



Watershed News

Cedar Community's Gift of a 100-acre Conservation Easement

From Linda Mutschler, Executive Director

I wanted to take a moment to reflect on CLCF's history and the fact that CLCF will mark its 50th anniversary in 2024.



All the land protection that has occurred—including Cedar Community's recent gift—would not have been possible without the vision of Geoff Maclay and CLCF's Founding Donors back in 1974.

CLCF's Founding Donors

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Russ Darrow | Everett Smith |
| Paul Grunau | Joseph Steuer |
| Geoffrey Maclay | James Wiebrecht |
| Paul Reilly, Sr. | B.C. Ziegler |
| Thomas Rolfs, Sr. | William Sprinkmann |
| Eugene Simon | |

We've come an incredibly long way during the last 50 years. There is no question that Geoff Maclay and the other Founding Donors were visionaries. They founded one of the oldest land trusts in Wisconsin right here in our small corner of Washington County!

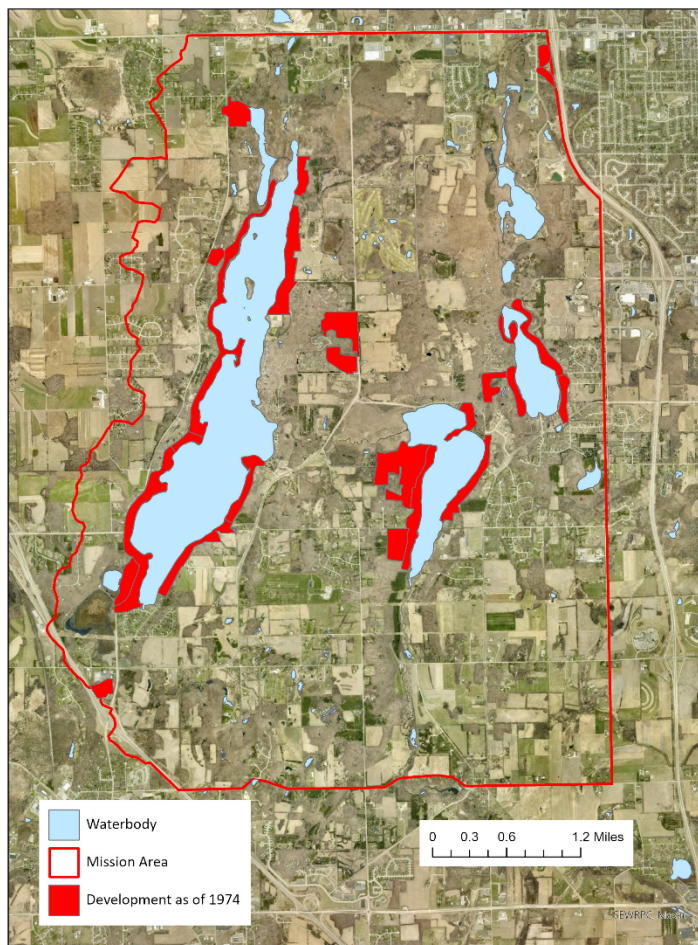
In fact, let's go back to 1974.

In 1974, 0% of CLCF's mission area was protected. Think about that. Zero percent. Furthermore, we estimate that only 6% of the land was developed as shown in red in Map 1. That's largely the shorelines around the lakes and Cedar Community.

At that time, 94% of the land was comprised of farmland and open space.

There are probably a number of you reading this who remember when this area was primarily farmland as far as the eye could see. So, where are we today?

Map 1: 1974 Developed Land in CLCF's Mission Area



To date, CLCF and its Partners have helped to protect 2,884 acres, or 22% of CLCF's mission area.

Think about that. Nearly one quarter of the land in the Cedar Lakes region will remain as open space. These areas will help to sustain the abundant natural beauty, clean water, and wildlife for generations to come. The breakdown of land protection is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of CLCF and Partner Land Protection

Type of Protection	Acres	% of Total
Owned Acres	1,176	40%
Conservation Easements	713	25%
Alternative Preservation	995	35%
Total Acres	2,884	100%

Imagine what CLCF’s mission area would look like without that land protection. It would look totally different. It could look like Oconomowoc Lake, Pewaukee Lake or Elkhart Lake.



