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CONSERVANCY COMPLETES EASEMENTS ON GENEVA LAKE NORTH SHORE PROPERTIES

The scenic beauty of Geneva Lake received more protection recently when the Geneva Lake Conservancy completed conservation easements with two property owners on the lake's North Shore.

The conservation easements, combined, protect 7 acres of environmentally sensitive land. The conservation easements are on properties that have remnant oak forests and are in Primary Environmental Corridors that provide important greenways for wildlife.

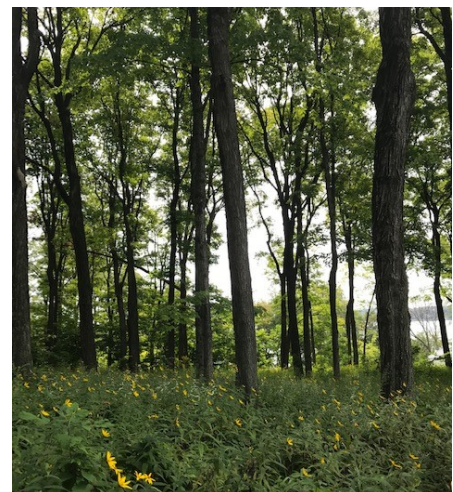
Conservation easements permanently protect land, while leaving the property in private ownership, by restricting the type and amount of future development and activities permitted on a property. The restrictions protect the property's scenic and conservation values. Both properties could have been subdivided and the easements will permanently protect oak forests on the properties.

"These two easements demonstrate the ability of an owner to forever steward the land they treasure," said Tom Nickols, vice-chair of the Geneva Lake Conservancy. "The conservation easements protect the watershed from further development that would negatively impact the lake with increased stormwater runoff, construction debris and erosion."

Ted and Christine Brownstein are owners of one of the easement properties.

"My husband and I hold the oak forest on our property close to our hearts, and we did not wish to see our property divided in the future, and the oak forest destroyed," said Christine Brownstein. "Our property was purchased by my father in 1951 and since then some of the landowners surrounding us have cut down their oak forests and we did not want that to happen on our property."

The other property owner also sought to protect a portion of the oak forest and restore a prairie landscape along the shore line that will filter stormwater runoff and enhance the environmental health of the lake.



“Both property owners are long-time Conservancy supporters who understood the value of these conservation easements to the community and the health of the lake,” said Janet Happ, Director of Development, who worked closely with the landowners on these projects.

Conservation easements also can offer landowners significant income, as well as estate and property, tax reductions. Each conservation easement is tailored to the needs of the particular landowner.

The Geneva Lake Conservancy now holds 20 conservation easements in the Geneva Lake watershed that limit density, protect open spaces and wildlife habitat and filter stormwater before it enters the lake.

The Conservancy is accredited by the National Land Trust Alliance. Accreditation, a mark of distinction, is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

Formed in 1977, the Conservancy’s mission is to preserve and advocate for Walworth County waterways, natural areas and working lands. It has protected more than 2,700 acres in Walworth County, and holds 33 conservation easements. The Conservancy owns and manages four nature preserves that are open to the public for hiking, fishing, cross country skiing, wildlife viewing and other recreational activities.

For more information on the Geneva Lake Conservancy, its mission, land protection accomplishment as well as maps of its public preserves, please go to www.genevalakeconservancy.org or contact Karen Yancey at the Conservancy at 262-275-5700 or 262-325-4923.