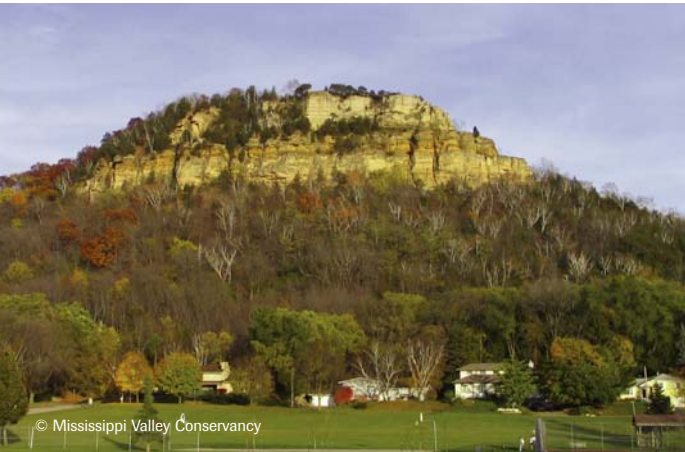


Partnerships are Key to Success

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund brings state government and citizens together through partnerships with nonprofit organizations and local governments to conserve natural landscapes and provide recreation opportunities.



La Crosse Blufflands Protection *La Crosse County*

In 2001, the City of La Crosse and the Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC) formed a partnership with the State to protect the scenic beauty and recreational values of an eight-mile stretch of blufflands along the Mississippi River. These landmark blufflands were targeted for conservation by local citizens in the city's comprehensive land use plan. Using funding from the Stewardship Fund, as well as matching dollars contributed by the city and private donors, the partners have protected more than 840 acres of land on the bluffs, which is open to the public for hiking, hunting, birdwatching and other recreational and educational uses. Work to preserve the blufflands is ongoing and as the MVC acquires the land, it transfers it to the city for long-term ownership and management. The city grants a conservation easement to the MVC, which protects the land permanently for future generations.

Lulu Lake State Natural Area *Walworth/Waukesha Counties*

Less than an hour from Milwaukee and Waukesha, Lulu Lake glitters amidst the rich marshes of the upper Mukwonago River watershed. When viewed through the lens of species richness and water quality, this 86-acre lake and its watershed comprise one of Wisconsin's highest quality natural areas. On higher ground, you will find prairie remnants and oak openings, two of the world's rarest plant communities. The State, The Nature Conservancy and private landowners in the area have worked together since the 1970s to conserve close to 1,900 acres of habitat using funds from the Stewardship program and matching funds raised by the Conservancy from private donors. Most of the natural area is open for hunting, hiking, canoeing, birdwatching and other types of recreation. It is also a popular outdoor laboratory for local teachers and their students.

Forests of the Baraboo Hills *Sauk/Columbia Counties*

The oak, maple, and basswood forests of the Baraboo Hills are the largest block of upland forest still standing in southern Wisconsin and provide habitat for more than 1,800 kinds of plants and animals. They are an important source of forest products and recreation opportunities. Working with private landowners, the Baraboo Range Preservation Association (BRPA) has used conservation easements to conserve close to 1,150 acres of forests, wetlands, and bluff prairies in the Hills. Under these voluntary agreements, landowners give up certain rights such as development while retaining ownership of all other rights to use their land. BRPA has matched Stewardship funds used to acquire the easements with federal dollars and with support from the landowners themselves, who in many instances have donated up to 50 percent of the value of the easement.

Wild Rivers Legacy Forest *Forest/Florence/Marinette Counties*

An innovative partnership among The Nature Conservancy, the State of Wisconsin and a timber partner conserved more than 64,600 acres of forests, wild lakes and wild rivers in north-east Wisconsin. The transaction, negotiated by the Conservancy with International Paper, is the largest land transaction in state history. A working forest conservation easement keeps 59,000 acres open to the public for recreation—including hunting and fishing—and guides forest management in a sustainable manner, ensuring that the forests remain healthy and diverse and continue to provide forest products and important forest industry jobs. The State's purchase of 5,610 acres protects wildlife habitat, portions of two wild rivers and several wild lakes, and provides additional recreation opportunities. Stewardship Funds for this project were leveraged with private business capital and philanthropic donations.

McMillan Wildlife Area Bike Trail *Marathon County*

Wildlife watching at the McMillan Wildlife Area is easier and more enjoyable for walkers, runners and bikers thanks to the 6-mile-loop trail built with funding from the Stewardship Fund, city and county government, and private individuals and foundations in Marathon County. The project was spearheaded by a local dairy farmer and is the result of a partnership among the City of Marshfield, Marathon County, the Marshfield Electric and Water Department, and the Friends of the Mead/McMillan Wildlife Areas. The trail, partially built on an abandoned railway bed, provides access to the marsh, which is a great place to see ducks, geese, songbirds, frogs, turtles and other wildlife. More recently, the Schmeckle Reserve has added educational signage about the history and natural resources of the area.

Wildlife Habitat at Hallie Marsh *Chippewa County*

A partnership among Pheasants Forever, Chippewa County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has provided the public with 376 acres of prime hunting land at Hallie Marsh in Chippewa County. Using Stewardship Funds, private donations and federal funds from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Chippewa Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever purchased 296 acres of wetlands, forests and former agricultural lands between Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls from private landowners. The three parcels are adjacent to 80 acres owned by the DNR that was land locked. Pheasants Forever plans to transfer its land to the DNR for long-term protection and management, opening not only its land but also the DNR's 80 acres to the public for hunting, hiking, wildlife watching and other types of recreation.

For Stewardship Fund projects in your area, look for the link to the Stewardship Fund Web site at nature.org/wisconsin