

KETTLE MORAINE LAND TRUST

Have you seen our “dinosaur” birds flying overhead, often in pairs? Perhaps they have landed in your backyard, rooting for seeds or slugs or something else yummy in your grass. If so, you have spotted our sandhill cranes. These regal —and, sometimes, comic—birds trace their lineage back some 2.5 million years. No other existing species on earth is that venerable.

With a wingspan of five to six feet, these huge gray to brownish birds with sporty red caps weigh only some 6 to 14 pounds. We are lucky, because they nest in wetlands and marshes in our area. In the early 19th century there were only 25 breeding pairs of sandhill cranes left in Wisconsin. Today, sandhills are far more plentiful.



But it has been a struggle. Sandhills can live as long as 20 years. A pair of sandhills, who mate for life, do not produce any eggs until they are three to five years old, and then only one or two per year. The baby birds, or “colts,” have a high mortality rate. Only one colt in ten survives to migrate.

The need to protect these special creatures, “rare but important birds” that are threatened by the degradation of our wetlands, symbolizes the mission of the Kettle Moraine Trust, observed founder Jerry Petersen. For this reason, KLMT selected the sandhill crane for its logo.

OUR MISSION

To preserve the natural heritage of the southern Kettle Moraine lakes area and nearby lands through partnerships in land conservancy and resource management.



NURTURING THE LAND

“My parents worked so hard on this land. I just wanted to give my kids, my grandkids and their grandkids a place to come and love as much as I do.”

Beverly Hartranft’s words reflect the love she and Don have for their family farm. They spend hundreds of hours each year restoring the oak savanna that surrounds a “kettle” pond in the middle of the property. They weed out nonnative plants and trees, nurture young oaks through selective cutting, and scatter seeds of native species. Hundreds of hours: hard work, inspired by love.

This remarkable dedication to the land is what motivates families to enter into easement agreements with the Kettle Moraine Land Trust. Easements permanently restrict usage of the lands in certain ways. The Hartranft family has done this not once, but twice, in two different ways.

In 2010 Beverly and Don Hartranft partnered with KMLT by donating an **agricultural easement** on their property. The land defined by this agreement can be used only for farming, now and in the future. In turn, KMLT developed a management plan to help reduce soil erosion and protect water quality. No housing development here. Once a farm, it will always be a farm.

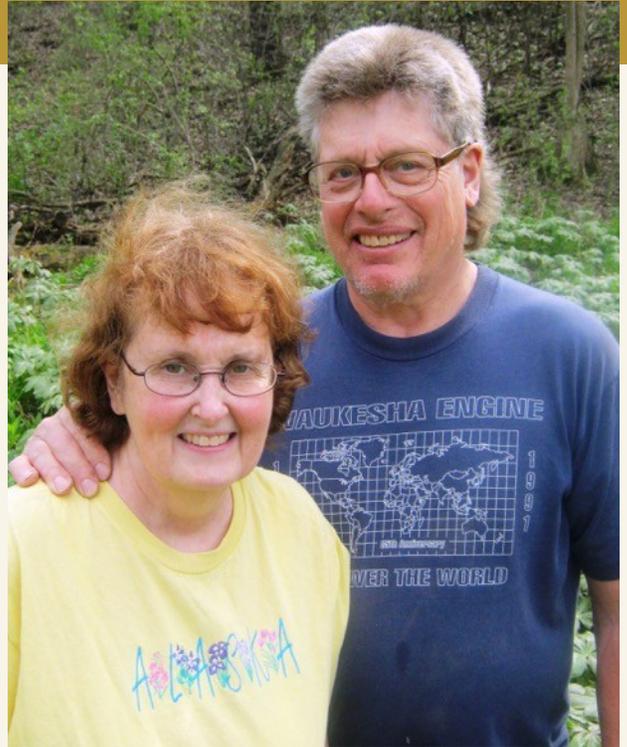
Recently, Beverly and Don Hartranft partnered with KMLT by donating a **conservation easement** on another part of their property. Within this rare native habitat are a large wetland and oak and hickory woodlands. KMLT created a plan to increase native plant diversity and also suggests and helps locate native plants and seeds. Again, the easement permanently protects this land from development. Meanwhile, Don can continue to hunt and trap and harvest timber for the wood burning stove in their home.

