

MINNESOTA LAND TRUST | 2014 ANNUAL REPORT









OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

MORE THAN ONE hundred years ago, Gayle Goetzman's family settled on a farm in a picturesque valley near Winona. Throughout all the decades of change-from Model T's and world wars to cell towers and the internet the Goetzman farm has remained a constant. Just this year, the Goetzman property was officially recognized as a "Century Family Farm," a very unique honor in Minnesota. Knowing the family's commitment to their sense of place and family's legacy, it is no surprise that several years ago the Goetzmans protected their land forever through a conservation easement with the Minnesota Land Trust.

From our beginning in 1991, the Minnesota Land Trust has embraced its roots of nurturing and preserving the best places in our state like the Goetzman Farm with innovation, integrity, quality and permanence. Our members, board, landowners, volunteers and staff all take very seriously the responsibility and gravity of *permanent* land protection.

And now, because of shifting demographics and economic changes, we are filled with a sense of urgency to increase our pace. Because for every family like the Goetzmans who are committed to their roots, there are thousands of landowners who are making decisions right now about the fate of their properties.

Thanks to our newly adopted strategic plan, the Minnesota Land Trust is poised to seize this opportunity to accelerate our work over the coming years. With your help, we can protect and restore Minnesota's very best places, and engage people in the land as never before. Here's a snapshot of the need for our work and what we hope to accomplish:

PROTECT

Consider this:

- Over the coming decades, Minnesota's population is expected to increase by 20%. With the recession over, real estate development is now starting to rebound.
- Nearly 800,000 acres of Minnesota's grasslands which contribute greatly to wildlife habitat and water quality are expected to convert to cropland in the next few years.
- Shoreline development is once again increasing, causing a 66% reduction in vegetation around our lakes, reducing fish habitat and degrading water quality.

Direct land protection will always remain core to the Land Trust's business, and last year was one of our most productive ever. Today, the Minnesota Land Trust holds 98% of the conservation easements held by non-profits in the state, which carries with it a responsibility for productive leadership and accountability. Therefore:

TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS WINDOW IN TIME, WE WILL DOUBLE THE PACE OF LAND PROTECTION SO THAT IN TEN YEARS AT LEAST 2 MILLION FEET OF SHORELINE AND 100,000 ACRES OF THE STATE'S BEST NATURAL HABITATS WILL BE PROTECTED.

RESTORE

At the same time, we continue to recognize the need for restoration throughout the state.

- Less than 1% of native prairie remains. We need to restore Minnesota's prairies and working grasslands for wildlife habitat and clean water.
- Wetland loss is particularly severe in the western prairie-pothole region of the state, where over 90% of wetlands are gone. This loss impacts water quality, increases flooding, and diminishes important wildlife habitat.

The Minnesota Land Trust is in the midst of helping to lead our state's largest restoration project – the St. Louis River Estuary Restoration Initiative – which will ultimately bring 1,400 acres of aquatic habitat and recreation opportunites back to life after years of degradation and industrial pollution.

Now we are ready to put our professional experiences and technical resources to work in other parts of the state, as many of our 500 landowners are looking to the Land Trust to help improve the health of their properties.

> IN ORDER TO HELP RECOVER SOME OF MINNESOTA'S MOST IMPORTANT HABITATS, WE INTEND TO COMPLETE MORE THAN 1,000 ACRES OF STRATEGIC AND ENDURING RESTORATION WORK IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS.

ENGAGE

And yet there is more to be done:

- The average American child spends 44 hours a week with electronic media and a fraction of that in the outdoors, contributing to the national obesity epidemic and other health concerns.
- Fortunately, the Outdoor Foundation found that young people with nearby walking and biking trails are far more likely to get outside and exercise.

The Land Trust recognizes that all our conservation investments today will rely on the conservation *leaders* of tomorrow. And we also recognize that it's difficult to create and foster a conservation ethic in the next generation if that generation hasn't have meaningful experiences in the great outdoors.

Towards that end, the Minnesota Land Trust has embarked on a new program in partnership with the City of Duluth to improve trail access and other outdoor recreation opportunities, helping Duluth to become one of the country's great outdoor destinations and create an unparalleled quality of life for its residents.

OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS, WE WILL USE THIS PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AS A MODEL FOR WORKING WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE WHICH ASPIRE TO CREATE MEANINGFUL, NATURE BASED EXPERIENCES FOR THEIR YOUTH AND FAMILIES.

The next decade represents what we believe will be a watershed moment for the health of our state and our communities. It will also be a pivotal time for the Minnesota Land Trust as we will need to grow to meet the changing landscape of our future.

Like the Goetzman family, we see ourselves not in the brief span of time that we spend on this earth, but as part of the land that will endure long after we are gone.

Because we are privileged to work with dozens of families like the Goetzmans who are all committed to leaving a lasting legacy for future generations, the urgency of this critical time in the life of the Minnesota Land Trust becomes clear. We want you to know that we are ready to put our shoulder down and do the hard work it will take to get our treasured places protected and restored while we still can.

But most of all, your continued passion, commitment and counsel are what will make Minnesota a truly exceptional place for all of us, and for future generations.

In gratitude for all you do,

Kris Larson Executive Director





THE ST. LOUIS RIVER flows 179 miles through a 3,634 square mile watershed into Duluth Harbor. It forms one of the largest freshwater estuaries in the world, and is important habitat for fish, wildlife and waterfowl. Over 230 species of birds depend on the estuary for a stopover place during migration.

However, it is currently listed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an Area of Concern due to its industrial history which destroyed fish and wildlife habitat and deeply polluted waters by unregulated chemical dumping, untreated sewage releases and other physical disturbances in the last century.

But now, the St. Louis River Estuary is on the verge of a dramatic transformation. An ambitious restoration program will repair the river's ecology and provide an attractive destination for recreational users from all over the region.

Several specific areas have been identified for clean-up and at one site, restoration is nearly complete.





RADIO TOWER BAY

Over a century ago, Radio Tower Bay was the site of a lumber operation which dumped tons of wood scraps and waste material directly into the water. The accumulated wood waste, in some places over 6 feet deep, created a sterile environment that was essentially a desert for fish and other creatures.

Working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and contractors, Minnesota Land Trust completed restoration designs, engineering specifications, environmental reviews and permits needed for the project. A contractor was selected to complete the dredging work on the 29-acre site.

Approximately 115,000 cubic yards of dredged material was ground up and pumped to a location where the wood debris will be prepared for re-use as biofuel, compost and other uses. The entire project, which began two years ago with the removal wood pilings, will be completed by late November.

Natural re-vegetation next spring will result in a riverbed that's ideal for fish and other creatures to spawn and raise their young, and water depths that will be much more amenable for fishing and other recreational uses.



GRASSY POINT

Minnesota Land Trust is working with partners on restoration plans for a project that's very similar to Radio Tower Bay but on a larger scale. In this case, sawmill waste covers a depth of up to 16 feet and the 140-acre site will yield approximately 300,000 cubic yards of waste wood material.

Currently, sheltered zones are missing throughout the St. Louis River Estuary – nice fringe areas of vegetation that act as a food source but also habitat for birds, fish, frogs and turtles.

At Grassy Point, excavated material will again be removed and re-used, but some is expected to be re-purposed to create a land feature that, by protecting the interior part of the bay from wave action, will result in a very effective nursery area for walleye and sturgeon.

The environmental review process is underway, evaluating how fish, water, and air quality resources will be affected, and developing practices to avoid or minimize risk to those resources. Excavation work is expected to begin in the spring of 2016.

CHAMBERS GROVE

Sometime during the 1950's or 60's a sheet pile wall was erected that was intended to stabilize the river bank. However, this steel curtain disconnected people from the river.

More recently, Minnesota DNR fish biologists have determined that Chambers Grove is an ideal site to provide spawning habitat for sturgeon and walleye.

By removing the sheet piling and restoring the natural shoreline, a much more attractive and usable public access site will be created. It will also replace former spawning sites that have been cut off to Lake Superior access because of the Fond du Lac dam.

Design, environmental review and permitting will be done by the spring of 2015, with the goal of initiating construction in mid-summer.

When completed, people will have much improved recreational access to the river, and fish will be able to utilize the spawning areas. 2,000 CUBIC YARDS OF WASTE MATERIAL WAS DREDGED PER DAY.