But our work is not done! We are in a *Race for Open Space*.

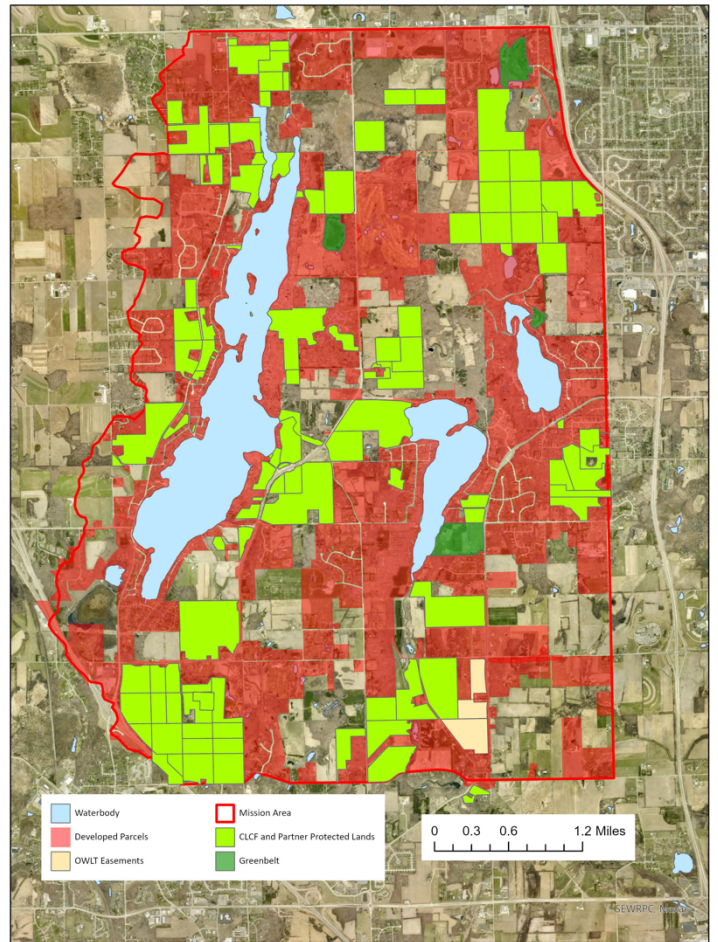
Map 2—and my gratitude goes out to Sophie Gosetti, CLCF’s Conservation Coordinator, for putting it together—shows where we are today. For purposes of simplicity, developed areas are predominantly lots under 10 acres with a structure.

Remember the map from 1974, when 94% of the Cedar Lakes region was farmland or open space? Well, today 22% has been protected (in green), 48% has been developed (in red) and only about 30% remains as farmland or open space.

That 30% represents approximately 4,000 acres. Of those 4,000 acres, approximately 2,200 acres are farmland, and 1800 acres are wetland, forestland, or open space.

That’s all that is left to protect. As part of our next Strategic Plan, which we will be rolling out at our Annual Meeting in December, we would like to protect an additional 600 acres, or 15% of those 4,000 acres over the next five years. Why is this important?

Map 2: 2023 Developed and Conserved Land



Because change can happen in the blink of an eye. This is an aerial view of the new Cedar Lake Estates development off of County Road C and Hwy 60. It’s soon to be 181 homes. Right now, it’s being mined for gravel. We often say that we have one chance to protect land, and the following picture shows you why. Once land is bulldozed, paved over, and developed, it is lost forever from a conservation standpoint.



Aerial View of Cedar Lake Estates

So, please consider supporting CLCF as we head into year-end.

Every contribution matters. Every dollar counts. Every dollar brings us closer to the finish line in our *Race for Open Space*.

