

Spring 2025

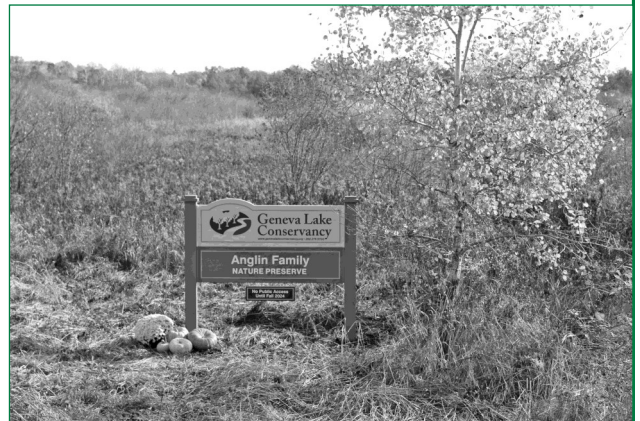
Protect and restore the lands and waterways of Walworth County and Beyond

Conservancy Purchases Last Parcel of Lake Ivanhoe Nature Preserve

The Geneva Lake Conservancy is pleased to announce that it completed the purchase of a 2.4-acre parcel with an oak savanna that will be the entrance to its Anglin Family Nature Preserve.

The purchase was completed with a grant from the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Fund program and private donations from its members.

“We are excited to complete protection of the final property in our Anglin Family Nature Preserve that links 43 acres owned by the Conservancy with 81 acres owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources creating a 124-acre nature preserve offering several hiking trails near Lake Ivanhoe,” said Don Parker, Conservancy Chair.



The Anglin Family Nature Preserve, named after one of the founding families of Lake Ivanhoe, was dedicated and purchased in 2023. Because much of the land is wetland, the Conservancy will be installing a boardwalk into the wetland this summer for viewing wildlife and the lake.

Lake Ivanhoe was founded in the 1920s by three Chicago businessmen as the first African American resort community in Wisconsin. It has a 46-acre lake and many of the streets are named after famous African American citizens. A sign at the nature preserve entrance will recognize the community's unique history.

The property also has important conservation values. Its oak savanna is a landscape that is becoming one of the rarest on the planet. In Walworth county, less than 17 percent of the oak woodlands, forests and savannas that were present before European settlement remain. In addition, the Lake Ivanhoe wetland contains two calcareous fens and a Tamarack Swamp that are habitat for a wide range of threatened species.

“Wetlands and oak savannas are vital to maintaining a healthy and balanced environment. We are so pleased to protect these rare landscapes for future generations,” Parker said.

The Conservancy would like to thank the staff of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Knowles Nelson Program and the Conservancy's members who donated to this project.

2025 GENEVA LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN TO BE COMPLETED BY JUNE

The Conservancy is pleased to report that the new 2025 Update to the Geneva Lake Management Plan will be completed by June of 2025 and ready for public review and comment this summer.

This plan is being drafted by the Southeast Regional Planning Commission and will be reviewed by the Conservancy, as the lead organization involved in the plan, prior to public review.

The plan has taken two and a half years to complete and cost \$60,000. The Conservancy is paying for the plan through a DNR grant and a grant from the Otzen Family Foundation. Research for the plan included studies of more than 15 of the lakes tributaries, a near-shore fish study, boat counts, focus groups and data collected on the lake from multiple government agencies. Many of these studies were funded through private donations and a grant from the Geneva Lake Association.

The Water Alliance, led by the Conservancy, will be responsible for implementing the plan recommendations with assistance from its partners, including the Geneva Lake Environmental Agency, Geneva Lake Association, Walworth County Conservation Office, Wisconsin DNR, U.S. Geological Survey and all the municipalities on the lake.

The plan is expected to include recommendations on how to better protect our ground water and reduce pollutants coming into the lake from tributaries. It will also address invasive species, how to better control boat traffic, wake boarding, how to reduce phosphorus levels and prevent future algae blooms. In addition, the plan will evaluate different management structures to protect the lake and pay for projects as the density and development around the lake continues to grow. New ordinances and an evaluation of current land uses and zoning in the lake's watershed will also be examined.

