

Standing Cedars Community Land Conservancy

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

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Standing Cedar Community Land Conservancy – 2025 Annual Report

Sharing Memories and Looking to the Future

by Dan McGuiness, Founding Board Member

I really enjoyed the June 4th "Protecting What We Love" event at the new Standing Cedars property. It was great to share memories with some of the other "old timers" who were around when we toured the property in the back of an old International Harvester Travel-All, with David Preus at the wheel. That was the 1990s and the Englewood Property was at risk of development. That visit helped birth the Standing Cedars Community Land Conservancy nonprofit organization. With the help of the State of Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and many private donors, a nearly unthinkable feat was accomplished: the permanent protection of this Riverway land into perpetuity for habitat and recreation.

Years have gone by. Thousands of volunteer hours by so many good people have taken care of this place, managed the land, added some key parcels, and most recently, started to convert a former farmstead into a gathering place and educational center. It has been so gratifying to be a small part of this. I look forward to visiting often and bringing my adult children and five grandchildren to experience the magic of this place.

Cheers to the future!

Dan

Protecting wild places for now, and for future generations



President's Message

by Bob Wright

As I finish my second year as president, I feel like I'm starting to get the hang of things. Recall that in 2024 we purchased a 10-acre parcel that plugs a critical 7-acre hole in the protection of the Engelwood property and provides us with a sorely-need base of operations. Thanks to our many volunteers, the farmstead portion, which we are calling The Prairie Center, is now looking a lot more respectable. We held our first ever donor and volunteer appreciation event there in June. This event was very well attended and a great opportunity to showcase both our accomplishments and our future opportunities. We also received some great feedback from the attendees. For me personally, it was great to finally meet many of the original advocates and donors for Standing Cedars.



Over 80 people attended the first annual volunteer and donor celebration

Standing Cedars' mission has always been to conserve and enhance the properties we manage, and our actions have always been guided by our Strategic Plan. The Prairie Center provides us with a myriad of new opportunities, but how do we prioritize them without losing sight of our original mission? To that end we have begun the process of updating our 5-year Strategic Plan to prioritize these opportunities, identify sideboards and update our vision as a conservation organization. This revised "guidance document" will provide the Board of Trustees with the clarity and discipline it needs to position Standing Cedars for sustainable growth going forward. Your feedback is always welcomed. As the Board of Trustees, our goal is to conserve and protect these properties in perpetuity for the health and enjoyment of future generations. "Paying it forward" if you will, in honor of Standing Cedars' original forward-thinking individuals, many of whom are no longer with us. Having met some of these original visionaries I am inspired to continue with this work. Can we be the next generation of visionaries for Standing Cedars, the community and the Upper St. Croix River Valley? We can be, but not without your help. Will you join us?

Yours in conservation,

Bob

THANK YOU ST. CROIX VALLEY FOUNDATION

The recent acquisition of a 10-acre holding has surfaced a broader strategic question for Standing Cedars: What are we trying to become, and how do we decide what to prioritize? The St. Croix Valley Foundation recently approved funding for our efforts to update our strategic plan to a more visionary, decision-oriented framework. Their support means we can hire a professional to update our current plan, and create the clarity and discipline needed to guide decisions, align efforts, and position the organization for sustainable growth. The new plan will help us to more effectively manage current properties and meet the constant pressures to develop the St. Croix River Valley.

Changes to the Board

New Trustee Atty. **Timothy Laux** is a lawyer practicing municipal law, corporate law, labor law and 6 other areas of law. Timothy received a B.A. degree from University of Wisconsin at Green Bay in 1974, and has been licensed for 42 years. Tim has served in the Standing Cedars board in the past, and has provided many years of services, as a trustee, and a volunteer. We are pleased to have Tim back on the board Welcome Tim.

David Aichinger, **Dan Guenthner**, and **Kevin Rogers** all completed their board terms in 2026. Serving on a nonprofit board like Standing Cedars isn't an honorary position—it's real work. Each of these individuals contributed so much time and talent. They helped guide the organization forward through the many challenges an all-volunteer organization faces. We are grateful for your dedication, and thankful for your years of service.

