 acres! A watershed is an area that drains into a body of water such as a river, lake, or wetland area. Watersheds cross community and political boundaries.

Everything that happens within a watershed affects the surface and groundwater supplies.

There are 29 signs located around the Geneva Lake watershed, thanks to the participation of the local municipalities in the program. The Conservancy worked with the following municipalities to have the signs placed: Town of Linn, City of Lake Geneva, Village of Fontana, Village of Walworth, Town of Walworth, Village of Williams Bay, Town of Geneva, and Town of Delavan.



There are two signs at each location. The first sign facing the lake states "Entering Geneva Lake Watershed, All Water Flows to the Lake." The opposite side states "Exiting Geneva Lake Watershed, All Water Flows Away From the Lake."

As you enjoy the area surrounding Geneva Lake this, take note of the watershed sign placements. You may be surprised at magnitude of the surrounding area that drains into the lake!

## FROZEN Holly Ball

From the first time the Geneva Lake Conservancy 2014 Holly Ball committee met, there was an energy that propelled the Dec. 6 ball to new heights in terms of net income, wow décor, and new supporters.

Karen Hirn, Chair, and Kelly Hirn and Kim Hirn, Co-chairs, brought together a committee whose creativity and enthusiasm rubbed off on every aspect of the event. The team worked tirelessly to ensure the event was top notch, and the seamless execution of the party was the result of their efforts.

The decorations were unique, and our guests delighted in a "Frozen" wonderland, receiving hand-painted martini glasses and being directed to a martini luge ice sculpture. After a dinner menu inspired by the northern tundra, guests enjoyed a chocolate fountain and dancing.

"Holly Ball was another exciting and festive event for all as we came together to raise awareness about protecting Geneva Lake and its surrounding areas," said Dawn Ripkey, Conservancy board member. She also is vice president and wealth advisor for BMO Private Bank, principal Holly Ball sponsor.

Save the date for the 2015 Holly Ball on December 5!



From left to right:

Karen Hirn 2014 Holly Ball Chair, enjoys a moment with 2013 Holly Ball Chair, Grace Hanny; 2014 Holly Ball co-chairs, Kim and Kelly Hirn. Grace Hanny co-chaired the 2013 Holly Ball with daughters, Kristin Larkin and Carolee Hanny Barnett. The Hanny and Hirn teams have brought a renewed energy to GLC's Holly Ball!

# 2015 GLC Event Calendar

Friday, April 17

## ***“Reflections of Time”***

**Pier 290, Williams Bay**

Mark Hirsch, speaker and photographer, will share his year-long iPhone photo journal documenting the life of a lonely bur oak in an Iowa field. Luncheon, overlooking the waters of Geneva Lake, will follow the presentation.

Friday, April 19

## ***“One Ocean, One People”***,

**4 p.m., Seabury Room, Beasley Campus Center, George Williams College of Aurora University**

Drawing on his thrilling marine expeditions, inspirational speaker Fabien Cousteau, grandson of the famous explorer Jacques Cousteau, shares stories of pushing the limits of adventure to discover the bond we all share thru water, what it means, and why we should care.

This event is co-sponsored by the Geneva Lake Conservancy, Geneva Lake Environmental Association, The Environmental Education Foundation, Inc. and George Williams College of Aurora University

Thursday, July 2

## ***Colman Woods Walkabout***

**Linn Township**

Enjoy touring GLC’s newest easement, while learning the nuts and bolts of conservation easements and how they protect properties from ever being developed. Speaker Shawn Graff, Executive Director of Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, will share the basics of conservation easements.

Saturday, July 18

## ***Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy’s 25th Anniversary***

Celebrate the establishment of KNC, truly a gift for our children and our children’s children by the citizens of Williams Bay 25 years ago. Gather with KNC and Conservancy supporters as we recognize the foresight and continued dedication to the property, through responsible stewardship and a commitment to forever protect this jewel, manifested in the 2011 easement agreement between the Conservancy and the Village.

Saturday, October 3

## ***Shore Path Walk***

**8 a.m., Fontana lakefront**

The eighth annual JPPT Lake Walk will benefit the Geneva Lake Conservancy. This is a great opportunity to accomplish a goal, promote good health, enjoy the beauty of Geneva Lake, and support the Geneva Lake Conservancy all in one day. Registration opens May 1.

