



## KETTLE MORAINÉ LAND TRUST

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Dear Land Trust Friend:

Did you know that:

- In partnership with the Lauderdale Lakes Lake Management District, a project is underway to save the Lauderdale Lakes Aqua Skiers water ski shows at Lauderdale, and
- In partnership with Don and Beverly Hartranft, 125 acres of prime farmland and a kettle nature area have been saved near Lake Beulah, and
- In partnership with the Elkhorn Area High School, more of our youth are learning about nature through day long workshops in Island Woods, our nature preserve at Lauderdale.

It is only because of our caring Land Trust donors that the above accomplishments have been possible. I'll elaborate a little more so that you'll better understand the importance of this work.

- Lauderdale Ski Shows

The photo to the right shows members of the Lauderdale Aqua Skiers ski team during a recent practice. Most Lauderdale property owners know that a very small group of lake property owners has been trying to end the long history of water ski shows at Lauderdale Lakes. This group tried to get Walworth County to deny the ski team



access to Don Jean Bay of Lauderdale Lakes across a wetland owned the Lauderdale Lakes Lake Management District (District). State ordinances were cited relative to wetlands activities. In fact, Walworth County sued both the District and the Ski Club challenging illegal “Public

Assembly” on the wetland during shows. The suit was referred to the Circuit Court, and a trial was held in December, 2008. Fortunately, the court denied all the County’s claims. However, the decision does leave many issues unresolved.

The Kettle Moraine Land Trust (Land Trust) is involved, since the District donated a Conservation Easement on the entire Lauderdale Lakes Country Club (including the Don Jean Bay wetland) to the Land Trust in 2003. By accepting this Easement, Land Trust is committed by federal law to, among other things, assure that the flora (native plants) on the Don Jean Bay wetland are protected at least to the same degree they were in 2003. State ordinances also require this protection.

The accepted way to provide public access to a wetland is via boardwalks. This is the universal practice by Land Trusts, and governmental units desiring to provide public access to wetlands. Accordingly, the Land Trust proposed a boardwalk plan to the District in 2008 which would keep all foot, and golf cart, traffic off the flora. Golf carts are used to service the District weed harvesting and water safety patrol vessels moored on the wetland. Walworth County initially denied a permit for the boardwalks citing an ordinance intended for private home sites. The Land Trust then supported the District’s application for a variance from the subject ordinance by getting approval from the County’s Board of Adjustment. The Land Trust feels the use of boardwalks is both logical, and essential, to allow public access to the wetlands for municipal activities, while at the same time protecting the flora. The County variance was denied, and now the Land Trust is supporting a District challenge in Circuit Court. The Land Trust feels strongly that the variance should be granted.

The Land Trust has agreed to amend the Conservation Easement once the boardwalk plan obtains County and/or Court approval and the boardwalks are in place. In the interim, the District has agreed to repair and extend the existing boardwalks and place mats selectively on the flora beyond them to reduce damage related to foot and golf cart traffic. Concurrently, the Land Trust has agreed that a full season of ski shows may be held in 2010 while the permanent solution is being worked out. This is a WIN-WIN for the lake community. As stated many times in the past, the Land Trust is not opposed to ski shows, it is however, required by federal and State law to enforce the terms of the Easement the District donated in 2003, and it is not allowed to reduce the level of flora protection in any future amendment of the Easement below that present in 2003 when the Easement was recorded

- Hartranft Easement

Don and Beverly Hartranft own 125 acres of prime farmland, including 23 acres of saw timber sized hardwoods surrounding a ground water pond with a floating mat. Their property is just west of the Village of East Troy, and has been in Beverly’s family for three generations. They love the land so much that Beverly and Don want to see its open space permanently protected. Hence, when they heard that the Land Trust could accept their donation of a Conservation Easement, which would provide this protection, they contacted us and we proceeded to work out the details. The photo below shows their kettle pond. The Easement, recorded with their land

deed, assures that their land will remain open space, even if it is eventually annexed by the Village of East Troy.

For anyone interested in more details, a Conservation Easement is a permanent deed restriction on property where a Conservancy or Land Trust (having 501.c.3 status) is pledged to enforce the Easement terms forever. The donation is appraised by a qualified appraiser, who evaluates the change in market value caused by the Easement. Frequently, the reduction in the number of allowable home sites is a key



appraisal consideration. The land owner (donor) then has 16 years to use his appraised donation value against his ordinary income in his state and federal income tax filings. The land owner has full use of his land except for the restrictions of the Easement. He can sell the land, but the Easement restrictions go with the land to the next owner. Easements are truly a WIN-WIN transaction for anyone interested in preserving the conservation value of their land rather than maxing out its development value. Either, Maggie Zoellner, our Program Manager, or I will be happy to discuss this opportunity further with anyone interested.

- Youth Education

Land Trusts nation-wide, have adopted the motto “Leave No Child Indoors.” This stems from the trend of our youth to spend more time watching TV and playing computer games than learning about nature. In fact, the Land Trust was told, during a meeting with the Executive Director of the Racine Girl Scout Council a few years ago, “girls now prefer computer games to camping, so we plan to close our Singing Hills Girl Scout camp at Lauderdale, and expand our computer game room.” They then proceeded to reject an offer by our District to donate \$2,000,000 to them in exchange for a Conservation Easement to protect the shore area of their Lauderdale camp from development, and proceeded to sell the camp!

We do not believe for a second that today’s youth doesn’t respond to, or show interest in, nature when opportunities are provided. However, we feel that our society needs to make the effort to give our youth the exposure that will stimulate their interest. At Lauderdale, in partnership with our Lauderdale Lakes Improvement Association (Association), we put on a Fishing Jamboree for pre-teens each spring. We are also thrilled that several teachers at the Elkhorn High School are anxious to continue our annual “Day in the Woods” for their science classes. The Land Trust partners with the Association in sharing the expenses for a school bus, a substitute teacher (so the regular teachers can participate), a porta-pottie, and box lunches. Four stations are set up, three

in our Island Woods Preserve, and one on a pontoon boat. The latter is provided by the Association. While on the pontoon, they learn techniques used for water quality sampling, and are instructed on the differences between native and invasive aqueous flora. The photo to the right shows Land Trust Board member, Herb Sharpless, explaining the importance of removing invasive species from the Island Woods preserve. The kids enjoy the experience, and some even discuss changing their career toward conservation.



The Land Trust's mission is **"To preserve the natural heritage of the southern Kettle Moraine lakes area and nearby lands through partnerships in land conservancy and resource management."** I think you can see how the above accomplishments support the mission. The Land Trust is recognized by the IRS as a 501.c.3 public non-profit corporation which can assure all of its donors of income tax deductibility. It can receive stock, which gives the donor the advantage of current value donation credit while avoiding payment of capital gains tax. It is also set up to permit automatic monthly donations via debits to checking accounts. Finally, it is also very interested in pre-planned estate bequests. Please consider a donation in line with your commitment to our environment, and the nature education of our youth. A donor card and a return envelope are enclosed for your use. Also, please don't hesitate to call me with any questions you may have. Please include both your e-mail any your regular address, and enclose a voided check if the monthly donation option is selected. We will keep in touch. In the mean time please visit our website [kmlandtrust.org](http://kmlandtrust.org) for regular updates on our activities.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Jerry", written in a cursive style.

PS All donations of \$250 and up qualify to have an engraved brick placed in our Overlook patio on the edge of our Island Woods Preserve. Please seriously consider a donation at or above \$250. The engraved bricks are a great way to honor friends and family members.