



## Annual Summary 2012

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### 2012 AT A GLANCE

- Increased Protected Land Total to 5,520 Acres
- Celebrated Our 20th Anniversary
- Hired New Operations Manager
- Honored With The “Friend of Conservation” Award
- Welcomed Two New Members to Board of Directors

# Open Spaces



## 2012 In Review

2012 was another remarkable year for OWLT thanks to our dedicated staff, Board of Directors, volunteers and our members. Allow me to share some of our many highlights with you.

Last year marked our 20th anniversary. It was wonderful seeing so many of our founding members at the annual dinner and it was especially fun having George Row and Ginny Bolger reminisce about the early days. I am amazed at how far we've come as an organization and the impact we have had, not just in Ozaukee and Washington Counties, but throughout Wisconsin.

The impact of our work in the region was rewarded with a major grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. Through an extremely competitive grant process, OWLT emerged with a \$448,000 grant to combat aquatic invasive species in a six county region. OWLT will be working with other non-profit partners, local units of government, and the Department of Natural Resources to inventory and control approximately 1,500 acres of aquatic invasive plants over the next 2 years.

OWLT has to match this federal grant with over \$100,000 of support from area foundations, corporations and individuals as well as build a volunteer corps to carry on the project after the federal support is gone.

OWLT was also honored with the “Friend of Conservation” award given by the Wisconsin Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society. This honor is especially rewarding since it comes from professional conservationists that work every day

to protect our natural resources.

It is a testament to the good work our staff and volunteers carry out to protect our land and water resources.

We had another very successful year in land protection and. We added the 45 acre Decorah Woods Preserve along the Milwaukee River in West Bend. The pur-

chase was made possible thanks to grants from the Department of Natural Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and the North American Wetland Conservation Act. We also added the Foth Easement in the Town of Belgium bringing our total land protection tally to over 5,500 acres.

*By Dan Dineen*

*President of OWLT*



On the stewardship side, our staff and volunteers made significant progress on invasive removal and public access improvements. We added trails and a parking area at the Pavcek Preserve, interpretive signage at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve and a canoe/kayak rest area at the Kratzsch Conservancy.

Of course we would not have such great news to share without the passion and commitment of our staff - Shawn, Steve, Mike, Elaine, Marilyn, Katie and Janet.

Before I conclude, I must thank Tony Warren for his dedication and years of service to our organization. For ten years Tony has served on our Board of Directors, four of them as president. During his tenure OWLT has seen remarkable growth thanks to his steady leadership and direction.

I am honored and privileged to have worked with Tony Warren. He has left us a solid foundation from which to build the future of our organization. 

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**ACCOUNTING**

Elaine Gauthier



## Thoughts On Land Protection



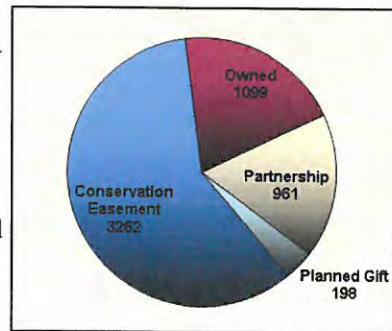
*By Steve Henkel  
Land Protection Director*

**Planning is critical to our success.** Since we have been quite successful over the last 20 years, it follows that we must have had a vision of where we intended to go.

From 2001 to 2010, our land protection efforts were guided by a strategic plan titled, "Charting The Future: A Strategic Plan to the Year 2010." Implementation of this plan greatly advanced our protection effectiveness. We began 2001 with 1,300 acres protected, and by the end of 2010 protected lands had increased by 3,500 acres - to a total of over 4,800 acres. This comparison by no means is intended to diminish the efforts of those who worked tirelessly prior to 2001. Rather, it highlights the impact of having a comprehensive plan to direct efforts and resources.