Old Friend Visits Buffalo Skull

Dave Crawford, an old friend of Standing Cedars, visited the Buffalo Skull unit of Standing Cedars with several botanizing friends this past May. Buffalo Skull is one of the properties that we manage. Dave shared a bit of his history with SCCLC, which goes way back. Dave said that in 1989 David Preus of the Cottonwood Land Company hired him for an informal plant survey of their Englewood property. A few years later, founding board members Rick Hall and Verna Kragness of Philadelphia Community Farm asked him to advise them during their work on the grant proposal they wrote to secure funding for purchasing Englewood. Dave also consulted with Shawn Schottler when he was scouting Polk County locations of potential restoration seed sources for SCCLC and Dave shared locations he'd found. He concluded by saying, "I hope to visit other parts of SCCLC this year".

Dave graciously shared a few of his photos from that outing.



Standing Cedars Ecology Scholarship

We believe that investing in future conservationists is important. To that end, each spring SCCLC awards two, $500 scholarships to high school seniors who demonstrate a commitment to the environment and a desire to study the natural sciences and/or apply their education to promote ecology and conservation.The 2026 scholarship recipients were Aaron Rysdam and Kasey Williamson. Congratulations Aaron and Kasey.





Photos by Dave Crawford; Lupine among the Prairie smoke, Haircap moss splash cups, & Easter Tailed-blue butterfly



Fire has always played an important role in prairie maintenance.

Prescribed Fire Training

Standing Cedars has used prescribed fire as a major tool for maintaining prairies. With over 250 acres of prairie, we are looking to increase our capacity to conduct our own burns. On October 10 & 11, we provided free basic training for individuals willing to volunteer for both the training and being available during the spring and/or fall burning seasons.

The training was provided by the Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Council, and is required to participate in Standing Cedars prescribed burning activities. This course was developed to give landowners, students, and volunteers the knowledge and skills to act as a crew member on a prescribed burn. Land managers also gain insight into improving their fire management practices on their lands. Topics included in this training are fire ecology, tools, fuels & fire behavior, as well as safety and crew structures. One day of the course was focused on classroom learning and the other on live fire exercises to become comfortable with tools & fire behavior. Anyone who is interested in prescribed fire and physically capable of acting on a burn crew was invited to attend. Training was held at The Prairie Center, with a practice burn in the prairie near there.

Check out the Kiosks

The kiosks at Brown, Buffalo Skull, Engelwood, and Tewksbury all have had a face lift, with new maps and other information about the property. Thank you Deb Murphy and Sean Burrows for your work to rehab all of the kiosks.

Thank You Volunteers

From August of 2025 through July of 2026, volunteers served over 2300 hours in support of our mission; preparing for prescribed burns, maintaining trails, controlling brush and invasive species, continuing to develop the Prairie Center into our base of operations, and doing the necessary Board and Committee work that keeps everything happening. We recently looked at how we spend volunteer hours. It wasn't surprising to learn that we spent about 30% of our time managing the land, 23% doing work at The Prairie Center property, and 20% each for Communication & Education and board business. While we primarily rely on those regular volunteers, we are always looking for ways to partner with others. One nice example is how we partner with The St. Croix Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiast. Earlier this year we co-hosted a hike at the Buffalo Skull. They were there to enjoy the hike, but also consider whether they might be able to help Standing Cedars burn a section of prairie at Buffalo Skull. We have contracted with them, with ignition happening sometime either this fall or next spring, pending favorable weather conditions.



Salvageable materials from the old farmstead are cleaned and repurposed.



Clearing of trees and other woody vegetation in former fence rows

Prairie Center Update

Work at the Prairie Center continues. While not glamorous work, those helping to create a safe, useable compound have been busy. The barn foundation has been removed, allowing for additional parking space on site. The concrete has been removed from the old milk house, along with the holding tank and pad. This proved no small feat; it took several work sessions, not to mention some machinery repair along the way. The old windmill has been removed and while further cleanup is needed, we are moving ahead with building a small utility building in that space for the well and water utilities.

Looking to the future;

- The Workshop roof needs to be replaced, and the interior finishing and lighting work has yet to be completed.
- The septic system at the old house site will be decommissioned.
- We plan to move the electric service up to the garage so the final house demolition and regrade of the entrance can be completed.
- The driveway and parking area needs a final top coating of gravel.
- Prairie Center Signage options are being explored.