> "THE **ST. LOUIS RIVER ESTUARY CORRIDOR** IS A PERFECT CASE STUDY ON HOW A COMMUNITY CAN SUCCESSFULLY WEAVE TOGETHER RESIDENTIAL, INDUSTRIAL, RECREATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS."

> > - DON NESS, STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS, MARCH 2014

AN OVERVIEW OF LAND PROTECTION

THE FOLLOWING NEW PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED IN FISCAL YEAR 2014, THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF OUR MEMBERS WHO CONTRIBUTED FINANCIALLY, AND BY LANDOWNERS WHO CARE ABOUT A LEGACY OF LAND PROTECTION IN MINNESOTA.



ARCOLA BLUFFS - WASHINGTON COUNTY

NERSTRAND BIG WOODS -RICE COUNTY

This 158-acre property protects oak savanna and grasslands that are key habitats for species in greatest conservation need including the short-eared owl and the eastern fox snake. The landowner, who has completed two prior easements, planted a grove of oak and walnut trees and has plans to eventually restore the wetland at the fork of two streams along the southern boundary.

ARCOLA BLUFFS ON THE ST. CROIX -WASHINGTON COUNTY

Native prairie protected on this 36-acre property will help maintain water quality in the St. Croix River area, the premier mussel watershed in the Upper Mississippi River. These places are home to many Midwestern species such as the cougar, bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and Karner blue butterfly, which are currently or were recently included on the federal list of threatened and endangered species.





THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS WERE FUNDED BY LAND TRUST MEMBERS AND WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND AS RECOMMENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES (LCCMR).



FISCHER LAKES - BECKER COUNTY

Three generations of one family have protected their 475-acre Century Farm, located in a very important migratory area for forest birds and waterfowl. Wildlife species documented on the property include several species of greatest conservation need: trumpeter swan, prairie chicken, sandhill crane, great blue heron, bald eagle, sharp-tailed grouse, and upland sandpiper. Over 18,000 feet of shoreline along five lakes, as well as remnant oak savannah, prairie and forest located adjacent to the city of Frazee are protected forever.

SUNRISE LAKE - CHISAGO COUNTY

The forests, grasslands and wetlands on this 79-acre property provide habitat for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including the wood turtle, trumpeter swan and spotted salamander.



BLACK LAKE - BELTRAMI COUNTY

This 145-acre property consisting of forest, wetlands, and grasslands also includes over 10,000 feet of shoreline. The mosaic of forest, wetlands and grasslands support bald eagles, northern goshawks, great gray owls, red-shouldered hawks, black-backed woodpeckers, gray wolves, loons, and other species of greatest conservation need.

TENNYSON LAKE - ISANTI COUNTY

Over 4,300 feet of sensitive shoreline are protected on this 158-acre property. Rare habitats including sedge meadow, tamarack swamp, and cattail marsh are found on the property. The land provides significant habitat for species in greatest conservation need, supporting such species as sandhill crane, tundra swan, trumpeter swan, bald eagle, Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow, pileated woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, black bear, and smooth green snake.



THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS WERE FUNDED BY LAND TRUST MEMBERS AND BY MINNESOTA'S OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND AS RECOMMENDED BY THE LESSARD-SAMS OUTDOOR HERITAGE COUNCIL (LSOHC).



AN OVERVIEW OF LAND PROTECTION

KNIFE RIVER – LAKE COUNTY

PINE RIVER - CASS COUNTY



KNIFE RIVER - LAKE COUNTY

This conservation easement protects 2,424 feet of shoreline along the Knife River, a designated trout stream, as well as a tributary and a pond by limiting development of the tract and other uses that could negatively impact the water quality and integrity of the forest community.

CHALBERG CREEK - ST. LOUIS COUNTY

This 159-acre property consists of a mix of upland hardwood forest, lowland coniferous forest, wetlands, grasslands, and beaver ponds with approximately 1,770 feet of shoreline along Chalberg Creek, a DNRdesignated trout stream, and a tributary of the Cloquet River. The property provides scenic views of the rolling, wooded landscape from Highway 8.