In 2009, with the timeline for our existing strategic plan coming to an end, we began a comprehensive review of our accomplishments and proposed new goals and objectives. In November 2011, we finalized our 'Strategic Plan 2020.' The Plan established goals and strategies for effective land protection, including creation of a "Guideline to Land Protection." The approach to creating such a guideline began by assessing whether current project area boundaries reflected the land's natural features such as watersheds and habitat, and then identifying within those boundaries ecologically sensitive land and water resources such as lands containing critical habitat and species of greatest conservation need. *Continued on next page*

### Acres Protected by Land Protection Method



# 2012 in Stewardship



*Mike*

By Mike Hoffer  
Stewardship Director

**2012 was a year for finishing projects**, controlling invasive plants, completing aesthetic enhancements and preparing for big things to come in 2013. The warm weather and dreadful drought brought us great challenges, but we persevered.

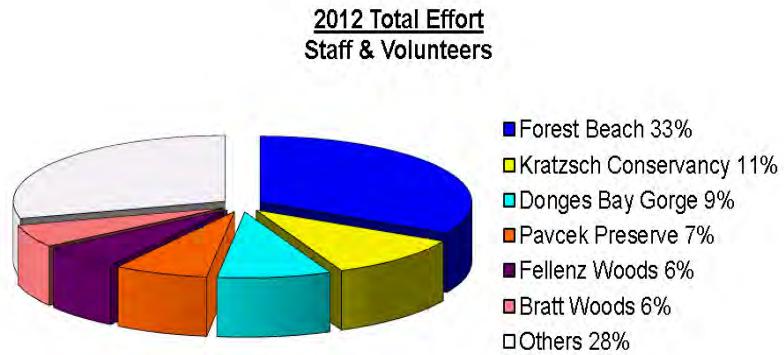
The relative completion of the *Forest Beach Migratory Preserve* was our largest and most successful project. (I use the term “relative” because no restoration project is ever truly completed.) In its fourth season it has become a wonderful wildlife preserve. The invasive plants are under control, the trails are established and well-marked, the interpretive signs are in, the trees and prairie grasses are thriving and the clubhouse is clean and in good repair. 234 species of birds have been recorded at the preserve.

The *Pavcek Preserve* was transformed into a publicly accessed woodland. Our AmeriCorps team went to work there and helped us to install a driveway, culvert, parking area, kiosk and trail system with benches and views of the monastery. With our volunteers we removed fencing and cleared most of the woody invasives. It makes for a great walk and allows us to provide open space access in the Holy Hill Woods area.

The *Cedarburg Environmental Study Area*, the *Sauk Creek Nature Preserve* and *Riverbend* have enjoyed significant makeovers. In all three cases large amounts of invasives were cleared, the entrances enhanced and trails were improved or created. New signs, information kiosks and rest areas were added as well. Return visitors are impressed by the improvements.

Perhaps our proudest achievement is the fact that we used more volunteer hours and less staff hours than we did in 2011. Not only is this more economically viable, it also represents the passion our community has for open spaces.

It's a good thing because we'll need that support more than ever in 2013. We'll plant 8,000 (yes, 8,000!) trees at *Riverbend* and 40 acres of prairie grasses at *Kratzsch Conservancy*. We have a restoration plan in the works for the *Hames Preserve* and we're leading the charge to combat aquatic invasive species in a six county region. 



Mike DeGueme won the stewardship championship. He logged 212 volunteer hours. Thanks Mike!

	2012	2011
<b>Staff</b>	4,421	5,797
<b>Volunteer</b>	4,999	3,329
<b>% Staff</b>	47%	64%
<b>% Volunteer</b>	53%	36%

## Thoughts on Land Protection

*Continued from previous page*

As a pilot project, we chose the Holy Hill Project Area for our first reassessment. A few of the preservation partners with which we are working more closely include the Mid-Kettle Moraine Partners Group and the Ice Age Trail Alliance. In 2012 we also engaged the GIS Club at the University of Milwaukee to assist with this reevaluation, and their efforts will be communicated in the coming months. In general, the process will include assembling the natural feature information noted above, and creating a program to systematically evaluate that information within a Geographic Information System (GIS) environment.

The objective is to identify parcels that best meet our criteria for protection, and to then contact the owners of those parcels to promote preservation options. This topic will be the focus of much discussion in the coming months within our Land Conservation Committee and with our preservation partners.