The Conservancy is pleased to have a professional management plan to help preserve Geneva Lake for future generations and is looking forward to collaborating with the many organizations caring for the lake to improve its water quality, aquatic habitat and recreational uses.



Photo credit: Pam Lindley

JOIN THE CONSERVANCY'S ANNUAL MEETING ON JUNE 21

Join us on June 21 for the Conservancy's Annual Member meeting where we will review our 2024 & 2025 accomplishments, present awards to several members and ask for comments and questions from the audience.

The meeting will be held at Celebration on Wells, 422 S Wells St. in Lake Geneva, and refreshments will be served. We will be celebrating another year of land protection as well as the completion of the 2025 Update to the Geneva Lake Management Plan.

The event is free however we ask members to email Outreach@GenevaLakeConservancy.org to RSVP.



ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE- Making the environment better one yard at a time.



If you're looking for a garden that will be successful in attracting and feeding a variety of songbirds, butterflies, bees and other beneficial pollinators, then we recommend our Native Plant Sale! You can create spaces for eco-friendly plants around your garden or fill in early spring bare spots. These plants are seasonal and many are tall, which is perfect for adding height and color to your annual garden.

In this pre-order sale, available plants will be Pennsylvania Sedge; Pussytoes; Swamp, Butterfly, and Whorled Milkweed; White and Cream Wild Indigo; Prairie Smoke; Great Blue Lobelia; Downy Wood Mint; Wild Strawberry; Wild Geranium; Jacob's Ladder; and many others. Larger kits for wet areas will also be available. Smaller kits include flowers such as Pale Purple Coneflower and Sweet Black-eyed Susans.

Plant pick-up will be Friday, May 23 from 9 AM-4 PM at the Mill House unless other arrangements are confirmed in advance (398 Mill Street, Fontana).

Order online at GenevaLakeConservancy.org before May 4th. Click on "What We Do" then "Native Plant Sale." Or scan the QR code here to order:



Pictured is *Baptisia alba* or Wild White Indigo, available in the Native Plant Sale.



CONSERVATION@HOME EVENT ON JULY 10

Mark your calendars for the Conservancy's Annual Conservation@Home open house on July 10th!

Our hosts for this event, Sue and John Major, are owners of the Penwern Estate on Lake Delavan. The Majors have both a formal and beautiful native garden. The Penwern estate was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and finished in 1903.

Conservation@Home is an education and recognition program for homeowners to make ecologically-friendly choices in their yard. This event includes a tour of the Majors' garden as well as refreshments catered by Celebration on Wells.

To schedule a Conservation@Home visit, go to GenevaLakeConservancy.org, then "What We Do," then "Programs."



Pictured above is the Conservation@Home event in 2024 in Katie Oglesby's garden.

SUMMER FUNDRAISER EVENT

Join us Friday, September 5th for a beautiful evening on the waterfront, delicious dinner by Celebration, silent auction, and classical quintet at the home of Mark and Patty Aschliman.

At our summer fundraiser, our guests will hear from an expert speaker on climate change from the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



View of the Aschliman's home in Williams Bay.

SAVE THE DATE— BIRD FEST & BROMLEY III DEDICATION

Grab your binoculars! The Conservancy is excited to host our fourth biennial Bird Fest on Saturday, May 17th at Bromley Woods. Bird walks will be held hourly (8 AM-1 PM) and led by members of the Lakeland Audubon Society.

A dedication of the third parcel for Bromley Woods will also take place at this event. Following the tours will be a lunch at LaGrange Methodist Church up the road, catered by Celebration on Wells. For more information, please see our website. We hope you can join us for this fun spring tradition!