"Paul and I just enjoyed a lovely walk at Standing Cedars this past week. Bloodroot is blooming now, this always reminds me of Paul's mom as she loves the wildflowers. Such a beautiful place.
hanks for preserving all of this".
–Kathy Fredrickson

2025 Financial Report

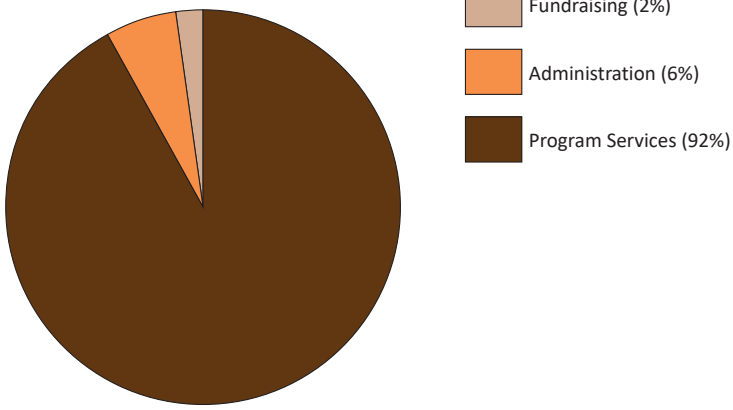
Expenses

Program Services: $95,335

Administration: $6,126

Fundraising: $1,703

Total Expenses $103,164



Income

Direct Public Support* $111,194

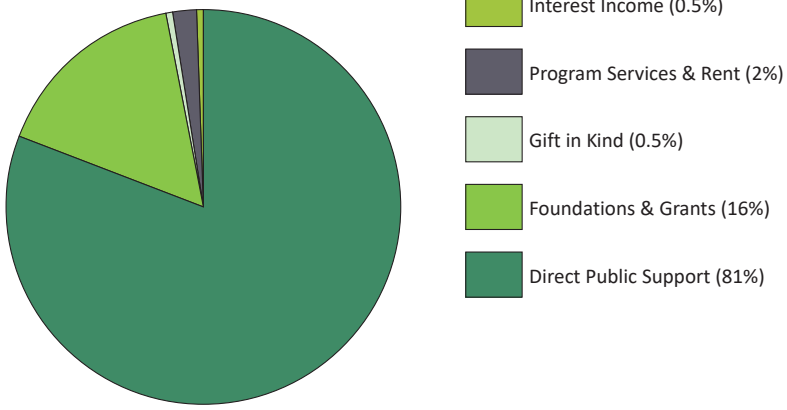
Foundations & Grants $21,603

Gift in Kind $579

Program Services and Rent $3,095

Interest Income $171

Total Income $136,642



Assets

Current Assets $112,162

Endowments $657,283

Property & Equipment $2,809,226

Total Assets $3,578,671

Liability & Equity

Current Liability $3,882

Net Assets $3,574,789

Total Liability and Equity $3,578,671

The amount of time, talent and money gifted to Standing Cedars is inspiring. It is only through our community of supporters that we can meet our mission.

The list on the following page represents the amount given in fiscal year 2025 through individual donors, grants and gifts in kind. Note that it is our policy for unspecified Memorial gifts go into our Land Protection Fund. We strive for accuracy in this list, if you notice inaccuracies or changes that need to be made, don't hesitate to contact us at admin@standingcedars.org.

THANK YOU, DONORS

Your financial support protects land for the environment and people

2025 Gifts Received
(Cash, Grants & Gifts in Kind)

$10,000 and up
St. Croix Valley Foundation
Samuel & Angela Schillace
Charles & Cynthia Wilcox

$5,000-$9,999
Anonymous
Peter & Mary Gove
Gail Hanson
Betsy Kremser

$2,500-4,999
Alice M. O'Brien Foundation
Stephen & Christine Clemens
Barbara Delaney
Michele Pierce

$1,000-$2,499
Mike Addy & Nancy Johnson
David & Amy Anderson
Lois Anderson
David & Patricia Borchert
Randall Clary & Lisa Etzwiler
Patrick Collins & Carolyn Brue
Joyce Hinz
Ron Johnson
Daniel & Nancy McGuiness
Margot Monson
Deb & Dan Murphy
Catherine Nelson
Mary & Chris Paul
Kevin Sample
John Schletty

$500-$999
Emily Berkley
Deborah Borek & David Wiseman
Susan & Mike Bull
Diana Cohen & Weselley Slaymaker
Drew & Robin Ekstrom
Randy Ferrin & Kathy Trombly-Ferrin
Patrick & Madeleine Fleming
Dorothy Goldie
Thomas Horan
Richard & Carolyn Johnson
Ryan Lee & Meghan Simmons
Sally & Richard Leider
Don McClung & Anne Harvell
Alice O'Brien Berquist
St. Croix Valley Trees