We welcome your comments and ideas as we move forward with our reevaluation process. 

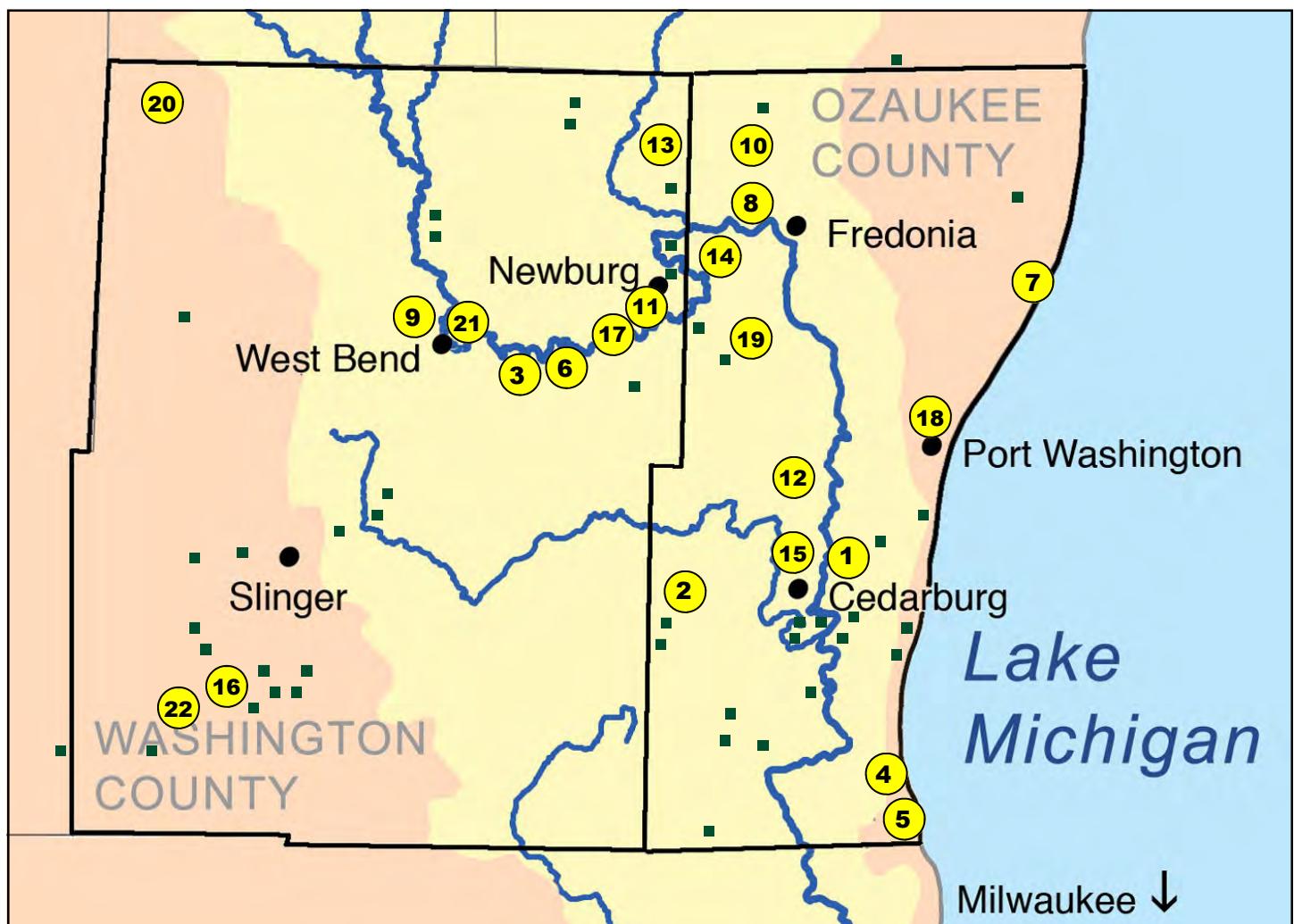
# OWLT Preserves & Easements

OWLT owns 22 properties totaling 1,099 acres of land that is preserved forever. This includes 16 sites developed for hiking, cross country skiing, bird watching, fishing or hunting. We also protect another 4,421 acres through conservation easements, partnerships and planned gifts. All totaled, that's 5,520 acres of land in Ozaukee and Washington Counties being preserved and protected by the efforts of OWLT.

