



Oak Leaves

Standing Cedars Community Land Conservancy — December 2021

To protect and restore field, forest and natural habitat along the lower St. Croix River

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President's Message

by Deb Murphy

Do you ever stop and think about your relationship with nature, and how you feel when you're out walking in the woods? This year I read a good book with an opening that caught my attention. The book, *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature*, by J. Drew Lanham, begins with these words:

"I AM A MAN IN LOVE WITH NATURE. I AM AN ECO-ADDICT, consuming everything that the outdoors offers in its all-you-can-sense, seasonal buffet. I am a wildling, born of forests and fields and more comfortable on unpaved back roads and winding woodland paths than in any place where concrete, asphalt, and crowds prevail." (Lanham, 2016, p. 3)

Reading this book made me think about my connections to nature. I thought of how I relish going for a long hike on a trail at Standing Cedars and getting lost in the quiet, solitude and beauty of the area, or kayaking with friends on the St. Croix River and always being amazed at the variety of wildlife we encounter. I hope that each of you have had an opportunity to connect with nature this year, in all of its splendid seasons.

Thank you for supporting Standing Cedars this year with your volunteering and financial support. You are the "community" in Standing Cedars Community Land Conservancy, and we greatly appreciate all of you.

Land Management Recap

At Standing Cedars, our land management goals continue to be focused on restoring the remnant prairie and oak savanna habitat at Buffalo Skull and Englewood. Our volunteers helped us clear invasive brush, and collect and plant native seeds of Slender Penstemon, Hoary Frostweed and many other native plants. This year the board voted to approve a new policy for prescribed fire and we hope to be conducting more controlled burns to restore these unique habitats. The policy includes a basic training program for becoming a qualified crew member and we plan to host a class before the spring fire season begins. If you would be interested in attending, email us (standingcedarsclc@gmail.com). We will continue our workday schedule of every third Saturday from 9:00-noon for 2022.

Volunteering with us is a great way to get outside and learn about these special ecosystems that we have the privilege of protecting and restoring. In all, 113 volunteers contributed 950 hours. Thanks again to all of our volunteers.



River Road Farm Crawl

In May, Standing Cedars participated in the first River Road Community Farm Crawl. We had an information table at the Englewood parking lot. Along with the table, we also had a ten-foot, hand-built, elm tree shaped story booth - built by local artist and Standing Cedars board member, David Aichinger. The story booth had a phone and digital recording device in it for guests to record a story about nature. The weather was beautiful, and everyone enjoyed and appreciated the event.

Hunting & Safety

We strongly recommend that you wear something blaze orange when you're out hiking at Standing Cedars in the fall and early winter. The hunting seasons start in mid-September, and go until the first weekend in January. The Youth Deer Gun Hunt weekend is usually the second weekend in October, and the Deer Gun Hunt season goes from the Saturday before Thanksgiving until the Sunday after Thanksgiving. A large portion of Standing Cedars was paid for with money from the Wisconsin Stewardship program. An agreement with this grant is that we allow hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and hunting (by permit).

Welcome New Board Members

This year Dave Anderson, Jim Kroening, Duane Lee & Tim O'Hare joined the board.

Dave Anderson became aware of Standing Cedars as it was forming in 1994, and served on its initial board. He has also served on other non-profit boards. He helped lead youth group work projects at Standing Cedars in the past. The land on which he and his wife live is in a conservation easement with Landmark Conservancy.

Jim Kroening has been volunteering, hunting, hiking and snowshoeing at Standing Cedars since 2005. He lives in Stillwater, and is the President and CEO for FamilyMeans. He has served on several other non-profit boards, including Two Rivers Community Land Trust, Stillwater Lions Club, and Chilakoot Bowhunters.

Duane Lee is an avid outdoor adventurer – he's canoed remote rivers in northern Canada, and backpacked in Alaska and many western states. He is deeply concerned about the preservation and protection of wild places. He and his wife are in the process of restoring a prairie on 34 acres near their home.

Tim O'Hare has been volunteering and hunting at Standard Cedars for over 20 years. He worked in law

enforcement for 26 years and is a retired military and Iraqi War Veteran. Tim and his wife, Louise, raised two kids here in Polk County; raising them both with much appreciation and love for the outdoors.

Leaving the board this year were Dick Burrows and Jenni Webster. Thank you, Dick and Jenni for your dedication and for all of the work you did on behalf of Standing Cedars.

Give Big Day

A Big THANK YOU to all who donated to Standing Cedars during this year's St. Croix Valley Give Big Day in April. We raised \$3,140 in donations, and we won a \$100 Golden Ticket door prize!

Tropical Wings Grant

Standing Cedars received a \$1,000 grant from Tropical Wings, a Hudson, WI, based nonprofit supporting migratory bird education and habitat conservation. The money will be used to purchase native shrubs and partial sun plantings, which will be planted at field and woodland edges where native plant diversity is currently low.





Tewksbury Parking Lot Upgrade

Things are looking a lot smoother in the Tewksbury driveway and parking lot these days. With the help of some donations (Thank You), we were able to make repairs and add new gravel.

Bluebird Survey

by Terry Ingram

The 2021 Bluebird count was very low compared to other years. Out of 63 houses, only 20 were occupied by Bluebirds, with an average of about 3 eggs per house. There were 6 empty houses, and 37 were occupied by swallows, sparrows, and or wrens. Eight houses were damaged by bears or other critters throughout the summer. Where did all the Bluebirds go? According to bird banders and DNR Conservation biologists, they think that the cold and ice in the southern states this past winter created a massive die off. Hopefully a milder winter will give the Bluebirds a chance to rebound in numbers next year.



Nature Notes

This year a fisher was spotted at Engelwood, a wolf with a tracking collar was spotted near Tewksbury, and numerous bears have been seen in the area.

New Kiosk Roof

Thank you to Dick, Don & Sean Burrows who replaced the Engelwood kiosk roof. The cedar logs came from Tewksbury (cut down during a work day). Dick milled the boards, and Don and Sean cut them to size and installed them. History note – Sean built the kiosks at Buffalo Skull, Tewksbury & Brown for his Boy Scout Eagle Project.



Thank You, Donors

Thank you for your continued financial support.

Donors of Cash, Grants and Gifts In Kind for 2020:

\$1,000 and up

Gail Hanson
Lisa Schlingerman &
Craig Christensen

\$500-\$999

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In Memory of Michael Schmidt

Danny & Renita Schmidt

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First Day Hike

A group of over twenty warmly dressed hikers and snowshoers rang in the new year with a fun trek at Tewksbury. The day had a surprise ending - a group of Trumpeter

Swans flew overhead. Thanks to Wild Rivers Conservancy (formerly St. Croix River Association) for cohosting. Watch for other events on our Facebook page.