Saturday, December 5

## ***Holly Ball***

**Big Foot Country Club, Fontana**

Join us for this significant annual fundraiser that includes a live band, dinner, mini-mall, and the presentation of the Conservation Stewardship Award. A long-favored tradition, this year marks the 34th annual Holly Ball.

# Letter from the Chairman

Continued from page 1

Finally, we have a new, part time accountant helping with our bookkeeping and financial reporting. Her name is Carolyn Knop. She has a strong accounting background and is coming up to speed fast. She will help lighten the workload of both Janet and Lynn allowing them to focus more on Land Protection and Advocacy/Outreach. In closing, I cannot pass on the opportunity to thank all three of our staff for all they are doing keeping our efforts going forward. They are a great team.

Charles L. Colman

# Conservation Stewardship and Honorary Land Steward awards

The Geneva Lake Conservancy (GLC) presented its 2014 Conservation Stewardship Award and Honorary Land Steward Award on Dec. 6 at the Conservancy's annual winter gala fund-raiser, a *FROZEN* Holly Ball, at Big Foot Country Club in Fontana.

As part of this annual event the Conservancy recognizes an individual or group for conservation contributions to the area with the Conservation Stewardship Award. The Honorary Land Steward Award is given to an individual who has shown a commitment to protecting the natural resources of the Geneva Lake area through personal action.

The Conservation Stewardship Award was presented to the Walworth County Board of Supervisors for its purchase of the White River County Park in March 2014. The award was accepted by Nancy Russell, Board Chair.

Upon acceptance of the award, Russell emotionally said, "This is one of the greatest days of my life" and spoke of the process that led to board approval of the park purchase. Numerous public meetings were held, and Russell remarked that the "Geneva Lake Conservancy was a big supporter of the property acquisition from the very beginning" and that the Conservancy's "support contributed greatly to this property being available to all of us who love it."

This year the Conservancy awarded Kevin Brunner with the Honorary Land Steward Award for his key role in the park acquisition. He is the Director of the Walworth County Public Works Department.

Upon acceptance of the award, Brunner said, "It takes a community, indeed a whole county, to make a park." Speaking of the future of the park, Brunner said great things can be expected of the Friends of the White River County Park, and as it organizes there will be opportunities for volunteers. The next major step for the park is the development of a master plan, which will explore additional trails, restoration work, best use of the barn, and overall best land-management practices. The plan will be a collaborative effort with the Conservancy.

GLC Chairman Charles Colman introduced Walworth County Administrator Dave Bretl, who spoke about former property owner Duane Clark and his vision of "Copper Kettle Ranch" becoming a county park that could be enjoyed by all. The 195-acre park, located at the intersection of Sheridan Springs and Short roads in Lyons Township, has 9,200 feet of frontage on the White River, a spring-fed quarry, and established trails.

Colman was proud to present the two awards on behalf of the Conservancy. He has repeatedly stated that the new park represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our community that will only increase in value as residents and visitors discover beauty of the park and that it has something for everyone.

## GLC Sustaining Sponsors

**Carol Bernick & Bob Fates**

**Dan & Betsy Ferguson**

**Jeff & Molly Keller**

**Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Foundation**



## Thank you for our Volunteers...

Fred Noer • Al Hermansen • Charles Obligato • Jim Frost • Mary Roth • JaNelle Powers • Nancy Williams •  
• Kirsten Larsen • Kayla Wruk • Madeline Engerman • David Williams • Lucy Happ • MacKenzie Smith  
• A heartfelt thank you to the 2014 Holly Ball Committee •

**A photo of the Conservancy's newest easement, Colman Woods, is featured on the new style collection envelope which is making its debut in this newsletter. Please take a moment to enjoy the photo while evaluating your giving opportunities to the Conservancy.**



# Geneva Lake Conservancy

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## Staff

**Janet Happ**

Manager of Fundraising and Community  
Outreach

**Lynn Ketterhagen**

Manager of Land Protection and Operations

**Carolyn Knop**

Accountant

**REFLECTIONS OF TIME**

LUNCHEON FEATURING GUEST  
**MARK HIRSCH**  
*photographer*

11:30 gathering  
12:00 presentation  
12:45 lunch is served

friday april 17 · pier 290 · williams bay, wi · 11:30 am · \$75/person  
**RSVP BY 04/10/2015**

Seating is limited and reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 262-275-5700 to make your reservation or email [Events@GenevaLakeConservancy.org](mailto:Events@GenevaLakeConservancy.org)

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[www.GenevaLakeConservancy.org](http://www.GenevaLakeConservancy.org)