WHITEFISH CHAIN OF LAKES -CROW WING COUNTY

This 25-acre conservation easement completes a gap between an existing Whitefish Chain of Lakes easement to the north and the Uppgaard Wildlife Management Area to the south, creating a 175-acre protected area. This land also includes over 500 feet of undeveloped shoreline on Lower Whitefish Lake. Large ponds with approximately 3,500 linear feet of shoreline provide nesting habitat for diving ducks. The wooded and natural character of the property provides scenic views visible from Silver Peak Road and Lower Whitefish Lake.

PINE RIVER - CASS COUNTY

Significant habitat for a full array of plants and wildlife, including several species in greatest conservation need, is protected by this 160-acre easement. Black bear, bobcat, bald eagle, beaver, wild turkey, sand hill crane, great horned owl, grouse, white tail deer, common tern, yellow rail, red-necked grebe, trumpeter swan, common loon, least darter, eastern hognose snake, and lady slipper will benefit from protection. A mile and a half of shoreline is also preserved forever.

ONE LAKE - CASS COUNTY

A mix of forest types, wetlands, grassland and open water on this 42-acre property provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species in greatest conservation need including sharp-tailed grouse, common loon, red-necked grebes, least darter, and eastern hognose snake. The undeveloped and wooded shoreline provides foraging habitat for osprey and bald eagles.

SHERBURNE HARDWOODS -SHERBURNE COUNTY

This 80-acre conservation easement protects deciduous forest, grassland, and wetland, providing habitat for a variety of species in greatest conservation need including bald eagles, American woodcocks, gray wolves, and whip-poor-wills. The property borders the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, and it's close to the Santiago Wildlife Management Area.





OTTER LAKE - OTTER TAIL COUNTY

MILLE LACS LAKE - MILLE LACS COUNTY

The natural and undeveloped shoreline on Mille Lacs Lake, recognized by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as providing exceptional off-shore muskie spawning habitat, has been protected forever. The 52-acre land supports a large array of wildlife species including bald eagle, osprey, yellow rail, trumpeter swan, sharptailed sparrow, muskellunge, wood turtle, and four-toed and spotted salamander. The property is located less than ½ mile southwest of Father Hennepin State Park, which is recognized as one of the most important areas for species of greatest conservation need in the Mille Lacs Uplands Ecological Subsection.

OTTER LAKE - OTTER TAIL COUNTY

Over 120 acres and nearly a mile of natural shoreline on Otter Lake, a Natural Environment Lake, are protected forever. The land's upland hardwood forest has been mapped and identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey as a native plant community of high biodiversity significance. Additionally, the grasslands and wetlands on the property are key habitats for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including the short-eared owl and the bobolink.



BEAR LAKE -CARLTON COUNTY

A mosaic of habitat on this 97-acre property supports bobcat, fisher, black bear, bald eagles, common loons, forest-dwelling

salamanders, and other species of greatest conservation need. Over 2,300 feet of natural shoreline along Bear Lake, classified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as a Natural Environment Lake, is also preserved.

MOOSE LAKE -PINE AND CARLTON COUNTIES

Final easements that collectively add up to nearly 700 acres of hardwood forest, black spruce, northern wet ash and swamp, tamarack bog, open water ponds and grasslands have been completed. This natural area supports a large array of wildlife species, including black bear, sandhill crane, sharp tailed sparrow, Cape May warbler, two-spotted skipper, northern cricket frog, wood turtle, and eastern hognose snake.

LITTLE CROW LAKE -OTTER TAIL COUNTY

This 115-acre property consists of a mixed hardwood forest, broadleaf sedge wetlands, open grasslands, agricultural lands, and an open water pond with approximately 2,422 feet of shoreline along an intermittent stream, 1,300 feet of shoreline along a perennial stream and 1,309 feet of shoreline along a pond connecting with Little Crow Lake. The broadleaf sedge wetland, red oak forest, and aspen-oak forest on the Protected Property have been mapped and identified by the DNR as key habitats for a variety of species in greatest conservation need, including the northern pintail and the bobolink.







"STUDY NATURE, LOVE NATURE, STAY CLOSE TO NATURE. IT WILL NEVER FAIL YOU." – FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



VOLUNTEERS

MINNESOTA LAND TRUST takes a unique approach to its use of volunteers for conservation easement monitoring.