Photo credit : Hal Jennings at Bromley Woods

THE CONSERVANCY WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Born in LaGrange and raised in Whitewater, **Jeff Olson** lived most of his life in Walworth County. After graduating from UW-Whitewater summa cum laude with double majors in Geography and Economics, he earned a Master's in GIS & Spatial Analysis Methods and a PhD in Geography from Ohio State University. He returned to the area as a professor in the Department of Geography, Geology, and Environmental Science at UW-Whitewater in 2013. He has been involved in GLC volunteer activities at Bromley Woods, the former homestead on his mother's side of the family. He currently resides in Whitewater with his wife Jessica, two young children, and two fish.

John St. Peter has a home in Geneva National and has experience with land use zoning, lake districts, and is interested in protecting the Geneva Lake area.

St. Peter, a senior partner at Dempsey Law, has been practicing law in Fond du Lac and throughout East Central Wisconsin for over 40 years. John's practice emphasizes business, municipal, and employment law. John is licensed to practice in the State of Wisconsin, the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern and Western Districts of Wisconsin, and the Seventh Circuit Federal Court of Appeals. He is a member of the Wisconsin Bar Foundation, the State Bar of Wisconsin, the American Bar Association, and numerous specialty sections sponsored by these organizations. John also frequently serves as a mediator (covering all types of disputes) and as an independent hearing officer in Wisconsin public sector employment cases.



GLC Membership by Categories

For January 1 to December 31, 2024 (new members in green)

Conservation Society— \$10,000 & above

Dr. Glenn Aldinger & Ms. Mary Constable
Ted & Christine Brownstein
Suzanne Bucher
Dr. Laurie & William D. Buss II
Charles & Diana Colman
Stephen & Peggy Diamond
E.C. Styberg Foundation
Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
Geneva Lake Association
Griffith Family Foundation
Charles & Jill Haubrich
Al & Dorothy Hermans
LOGOS Charitable Fund
J. Christopher & Anne N. Reyes Foundation
Keller Family Foundation
Mr. Jack Rohner
SBK Stearns Family Foundation
Wagner-Essman Care Foundation

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

Bartlett Tree Experts
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John & Sarah Cobb
Brian & Mary Cook
Tim & Jocelyn Fanning
T & Kristen Freytag
Geary Rimmer Vincent Wolf Foundation
Philip & Susan Hagenah
Steven & Patricia Hall
Harry & Marie Hostetler
Baker & Ginny Jenner
Lake Geneva Garden Club Foundation
Mark & Dawn Marie Licht
Thomas & Christine Moldauer
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John & Janis Notz Jr.
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Caroline Wettersten

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

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Linda & John Anderson
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Tyler & Nancy Anderson
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Cellmer Neal Foundation Fund
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Ginny Coburn
Mary Cooney
Melanie Coulter
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James Dyer
Egert Law, S.C.
Fat Tire Ride
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Thomas Hensing
Interstate Insurance Group
Maggie Jahn
Daniel & Paula Jarzemyk
Bruce & Gail Johnson
Cathleen Johnson
Gary Jouris
Joanne Kantner
Gil & Lisa Lynne Kirkpatrick
Sanja Kirovski
John & Patty Kivlin
John Klug
James & Kathy Koch
Donalda Kohnke
Kenneth & Susan Koranda
Phyllis Kotel
Clinton Kuzmich
LUMW Foundation
Land Trust Alliance
Mariani Landscape
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Mike & Joana Larson
Sharon Larson
Doug & Debra Lellbach
Mark & Celine Lillie
Patrick & Jean Lilly
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Lorraine Martenson
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Jeffrey & Diana Hartnett



**2024
BY THE
NUMBERS**

3,553

Acres of land protected

52

Land protection projects
completed to date

2,000

Native plants sold in our
2024 plant sale

300

Children participated in
Helen Rohner Children's
Fishing Park classes

46

Total Healthy Lakes
gardens planted on
Geneva Lake to reduce
phosphorus

260

Conservation@Home
visits completed to date

Mark & Kristin Hatch
Elaine Hodgson
 William & Barbara Huck
 Dr. Ryan Hurley
 John A. Miller Family Foundation
 Mr. & Mrs. William Johnson
 John & Sally Joyce
 Mr. & Mrs. Jim Kelly
Tammie Ketelsen
 Xavier Keutgen & Lindsay Westphal
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Stonewood Design Group, Inc.
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 JP & Lynn Tucker
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Topsy Turvy Brewery
Volo Museum
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Special recognition to Chuck and Barbara Taylor for their conservation easement donation in 2024.