If you'd like to learn more about CLCF, or you'd like to volunteer, please don't hesitate to contact us at askclcf@theclcf.org. We would love to hear from you.

We have one chance to do this. Let's do it. Let's get it done. Let's finish this *Race for Open Space*.



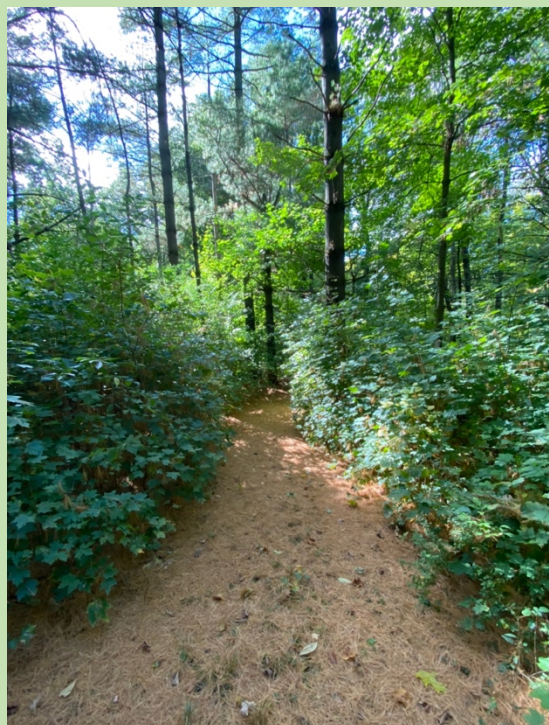
CLCF's Protected Property, Fritsche II

Volunteer Spotlight: Ross Anderson and Michael Voss

CLCF couldn't do the work it does to protect the natural environment of the Cedar Lakes region without its incredible Stew Crew volunteers. Thank you to all the Stew Crew volunteers who have come out to help CLCF during 2023!

As part of CLCF's Stew Crew program, individuals can Adopt-A-Preserve, where they take on the responsibility of helping CLCF steward a particular property.

Shortly after CLCF purchased the Wiebrecht Property in August 2022 from the James A. Wiebrecht, Sr. Family Trust, Ross Anderson and Michael Voss agreed to take on the Adopt-A-Preserve role for the Wiebrecht Property.



Over the past year, Ross and Michael have worked to clear and maintain the trails, cut down hazardous trees, and spray non-native exotics on the property.

If you haven't been out to visit the 8.5-acre property on the corner of German Village and Oak Lodge Roads, we encourage you to do so.

The trails wind through the woodland, and right now the fall colors are on full display!

If you'd like to go on a guided hike or learn more about CLCF's Adopt-A-Preserve Program, please don't hesitate to contact Sarah Moore, CLCF's Stewardship Coordinator, at smoore@theclcf.org.

And, in the meantime, thank you, Ross and Michael, for volunteering your time and for maintaining the wonderful Wiebrecht Property for all to enjoy!

Cedar Community's Incredible Gift

On August 28, 2023, Cedar Community, one of Wisconsin's largest not-for-profit senior living communities, gifted a conservation easement on 100 acres of pristine woodland, prairie, and lakeshore frontage to CLCF.

This gift represents the third largest conservation easement donation in CLCF's history.

Back in 1953, bachelor farmer William Koehl donated his farmland to help establish a place of purpose, dignity, and compassionate care for older adults. Cedar Community's founder, Rev. Louis Riesch, envisioned a place of natural beauty and quality care for Washington County seniors.



William Koehl

Rev. Riesch rallied members of the South Wisconsin Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (now the United Church of Christ) to raise funds, to engage volunteers, and to create a leadership board to spearhead these efforts. With the gift of William's land, a determined vision, and thousands of volunteer hours, this vision became a reality.

Following a groundbreaking ceremony attended by William, the newly appointed Board of Directors, and hundreds from the surrounding areas, Cedar Community opened its first 22-bed "home for the aged" in 1957—serving neighbors from the surrounding farms and municipalities.

