



Wild Flowers of America-1886
Isaac Sprague



Oak Leaves

Standing Cedars Community Land Conservancy — March 2026

Protecting What We Love

A celebration of all that we've accomplished together

Join fellow Standing Cedars enthusiasts for an evening at The Prairie Center, the old farmstead on our new parcel that connects to the Engelwood property. Volunteers have been busy, and big changes are underway. The progress on site improvements has been extraordinary.

Enjoy good food and drink with fellow Standing Cedars enthusiasts while exploring the property. We're proud of the progress volunteers have made on the site so far. You'll have the opportunity share your dreams and aspirations for the site as it begins a new life as The Prairie Center.

This free event is to say thank you for supporting the Standing Cedars mission-- your commitment, as a volunteer and/or donor is invaluable.



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

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What: "Protecting What we Love"

When: June 4th, 6-8 PM, 6:30 Program

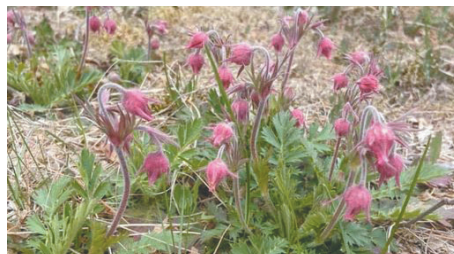
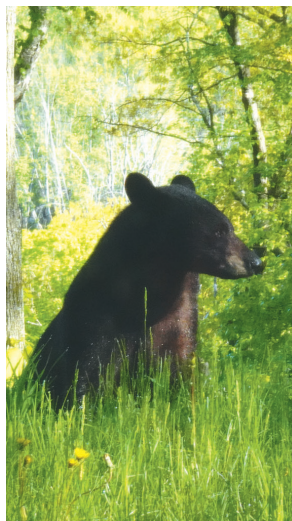
Where: 229 280th Street, Osceola, WI 54020

Why: Celebrate all we've accomplished together

Optional: Guided Hikes at 7:30

Use the QR code to register or signup online at:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/protecting-what-we-love>



Never More Important Than in Times Like These

by Pat Collins, former SCCLC Trustee

Watching the news is painful. We are worried about our neighbors, our friends and even those we don't know who came to our country seeking asylum. Polarization pits family against family, spouse against spouse and neighbor against neighbor. We are all in search of peace, commonality and a simple diversion from news we find so disturbing. These are the times we realize the restorative value of nature and our public lands — and we have a crown jewel in our beloved Standing Cedars.

When my friends ask where I take the lovely photos I post on Facebook, I direct them to Standing Cedars and more specifically the Englewood piece. I tell them to park in the lot across from the red barn where Dan and Margaret have painted a William Carlos Williams poem. I am not sure if I hike, walk, saunter or amble when I visit Englewood, but I know what I get out of my meanderings — and that is peace.

I find peace in the sheer beauty of the land and the rhythms of nature. I enjoy the solitude as I make my way from prairie to woodland to the deer shack on the bluff overlooking the St. Croix. I think about perspective as I look down to watch a bald eagle fly by — a view very few of us ever see. My children, the dog and I have hiked there in difficult times and always found our troubles diminished after an hour or two immersed in

this beautiful land. It was on the bluffs of the Tewksbury piece that I asked Carolyn to be my wife. A rose-breasted grosbeak provided the perfect accompaniment, its song as sweet and resonant as the finest Stradivarius.

Standing Cedars is home to so many lovely creatures, and we humans are fortunate to sojourn there. In every visit I find a quiet cleansing. It is easy to hear and see the beauty of our living world, but I always feel something deeper here. I feel welcomed by the call of the raven, and the big bluestem seems to wave hello as I pass. Perhaps it is that innate human need to connect with nature that E.O. Wilson called biophilia — and Standing Cedars answers that call beautifully. I doubt that those seeking refuge here talk politics on their walks, if they talk at all. What they do share is a celebration of what we hold in common: a love of nature, beauty and hope for a better world.

I have long admired the Irish philosopher John O'Donohue, who would recognize Standing Cedars as a threshold place — somewhere transformation quietly happens, where you cross over and return not quite the same person who arrived. It is a place to leave your troubles, to let them be composted back into the earth, with nature bearing gentle witness as we cross back into our lives a wee bit lighter. And so I must say thank you to those wise souls who, 51 years ago, chose to preserve this land. Countless lives — of all creatures great and small — have been quietly transformed by that choice ever since.