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TWO COUPLES HONORED FOR PROTECTING DISAPPEARING LANDSCAPES OF WALWORTH COUNTY

Two couples that have used conservation easements to protect some of the disappearing landscapes of Walworth County were honored at the Geneva Lake Conservancy's 2024 Holly Ball Gala in December. Between these two couples, 432 acres with high conservation value are protected.



Karen Yancey, Executive Director (center), poses with Chuck and Barbara Taylor, winners of the Conservation Stewardship Award at the 2024 Holly Ball.

Chuck and Barbara Taylor were honored for protecting 330 acres of agricultural land in the Town of La Grange that has been in their family since the 1800s. They were given the Conservation Stewardship Award. Agricultural land is disappearing at an alarming rate in Walworth County with almost 10 percent of family farms developed for other uses since 2017.

“Southeastern Wisconsin has some of the country’s prime farmland needed to feed the nation,” said Kiera Theys, the Conservancy’s Director of Land Protection. “When we lose this land to inappropriate development, the prime soils that are essential for growing crops are paved over and gone forever.”

The 330-acre farm protected by the Taylors through a conservation easement held by the Geneva Lake Conservancy ensures that the land is never subdivided and that it will be used for agriculture in perpetuity.

“We want to work with more farmers to help protect the scenic beauty and conservation values that farmland provides to Walworth County residents and visitors,” said Theys. “We will be expanding our farmland protection program beginning in 2025.”

To date, the Conservancy has protected more than 1,300 acres of farmland in Walworth County preventing it from being subdivided and ensuring that it continues to be farmed forever.

Charles and Jill Haubrich were given the Honorary Land Steward Award. The Haubrich family owns another land type that is disappearing in Southeastern Wisconsin – oak woodlands and oak savannas. Less than 20 percent of the oaks that once dominated the landscape in parts of Southeast Wisconsin remain, according to a study completed by the Morton Arboretum/Chicago Wilderness project. “The Haubrichs have generously given their time, talents, and funds to help protect their oak woodlands, assist their neighbors and support the Conservancy’s efforts to preserve our oaks,” said Karen Yancey, Executive Director.



Charles and Jill Haubrich win the Honorary Land Steward Award at the 2024 Holly Ball.

For more information on how you can protect your agricultural land and oak woodlands or savannas, contact the Geneva Lake Conservancy at 262-275-5700.

THE CONSERVANCY REMEMBERS JACK ROHNER

Jack Rohner passed away in December 2024 at his home in Sarasota, Florida. Mr. Rohner was raised in Chicago along with his wife, Helen, who had close ties to Geneva Lake, and their children and grandchildren. Rohner served in Army Air Corps during WWII and was a family man who loved to put a smile on other's faces.

In 2017, Mr. Rohner donated money to purchase a 5-acre parcel of land in Williams Bay and funds to develop it into a children's nature and fishing park. Helen Rohner Children's Fishing Park honors his late wife, Helen, who loved children. The Park opened in June of 2018.

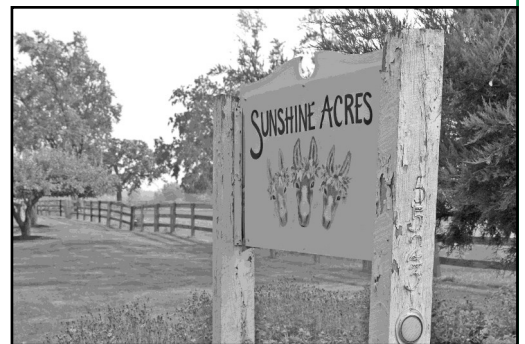
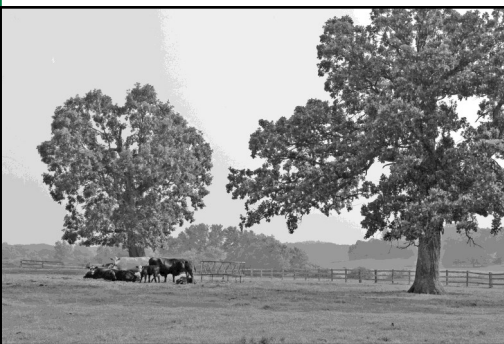
The goal of the park is to connect children with the wonders of nature. Today, because of Mr. Rohner's vision, the Park hosts hundreds of children each summer for story times, fishing, and nature classes. There is a boardwalk for easy hiking for families and many more interactive activities for children. Mr. Rohner's generosity has allowed the Conservancy to provide all activities at no cost to families.