By using trained and certified volunteers – many of whom have devoted time to monitor Minnesota Land Trust easements since the 1990's – our organization is able to accomplish two critical goals.

First, we are committed to visiting each and every easement on an annual basis. Typically during that visit, the monitor walks the property with the landowner and takes photos and otherwise documents any changes that have occurred on that property over the past year.

This allows us to maintain a means of direct communication with our nearly 500 landowners that would otherwise be next to impossible.

2014 VOLUNTEERS

Jessica Abernathy Donna Abramson Allan and Ginna Portman Amis Patrick Anderson Todd Armbruster Robert P Axtmann John Baird Polly Bayrd Tom and Ann Beaver Eric S. Bell Nancy L. Berlin Brad Bourgeois Susan Boyd Matt Bredesen Kirk and Julee Bremer Dorothy Slegman and James Brewer Michael Burnett David Burritt Thomas Clapp Jace Crowe

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Our second goal is to minimize violations, when something occurs on the property that runs counter to the objective of the conservation easement.

Remember, conservation easements are legal agreements that are binding on all future owners of the property. Our experience tells us that consistent communication with our landowners goes a long ways towards preventing violations down the road.

Our best guess is that volunteers save thousands of dollars per year that would otherwise have to be spent on staff time. Without our highly dedicated team of expert volunteer monitors, we would not accomplish the volume of land protection that we're currently able to achieve.

Thank you, volunteers!

Richard and Vickie Lemanczykafka Huizhen Li Linda Liestman Brad Fuller Bonnie Maffitt Bill Majewski Maria Maldonado Norma Malinowski Catherine Marquardt Peter Martin Laura Matson Diane McGann Brvan McGinnis Joan Meierotto Hamlin Metzger Clint Miller Ran Miner Dennis and Bonita Morris **Rick Musser** Terri Nelson Mary Newstrom Karen Oberhauser James Odden

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FUNDRAISING & REVENUE

The Minnesota Land Trust is committed to strong fiscal health and socially responsible investments. The financial summary that follows is based on the complete financial audit which was conducted by Redpath and Company, Ltd. Their full report is available online at www.mnland.org or by contacting the Land Trust at 651-647-9590.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2014

Assets	2014	2013
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$4,719,126	\$4,208,089
Net Furniture & Equipment	\$1,867	\$5,600
Land Held for Resale/Conservation	\$9,000	\$9,000
Total Assets	\$4,729,993	\$4,222,689
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Accrued Payables	\$88,907	\$80,050
Total Net Assets	\$4,641,086	\$4,142,639
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$4,729,993	\$4,222,689

EXPENSE ALLOCATION

Program	\$2,021,999	86%	
Fundraising	\$195,883	8%	
Management	\$120,187	6%	
Total expenses	\$2,338,069		





FUNDRAISING & REVENUE

Total support & revenue	\$2,836,516
Changes in fair value of investments:	\$353,386
Other:	\$1,959
Fee for service:	\$28,900
Interest income:	\$148,493
Other public funding, primarily St. Louis River Restoration:	\$318,514
Minnesota Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund:	\$521,344
Outdoor Heritage Fund:	\$883,185
Charitable support from foundations, corporations & organizations:	\$141,580
Charitable support from individuals:	\$439,155



DONORS FROM JULY 1, 2013 - JUNE 30, 2014

ANNUAL GIFTS

Gifts that support operations, special projects and long-term stewardship of protected lands.

\$1.000 and above

Paul Markwardt and Richard Allendorf Howard and Camilla Robert Alton Allan and Ginna Portman Amis Eric S Anderson and Janalee Aurelia Kurt Apfelbacher Prospect Creek Foundation, a family foundation of Bruce and Martha Atwater John Baird Mita Bell Elizabeth N. Brombach Carroll Brooks through the Greystone Foundation Colleen Carey and Pam Endean Austen S. Cargill Garv R. Carlson and Ms. Jane Howard Claire Olson and William Davidson Edward and Sherry Ann Davton Toby and Mae Dayton David Hartwell and Elizabeth DeBaut Steve C. DeLapp Valerie Dohertv EcoTrust

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"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD; INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS."

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