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Bratt Woods                               | 12 Kurtz Woods State Natural Area |
| 2 Cedarburg Environmental Study Area (CESA) | 13 Lake Twelve                    |
| 3 Decorah Woods*                            | 14 MacLaurin Preserve*            |
| 4 Donges Bay Gorge                          | 15 Maurer Preserve*               |
| 5 Fairy Chasm State Natural Area*           | 16 Pavcek Preserve                |
| 6 Fellenz Woods                             | 17 Riverbend                      |
| 7 Forest Beach Migratory Preserve           | 18 Sauk Creek Nature Preserve     |
| 8 Hames Preserve                            | 19 Shannon Preserve               |
| 9 Hepburn Woods                             | 20 Wendt Preserve*                |
| 10 Huiras Lake State Natural Area           | 21 West Bend Train Depot          |
| 11 Kratzsch Conservancy                     | 22 Zinn Preserve*                 |

## Symbols

- 9 Preserve
- Easement
- \* Not developed for public access at this time



# 2013 OWLT Events



## MARCH

**Thursday, March 21, 6-9pm, Forest Beach Migratory Preserve**

OZAUKEE TREASURES NETWORK CONFERENCE All are welcome to attend this meeting of like-minded groups and individuals dedicated to smart development, open spaces and preserving quality of life in Ozaukee County.

**Saturday, March 23, 10am-1pm, West Bend Depot**

STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER MEETING Join the stewardship staff and key volunteers for a season kick off meeting. We'll provide refreshments and information - you provide ideas and enthusiasm!

**Tuesday, March 26, 7-9pm, Cedarburg Community Room**

STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER MEETING Join the stewardship staff and key volunteers for a season kick off meeting. We'll provide refreshments and information - you provide ideas and enthusiasm!

## APRIL

**Saturday, April 6, 10am-2pm, Riverbend Conservancy, Trenton**

VOLUNTEER WORK DAY It's the first volunteer workday of the 2012 stewardship season. We have a big year planned, so mark your calendars. We'll spend this day preparing Riverbend for 8,000 new trees!

## MAY

**Saturday, May 11, 7am-1pm, Forest Beach Migratory Preserve**

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY & GO GREEN Join OWLT, the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast as we celebrate migratory birds of all shapes and sizes. The day will include guided hikes and lots of bird watching.

## JUNE

**Saturday, June 15, 9am-4pm, Multiple Venues in Ozaukee County**

TREASURES OF OZ Visit eight hidden treasures in Ozaukee County (Including Kurtz Woods State Natural Area and the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve - both OWLT preserves of course.)

## AUGUST

**Saturday, August 24, 4-10pm Forest Beach Migratory Preserve**

ANNUAL DINNER Help us celebrate 21 years of protecting the land and waters of Ozaukee and Washington Counties. This year's theme is Wetlands, Water, Woods & Wildlife and will be catered by Shully's Cuisine of Theinsville.

## DECEMBER

**Saturday, December 7, 4-10pm, West Bend Depot**

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE Join us for an evening of food, drinks and holiday cheer. We've already started decorating the office! (Just kidding.)

# Good Friends We've Lost



*Shawn*

By Shawn Graff  
Executive Director

**Change is a part of life.** We all know this, but it never makes it easier to say goodbye to great friends and family, which is how we view each and every volunteer, member or supporter of OWLT.

I lost one of my best friends recently.

**Pat Wilmeth** was one of our founding members; she served on the Board of Directors of the Ozaukee Land Trust in the 1990s and returned to the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust board in 2007. She was our biggest supporter with major donations for Highland Woods, the Mequon Nature Preserve, Fairy Chasm and Donges Bay Gorge.