Soon after, services expanded—providing nursing home care to those needing skilled nursing and around-the-clock care. At its peak, Cedar Community was Wisconsin's largest nursing home, serving the skilled nursing needs of more than 400 individuals.



Cedar Community's Sod-Cutting Ceremony

Volunteer groups and congregational members came from as far away as Milwaukee to assist with daily duties of cooking, cleaning, laundry, and social activities as the number of residents and patients grew. Youth groups would summer on the campus, assisting with the care and maintenance of the trails, lakeshore, grounds, and buildings.

Under Rev. Riesch's determined leadership, William Koehl's original 98-acre gift grew to more than 500 acres on multiple campuses in the West Bend area. Since its founding, Cedar Community's size and scope has expanded with nearly 900 friends and neighbors now calling Cedar Community home.



The Wisconsin Prairie at Cedar Community

Living and service options include independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing and long-term care, rehabilitation services (in-patient and out-patient), a state-of-the art memory care facility, pharmacy, and

more. For the past 70 years, Cedar Community has thoughtfully cared for and cultivated the treasured gift of the Cedar Lake Campus. What was once a farm field is now a beautiful Eden of forestry, native plants, conservation trails, streams, ponds, and the largest undeveloped frontage on Big Cedar Lake.



Trail at Cedar Community

After taking the helm of leadership in 2021, Cedar Community’s President and CEO Nicole Pretre revisited conversations that had taken place between CLCF and prior Cedar Community leadership.

Nicole states, “It was incredibly important to me that we not only honor the legacy of our founders and benefactors, whose amazing generosity made Cedar Community possible, but that we also demonstrate our commitment to environmental stewardship. I believe we are caretakers, and I wanted to explore how we could balance the ability to use and enjoy this amazing resource, while honoring its past and keeping it in its natural state for generations to come. Making this gift to CLCF accomplishes both.”



Cedar Community’s Turtle Pond

CLCF is incredibly grateful to Cedar Community for the gift of this conservation easement. The 100 acres

includes land that has been relatively untouched, with mature hardwood forests, a well-established prairie, and multiple wetlands.

According to Nicole, “Cedar Community is differentiated in the senior living space because of our amazing campuses and because of seniors who want to enjoy, explore, and embrace life in a beautiful and natural environment. We are unique because of the miles of trails, the pristine lake frontage, and the ecological treasure that is, quite literally, right outside our door. This partnership is a strategic win. And protecting this land for future generations, is simply the right thing to do.”

For CLCF, the addition of this 100-acre conservation easement helps CLCF to protect incredibly important land in the Primary Environmental Corridor—areas which contain the best woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitats in the region.

Map 3: Cedar Community’s Protected Property



Nicole continues, “We were founded with one gift. And we are honored, in turn, to donate the development rights of 100 acres of this sacred land in the Primary Environmental Corridor on the Cedar Lake Campus to our partners at the Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation. This gift will ensure that this land is here in its natural state for generations to come.”

CLCF’s Annual Meeting Notice

CLCF’s 2023 Annual Meeting will be on Saturday, December 2nd from 9:00-11:00 AM at Cedar Lodge on the Cedar Community’s Cedar Lake Campus (5595 County Road Z, West Bend).

Sponsored by:



Please Consider Joining CLCF's Legacy Circle!

We are keenly aware that the responsibility of caring for the land that CLCF has protected is a timeless endeavor.

To that end, we ask that you consider becoming part of a very special group of CLCF land conservation supporters by joining CLCF's Legacy Circle Planned Giving Program.

As part of CLCF's current Legacy Circle Bequest Challenge, you have an opportunity not only to help CLCF in the future but also, due to the generosity of two anonymous couples, to help CLCF today. These two couples have created a grant of \$40,000, of which \$1,000 will be added to CLCF's operating funds for every new Legacy Circle member. This means that your future commitment to save land can help right now!

Please consider joining this incredibly special group. There are two funds to which you can direct your donation: Conservation Support, which will be used for all facets of CLCF's operations, and the Founders Fund,

an endowment fund named for CLCF's visionary founders. The interest and appreciation from this permanently restricted fund will help support CLCF year after year.