$250-$499
Rebecca Barbacovi
Nancy Beck
Sarah Boe Lahti
Bill & Virginia Buell
Lorrie & Marc Franz
Dan Guenthner & Margaret Pennings
Nancy Hardenbergh
John & Diane Herman
Angela Hong
Terry & Deborah Ingram
Steven & Sarah Kromrey
Cade Lefeber
Anne Miller
Donald Mitchell & Barbara Staub
James Rickert
Danny & Renita Schmidt
John Stoklosa & Nancy Cole
Jeff Stonehouse
Tom & Laura Swain
Norval Valleen

$100-$249
Robert Cyril Altman
Cheryl Beardslee
Eliot Berkley
Rob Bullard
Dave Crawford
Deluxe Corporation
Nancy Drake
Ronald Erickson
Paul & Kathleen Fredrickson
Nina Hale
Mark & Jean Hoffman
Bruce & Elizabeth Hutchinson
Neil & Ellen Johnson
Susan & Mitchell Kittel
Kelvin Kobernick & Ann Layton
Deborah Kravik
Neil & Deborah Krueger
Richard & Linda Law
Michael Levy & Kerry Finn
Jeff Mallak
Gordon Maltby
Amy Middleton & Therese Durkin
Shellee Mierow
Terese & Thomas Mitchell
Catherine & Bruce Oscarson
Robert & Alice Peters
Janie Peterson
Martin & Jennifer Peterson
Helen Pickle
Malcom Potek & Kara Vanwyk
Peter Preus
Deb Ryun & Steve Rassler
Ryan & Lily Rodgers
Kevin & Maureen Rogers
Brandon Sanders
Michael & Catherine Stevens
Edward Stracke
Thrivent
United Way St Croix Valley
Richard Vezina
Ron & Kristina Vorndran
Bob & Kym Wright

Up to $99
Richard & Sharon Bachman
Sandra Ball
Michael & Marcia Baudino
Scott & Kristen Bibeau
Kirk & Catherine Bloomquist
Alex Bouthilet
Angela Burnett
Richard & Deborah Burrows
Joan Carlson
Kimberly Donaldson
Oliver Dressel
Rhonda Dunham
Carl Dyrbye
Lowell Enerson
Alexandra Felt
David & Katherine Griffith
Martin Hamm
Corina Haugan
Benjamin Heimbach
Joseph Hudick
Cheryl Hustad
Jay Johnson
Andrew Koskie
Kenneth & Doris Krautbauer
Norma & Roger Kretzschmar
Susan Lange
Dennis & Jan Lund
Mary Lusher
Joel Nester
Tima Zoe Newman
Polaris Match
John & Sandra Reed
William Reynolds
Susan & Wayne Shelton
Neil Soltis
Taylor & Jacobs
Jennifer Webster

In Memory of Marcia Russell Berkley
Emily Berkley

In Memory of Susan Mary Burrows
Robert Cyril Altman

In Memory of Andrew Clare
Lorrie & Marc Franz
Thomas Horan

In Memory of Doug Drake
Nancy Drake

In Memory of Catherine Preus
Deb Murphy
Helen Pickle
Peter Preus
Taylor & Jacobs

In Memory of Michael Schmidt
Danny & Renita Schmidt

In Honor of William, Reed & Gregory Buell
Bill & Virginia Buell

In Honor of Ron Johnson
Mike Addy & Nancy Johnson
Neil & Ellen Johnson

In Honor of Tim O'Hare
Carl Dyrbye

In Dedication to Andy & Joan
Sarah Boe Lahti

In Dedication to the Ski Trail Groomer
Alexandra Felt

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Community Land
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Standing Cedars
Community Land Conservancy

Every contribution matters.

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. We are continuing to raise money to help pay for future land acquisition and site improvements at the Prairie Center. Your gift will also help fund the replacement of the tractor and other equipment volunteers use to maintain trails and the land.

If you'd like to make a donation, you can do so online at standingcedards.org or mail a check to:
Standing Cedars
PO Box 249
Osceola, WI 54020

Thank you to all of our donors, we sincerely appreciate your support!