Pat lost her battle with multiple myeloma. As an example we should all follow, she will be greatly missed. She shared her passion for the environment with others and made a difference one project at a time. Her life had purpose and she shared her knowledge and talents on a daily basis.

Even though she was a few years my senior (39 to be exact) we hit it off from our first meeting. Pat and I had a lot in common and every visit was sure to include conversations about current politics, family, and an interesting fact or question to ponder.



One time she asked me how far she would have to walk if she walked an acre. I tried to explain that an acre was a measure of area not distance. But she convinced me that there had to be some way to calculate it. I finally decided that I could give her a distance by calculating the acreage equivalent of a four foot wide trail. Since there are 43,560 square feet in each acre, I determined that a four foot wide trail would need to be 10,890 feet long or a little over two miles. Pat's response was, "that's not long enough – I only need a two foot wide trail."

Pat chaired our advisory board and took on the challenge of setting up friend raising meetings. Sometimes the meetings would be intimate gatherings to reconnect with old friends like George and Suzanne Row. Other times it included renting a van and taking a group of new friends on a tour of a land trust preserve. Either way Pat took an active role in inviting guests, setting up the meeting and planning the day's activities.

To quote OWLT past president, Ginny Bolger "How very sad to lose such a remarkable woman and dear friend. Many of OWLT's successes were due to her efforts and generosity. She will not be forgotten!" *Continued on next page*



Pat Wilmeth at the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve in 2009

## Wish List



**Do you have any of these items around the house?  
They'd sure come in handy for us!**

### For our Forest Beach living quarters

- Games, books, puzzles, movies and general entertainment items for our AmeriCorps teams, interns and other guests
- A television
- A stereo
- A VCR/DVD player
- Pillows and covers

### For our preserves

- Fence posts
- Chicken wire
- Tree tubes
- Trail cameras
- A lawn tractor
- A small shed

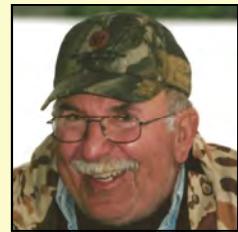
All contributions are tax deductible.  
Please contact Janet at 262-338-1794 to discuss a donation.

## Good Friends We've Lost

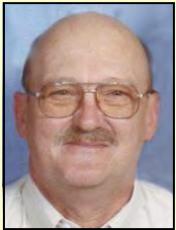
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**JJ Peterson** hunted Forest Beach Migratory Preserve and volunteered at Riverbend Conservancy where he helped us remove a truckload of farm debris from the Milwaukee River. Last year he was the first volunteer to walk in the door for our pre-season kickoff meeting (he helped carry in the snacks) and he was working with our Stewardship Director to develop a friends group for the Sauk Creek Nature Preserve.



**Jim Conger** helped out at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, the Abbott easement and with our "Go Green" event. Every spring he would go salmon fishing at the Sauk Creek Nature Preserve and he always found time to bring smoked fish to the OWLT office. Jim always had a smile on his face and was quick with a story about his latest hunting or fishing trip.



**Dick Schmitz** walked into the land trust in 2011 for the first time when his wife Janet Schmitz was a staff member. He quickly realized that he could be of service as the volunteer groundskeeper for our West Bend office. The place never looked better and Dick was soon mowing the entire trail system at Kratzsch Conservancy. He was a happy man on that tractor.



**Ted Engelhoff** was the owner of Engelhoff Tree Service in Mequon and a lover of his community and the outdoors. In addition to helping Mequon open their first library, he was also instrumental in establishing the Ozaukee Ice Center, Mee Kwon Park and Lion's Den Gorge Nature Preserve. Upon his passing he requested that memorials be donated to the Cedarburg Senior Center and OWLT. We've received many donations in his name - a testament to his character.

**Lenore Juvan** had a generous heart and was a great supporter of OWLT. She was a long-time teacher from Germantown who loved children, animals, nature, traveling the world and playing piano. She helped with our efforts to secure Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, Donges Bay Gorge and Riverbend.