For more information or to participate in CLCF's Legacy Circle Bequest Challenge, please contact Linda Mutschler at 414-614-5084 or Kathy Klein at 414-614-4698.

With a legacy gift, you can help to preserve the lakes and lands you love for generations to come.

There are a limited number of ways to make an impact that lasts beyond a lifetime.

Protecting land is one of those ways. Thank you for helping CLCF to protect the land you love.

Legacy Circle Donor – Mary Beth Carr

Mary Beth has enjoyed a family summer home on Big Cedar Lake since 1963. She and her husband Buzz, have one daughter, Elizabeth Carr Whitmore; a son-in-law, Jeff Whitmore; and, representing her family's fourth generation on BCL, three grandchildren, Escher, Juniper, and Atlas.

Mary Beth and Buzz became involved with CLCF as Nordic Members for cross country skiing at the Fox Hill Nature Preserve.

As Mary Beth learned more about CLCF, she knew she wanted to get involved. Mary Beth has been Chair of the Community Relations Committee since 2019 and has coordinated CLCF's biennial Somewhere in Time gala for the past several years. She joined CLCF's Board in 2019.



According to Mary Beth, "The Cedar Lakes Region is a special place. I've seen the positive results from the land conservation around Big Cedar Lake. Taking the opportunity to name CLCF a beneficiary of my 401K was an easy way to help preserve the area now, for my grandchildren and for future generations."

Thanks for Coming Out for CLCF's 2nd Annual Race for Open Space on October 15th!

Thanks to all who attended this year's Race for Open Space 5K/10K Trail Run and 1-Mile Walk! It was a super fun morning at the Fox Hill Nature Preserve, and all proceeds help to support CLCF's mission to protect the natural environment of the Cedar Lakes region. This year, there were 206 registrations, up 23% over last year. There were many new faces and lots of positive energy. It was great to see families with children—and grandparents, too!



Thanks to the
2023 Race for Open Space Sponsors

Thanks to Emily Hurd and Cindy Rusher for chairing this year's event. Emily's fabulous organizational skills and Cindy's tireless efforts to make the trails as perfect a possible (with CLCF's long-term volunteer, Jerry Gensch) out at the Fox Hill Nature Preserve ensured that everything ran smoothly. Thanks also to the 31 volunteers who came out to help! It takes many hands to put on an event like this, but it was a wonderful opportunity to get people out on the trails and to introduce them to what CLCF is doing in the Cedar Lakes region.



Staff Update – Welcome Sarah Moore!

In October 2023, Sarah Moore joined CLCF as its new Stewardship Coordinator. Sarah graduated *summa cum laude* from UW-Milwaukee in 2022 with a BA in Conservation and Environmental Science and a minor in Biology.

While going to school, Sarah got her start as a seasonal ranger for the Forest Preserve District in DuPage County, Illinois. After graduating from UW-Milwaukee, Sarah spent two years continuing to learn while out in nature as an environmental restoration field technician at Milwaukee County Parks.



Sarah is excited to be a part of stewarding CLCF's properties in the Cedar Lakes region and is looking forward to meeting all the wonderful people who care so much for these lands. Outside of work, Sarah enjoys working on leather tooling, sewing, painting, and practicing historical European martial arts.

Staff Update – Best Wishes to Mackenzie Franz!

We are very sad to see Mackenzie Franz depart CLCF, but we are super excited for Mackenzie as she begins her new journey at Milwaukee County Parks as Area of Concern Project Manager. In her new position, Mackenzie will be focusing on implementing projects to improve the environmental health of degraded areas in the Milwaukee River Estuary.



Mackenzie has had a huge impact during her time at CLCF, including bringing CLCF's Garlic Mustard Pull-a-Thon team to victory in 2022, stewarding CLCF's properties with the help of all the amazing Stew Crew volunteers, and monitoring CLCF's fee simple properties and conservation easements.