Share your restorative experiences on Facebook @standingcedars.org



Springtime in Engelwood, Morel Mushroom (*Morchella esculenta*)

Perseids in the Dark Sky



Join us August 12 (13th if cloudy on the 12th) at Engelwood to enjoy an evening with the stars. There will be a new moon so sky conditions on the prairie should be optimal. Meet up at 9:30 PM and stay as long as you like to witness what promises to be a night filled with shooting stars.

The Perseids are considered some of the best meteor showers of the year. The

combination of number of meteors per hour, brightness, and comfortable summer temperatures make them a favorite for nighttime viewing. It should be especially exquisite alongside the prairie.

Bring reclining chairs or blankets, wear layers for warmth, and anything you might need to be comfortable outside; bug spray may be a good idea. We will provide snacks and warm beverages, and have a few red-light flashlights available to find your way and still preserve night vision. This is a free, public event. For details visit the events page at www.standingcedars.org

Standing Cedars recently received a grant of \$90,178 from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund to offset the cost of purchasing the seven-acre hayfield associated with the Gourley property. This grant will help replenish our endowed funds at the St. Croix Valley Foundation and to transform the hayfield to native prairie.

Thankful for Success and Looking Forward

by Deb Ryun, Board Trustee & Vice President

I am thrilled to report that we raised over \$47,000 for the year-end match offered by Charlie and Cynthia Wilcox. They were so moved by your response that they upped their gift from \$25,000 to \$35,000. Because of your support, Standing Cedars has already completed the asbestos remediation in the house, and demolition is scheduled for this spring. Improvements to other buildings on site and the seven-acre hayfield conversion to prairie are ongoing. **Thank you to everyone that contributed to the year-end funding goal!**

I often think how lucky I am to serve with an organization where part of my “job” is to explore this perpetually

protected land in the lower St. Croix valley. Every season here brings me peace and joy. I write this article on a bright and sunny first day of spring, knowing that the spring ephemerals will soon be putting on a show. I also know that this show can't be taken for granted. It takes a lot of effort to ensure future generations will experience this beloved place.

The Board is exploring more ways to build infrastructure to meet the growing needs of your organization, increase sorely-needed land protection and restoration activities, and provide the means to foster confidence and belonging in the outdoors. Volunteers will always be the most important contributors to success at Standing Cedars, doing as much of the work as is practical. Trustees also realize that we will need to hire professionals to do many tasks safely and effectively. A good example of this is prescribed burning to maintain prairies. Because of rising liability concerns and the cost of insurance, we are likely to do more burning with professionals rather than be volunteer-led. And in places where invasive species such as buckthorn have become dominant, experts with the right knowledge and equipment will be more impactful.

Being a land-based organization, one tool that is critical for many aspects of our work is up-to-date mapping technology. Standing Cedars is collaborating with a consultant to develop and establish a stable Geographic Information System (GIS) platform. With their help, new maps will be created for all our holdings. GIS is an essential tool for land management planning and implementation strategies. This new platform will also enable us to offer interactive maps online and to provide accurate trail and kiosk maps and brochures, making people more comfortable on our properties.

With a grant received from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), we recently completed a Forest Management Plan. The consultant developed the plan that is needed for Standing Cedars to be eligible for future funding through NRCS for any non-forest projects, such as prairie restoration associated with forested tracts. This is an important first step in creating a comprehensive plan for the all properties we manage: Brown, Buffalo Skull, Engelwood and Tewksbury.

We are honored and so very grateful for your support.

Your gift will help care for our 1,700 acres of forest, savannah, prairie and wetlands. If you'd like to make a donation, you can do so online at www.standingcedars.org or mail a check to Standing Cedars, PO Box 249, Osceola, WI 54020. Every contribution matters.

**Standing
Cedars
COMMUNITY
LAND
CONSERVANCY**

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2026 Volunteer Work Days

Help protect your land legacy at Standing Cedars by volunteering for land restoration and improvement tasks. Work will vary from one session to the next. Projects may include brush clearing, fence, invasive plant and tree removal, and general cleanup.

Work days begin at 9:00 AM on the third Saturday of the Month. Meet at **229 280th Street, Osceola, WI**. The group will move to the work site from there. Upcoming volunteer work days:

April 18	July 18	October 17
May 16	August 15	November 21
June 20	September 19	December 19

Bring water, work gloves & wear sturdy shoes. At times power equipment is used, so bring ear protection, safety eyewear, and other safety gear if you have it. Details about that month's project are sent to volunteers via email prior to each workday. If you would like to be added to our volunteer email list, please email us at standingcedarsclc@gmail.com

BE A RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER. For the protection of nesting birds and animals raising their young, dogs must be on leash at all Standing Cedars properties from April 15 - July 31.