## Leaving a Lasting Legacy

**Herb Lindemann and his wife Dorothy** loved their land in the Town of Erin. In the 1950s the land was mostly farm fields. But over the decades the land was transformed into forest, prairie and ponds. In 2003 Herb and Dorothy donated a conservation easement on their property. Herb was a man a few words but the one thing that would get him talking was his land. He could talk for hours about the pleasure he took in planting trees and maintaining his garden, prairie and a grape vineyard.

We were saddened to learn that Herb passed away last year. But true to his nature and his love of his land he made sure OWLT was remembered in his will. Herb's generous gift was added to our Stewardship Fund which supports our land management and easement monitoring needs. Our goal is to grow these funds so that the interest can be used to help fulfill our mission.

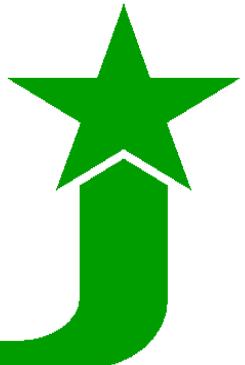
OWLT also lost two other good friends this year that had the foresight to think about leaving a lasting gift.

**Lenore Juvan and Robert Koehler** both were long time supporters of OWLT and wanted to make sure our mission carried on in perpetuity. Their estate gifts were also used to build our Stewardship Fund.

Planned givers are recognized by OWLT through our Green Star program. The Green Star program is a very special group of donors and supports that have made a lasting commitment through a variety of land preservation and estate planning tools. Individuals that have donated land or conservation easements are Green Stars. In addition, anyone that contributes to our stewardship fund or makes a planned gift is also a Green Stars.

All bequests to OWLT are exempt from federal estate taxes. For more information about how to become a Green Star or make a planned gift please contact the OWLT office at (262) 338-1794.

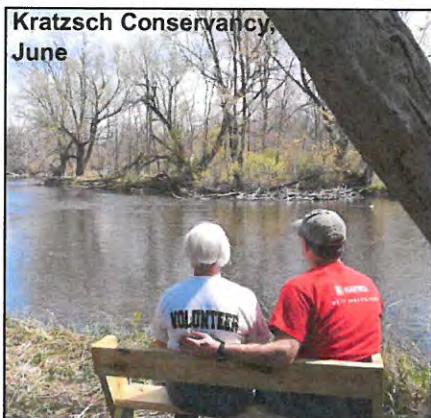
Some gifts last a lifetime, but some gifts last forever.



# The year in photos 2012



Ron Schmidt (L) and our college interns put up a kestrel falcon box.



Jane and Greg Wray try our new canoe rest stop along the Milwaukee River.



This little fella was living in the clubhouse (along with the rest of his family.) We found them a good home.



John Hurth enjoys a fall day marking preserve boundaries



Kevin Bierzter (R) leads a crew as they build a new shed.



32 employees from Leeson Electric help build trails and protect habitat.



JH Hoffer shows off a surveillance camera.



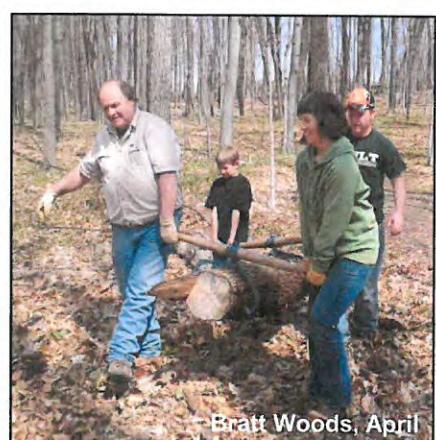
Joe Pospichal shows off our new interpretive signs.



Our AmeriCorps crew stayed for five weeks and worked at eleven preserves.

Volunteers donated over 5,500 hours of their time last year.

*Thank you!*



Steve Wilkinson, Marjie Tomter and friends work hard on a spring day.



Employees from the West Bend Home Depot help us to open our newest nature preserve.



Mark Adams (L), Richard Winter (R) and AmeriCorps friends help re-open the Zinn Preserve to the public.



Ethan Heineke completes his Eagle Project.