Mackenzie's positive attitude, laughter, and passion for environmental education have left a lasting impact on our community. We wish her all the best and know she will continue to do amazing things!



Please Renew Your Support of CLCF and Join Our Race for Open Space!

CLCF's mission is to conserve the natural environment of the Cedar Lakes region for generations to come.

Because of your passion and commitment to this mission, CLCF has been able to grow the number of protected acres by over 250 during 2023!

With your help, we can finish this race for open space.

Please use the enclosed envelope to submit your donation. If you prefer to donate online, please visit our website at: www.conservecedarlakes.org

Stock: If you have stock that has increased in value, you can help lower your taxes by donating shares to CLCF. You may be able to take an income tax deduction, and you won't have to pay capital gains tax. Contact the office for stock transfer information.

Give from your IRA: If you are 70½ or older, you can donate to CLCF directly from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) without it being a taxable withdrawal. And, if you are over 73, this gift can count toward your required minimum distribution. Information to complete your donation:

Legal name: Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, Inc.

Mailing address: PO Box 347, West Bend, WI 53095

Federal Tax ID: 39-1284451

**Thank you for your support.
You are critical to our success!**



Calling all X-Country Skiers and Snowshoers to join CLCF Nordic and embrace winter!

CLCF Nordic is a membership category within Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation Inc. (CLCF) that provides access to parking and expertly maintained x-country classic and skating trails at the Fox Hill Nature Preserve and more open, rustic x-country trails at the Rudolf Farm. Snowshoeing is permitted on both preserves.

- The Fox Hill Nature Preserve parking lot is at 4214 Sleeping Dragon Road, West Bend, WI.
- The Rudolf Farm parking lot is at 5020 Division Road, West Bend, WI.

Visit www.conservcedarlakes.org for directions, to download trail maps and to complete your Season Pass application and waiver online. Day Passes are available online or on-site at the Fox Hill Nature Preserve.

You can also complete the form below, sign the waiver on the back of the form and enclose with payment in the envelope provided. Check for updated x-country ski and snowshoe conditions at www.skinnyski.com or www.laphampeakfriends.org.

2023-2024 CLCF Nordic Ski Pass / Family – Individual Membership - \$75

Primary Name: _____

Additional Family Members: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Email addresses will be used exclusively for communications related to CLCF Nordic and the Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation.

\$ 75.00 Nordic Membership

\$ _____ Optional Additional Trail Maintenance Donation

\$ _____ Total enclosed

Scan here to
sign up online:



**Please Make Checks Payable to: Cedar Lake Conservation Foundation
and return in the enclosed envelope. *You will receive your Nordic Season Pass in the mail.***

REMEMBER TO SIGN THE WAIVER ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact CLCF's office at 262-353-4866.

RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!
THIS IS A LEGAL DOCUMENT THAT AFFECTS YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

This Release and Waiver of Liability (“Release”) is executed by the undersigned Nordic Member and, if applicable, additional family members and on behalf of minor child(ren) in favor of Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, Inc. and its officers, directors, employees, volunteers and agents (collectively, “CLCF”).

In consideration for CLCF permitting access and use of the Fox Hill Nature Preserve for skiing, snow shoeing, walking, hiking and any other recreational activity (“Activities”), I agree to the following of behalf of myself and, if applicable, my minor child(ren):

I waive, release and discharge CLCF of any claims, liabilities, demands of whatever kind or nature, either in law or in equity arising from bodily injury, personal injury, illness (including communicable diseases such as COVID-19), death or property damage to myself or my minor child(ren) as a result of participating in Activities whether such claims or liabilities arise from my negligence or the negligence of CLCF. I understand that this Release does not release and discharge CLCF from liability or a claim for harm caused by the intentional or reckless acts of CLCF.