The Rohner family asked that memorial gifts be sent to Geneva Lake Conservancy in honor of Jack Rohner.



THANK YOU TO FRED NOER, GLC'S PHOTOGRAPHER

The Conservancy thanks Fred Noer, who has been photographing Conservancy events for many years. Noer has captured special moments of celebration at the Conservancy's events like Holly Ball, landscapes that show the beauty of Walworth County, and the people that have come together in support of protecting our environment. He has also given his time to judge the Small Nature Photo Contest for 3 years. The Conservancy is grateful to have had such a talented photographer these past years.



HELP THE CONSERVANCY ‘KEEP IT BLUE’ IN 2025

As the weather warms up there is a chance that we could see higher phosphorus levels in our lakes. Due to snowmelt, leftover leaves in waterways, and the use of lawn chemicals such as fertilizer and herbicides, phosphorus can easily become a concern to lake-centered communities.

For all of these reasons and more, the Conservancy’s “Keep it Blue” program is a pledge signed by property owners to do their part in controlling phosphorus on their property. By taking the pledge, property owners agree to eliminate the use of fertilizer and pesticides, prevent leaves from entering waterways, plant native plants and trees to prevent soil erosion, keep soaps and other harmful chemical from entering waterways, and educate their neighbors and friends on the importance of changing their lawn care to protect lakes.



Linda Franz, resident of Williams Bay, poses with the Keep it Blue sign in her yard.

Over one hundred participants have pledged to keep our lakes healthy by signing the Keep it Blue pledge. One of those participants is Linda Franz, resident of Williams Bay. The Conservancy conducted an interview with Franz to share why she participated in this program.

Franz chose Williams Bay as her forever-town and moved from Palatine in 2006. She retired on a Friday and moved to Williams Bay on a Saturday. She picked the town, and her husband picked the house.

“I wanted a peaceful and scenic town. Thankfully, George (her husband) came with,” she joked. “I had come up here as a child on the weekends. I remember in the 1920s, my mom would come up here in a train. We would picnic on Bigfoot Beach and Geneva Lake.”

Beside the lake, Franz chuckles and mentioned that her favorite part about Williams Bay was that it does not have a stoplight. Nineteen years later, she has no regrets on her sentimental move.

When asked how the importance of the lake resonates with her, she answered: “I think of it as a friend, as a living thing. I just want to be near it. I like it in the winter when ice forms on it, making it sound like it’s groaning.” She continues, saying she “wishes that there were less chemicals put on lawns so the lake could be healthier.”

“I worry for all the little animals that live in our yards with these chemicals like bunnies, racoons, and the insects. I feel so strongly about the environment. We were called upon to take care of this earth, not just use it up,” she said.

“Signing the “Keep it Blue” pledge means a lot to me. It reinforces my belief that this is a privilege; we have to take care of the water. The pledge is a promise to the lake that we will do just that.”

Phosphorus, an element that is naturally found in minerals and is essential to all forms of living things, can become dangerous in higher levels near and in bodies of water. According to a water quality report conducted by the WDNR, phosphorus is the highest-ranking pollutant of Wisconsin lakes at 43%, with invasive aquatic plants coming in at 19%, and PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid) at 11%. Excessive levels of phosphorus can cause rapid algae formation and depleted oxygen levels, overall lowering the water quality and potentially leading to algal blooms.



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