Assumption of Risk: I further understand that the Activities may be hazardous to myself, and if applicable, my minor child and that such hazards could include bodily injury, personal injury, illness (including communicable diseases such as COVID-19), death or property damage. I represent that I am familiar with the hazards related to or arising out of the performance of the Activities. I further represent that I have the education, experience, and/or skill to participate in the Activities in a safe, efficient and proper manner. As provided in this Release, I hereby expressly and specifically assume the risk of injury or harm to myself and, if applicable, my minor child arising from the Activities. I have reviewed and understand all of the terms and conditions of this Release and believe them to be reasonable. I acknowledge that I had the opportunity for this Release to be reviewed by legal counsel and I either had such review performed or chose not to have such review performed.

Additional Provisions: I expressly agree that this Release is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the State of Wisconsin, and that this Release shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Wisconsin. I agree that in the event any clause or provision of this Release is held to be invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity of such clause shall not otherwise affect the remaining provisions of this Release, which shall continue to be enforceable.

I understand I have the right to negotiate the terms and conditions of this Release by contacting CLCF prior to participating in the Activities and that my participation in the Activities without negotiation is deemed to be my acceptance of the Release’s terms and conditions.

On behalf of myself and my minor child (if applicable), I have executed this Release as of the day and year written below.

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Print Name of Minor Child: _____

Print Name of Minor Child: _____

Print Name of Minor Child: _____

In Memory of Doc and Genie Olsen
Conservation Leaders and Dedicated CLCF Friends and Supporters
by Linda Mutschler

Colonel Ralph “Doc” Norman Olsen, M.D. — May 14, 1929-July 9, 2023
Eugenie Fisher Olsen — March 2, 1933-May 18, 2023

When I became Executive Director of CLCF, Doc and Genie were among the first to welcome me and to express their love for CLCF and all the work that CLCF was doing.

In fact, I looked back at our database—which only goes back to 2000—and Doc and Genie never missed a year of supporting CLCF. In recent years, Geoff Maclay brought me in on the annual handing over of Doc and Genie’s donation check each December. We would meet at Pandl’s in Whitefish Bay for a drink at the bar. As I recall, Doc’s drink of choice was an Old Fashioned.



But Doc and Genie’s contributions to CLCF went way beyond annual

giving. Genie served on CLCF’s Board of Directors from 1996-2002 and, with Sue Darrow, chaired CLCF’s very first Somewhere in Time event at Oak Lodge back in August 1997. In fact, looking at old photos, I know that many of you who are reading this were there to enjoy that very first Somewhere in Time gala all those years ago.

Doc served on CLCF’s Stewardship Committee and volunteered at many of CLCF’s stewardship events and Conservation Days—remember those? Doc’s historical knowledge was unsurpassed. I know that I am not the only one who loved to sit and hear him recite poetry and regale us with stories of Big Cedar Lake over the years.

As many of you know, Doc was an avid ornithologist and used his knowledge and enthusiasm to spread the importance of avian conservation. Remember Doc’s presentation at the West Bend Country Club entitled “The Dark Side of Birding” back in 2018? What a fabulous tale he wove about the life and times of Colonel Richard Meinerzhagen!

But, Doc and Genie didn’t only support CLCF with their time and donations--they also protected their land. In 1997, Doc and Genie donated CLCF’s very first conservation easement, working with CLCF to start the protection of the land around Gilbert Lake. Their property contains wetlands at the north end of Gilbert Lake, the incredible Indian Springs—which if you haven’t seen in person, you have to see--and a hardwood forest. CLCF has now protected much of the land surrounding Gilbert Lake, and the Olsen’s property was the very first step in that process.

There really aren’t enough words to express our gratitude for all Doc and Genie did with such incredible class and graciousness. They are greatly missed and will always be remembered.



Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation
P.O. Box 347
West Bend, WI. 53095

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CLCF's Annual Meeting Notice

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This event is sponsored by:



For more information, please visit
www.conservecedarlakes.org

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Watershed Events is published by the Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, Inc., a public non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve the natural environment of the Cedar Lakes region.

Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 347
West Bend, WI. 53095
262-353-4866

CLCF's office is located on the grounds of the Joan M. Pick Nature Preserve at 5975 County Road Z, West Bend, WI.

Hope to see you on the trails!