Deer, herons, wood ducks, coyotes and turkeys abound on the Hartranft farm. But the family wants to attract even more wildlife. Sedges, grasses, forbs and shrubs will enrich the property and provide food and shelter for wildlife to rear young.

The Hartranft family farm is a rich 100 acres just west of East Troy in Walworth County. The property also lies within the headwaters of the Mukwonago River, one of the highest quality waterways in the state. This makes their work with KMLT critical.

By donating these easements, and by working hard to sustain and improve the environment, the Hartranfts are prime examples of the partners that KMLT seeks to support.

Beverly Hartranft said, “I had such a good time growing up in those woods. I just wanted a place where our family could see beauty.” Our thanks to the Hartranft family. Your vision, hard work and planning will benefit your land—and us all.



WORDS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Kettle: Long ago, glaciers pushed around rock and soil in southern Wisconsin to create a unique landscape. Kettle moraines are the result, rolling hills composed of glacial soils and rock, or “moraines,” and lakes, or “kettles.”

Conservation Easement: An agreement with another party, in this case KMLT, to permanently restrict property from urban development and manage the natural resources to safeguard the flora and fauna and water.

Agricultural Easement: An agreement with another party, in this case KLMT, to permanently restrict property from urban development so that it continues to be preserved and used for agriculture.

MEET THE BOARD: JIM BLOMBERG

To “improve, restore, protect”—these principles inspire Board Member Jim Blomberg in his volunteer work for the Kettle Moraine Land Trust.

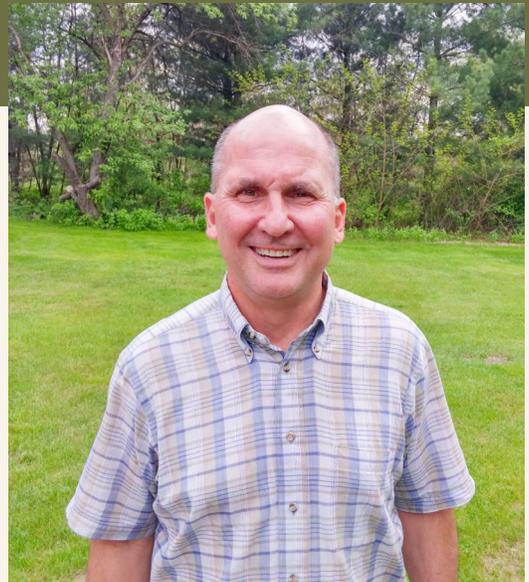
Jim comes to KMLT from a long family history on and around Wisconsin lakes. Growing up in Illinois, he spent many summer vacations at a friend’s in Fontana. In 1998 he and his wife decided to look at property for themselves and their four children, then aged 3 to 11. They ended up buying on Lake Beulah which they loved for its beauty and lack of crowds.

As the children grew up and “when we finally took our eyes off waterskiing and took a look around,” he and his wife realized what a treasure this countryside is. They began biking around the Kettle Moraine to better appreciate its beauty. After seeing an article in the Lake Beulah newsletter three years ago, he joined the Kettle Moraine Land Trust. Today he serves as board vice president.

Jim brings a unique skill set as a founding partner of Navigant Consulting, an international consulting firm. As a consultant, Jim specializes in taking a situation and improving it. From individual KMLT projects to the larger issue of getting people to understand, appreciate and support our work, Jim’s consulting background is an invaluable resource.

Jim sees KMLT as providing a “fulcrum of protection, a lot of hard work, good work, by relatively few people, wherever possible and fundable.” He sees KMLT’s biggest challenge as name recognition. Helping landowners keep their property pristine in perpetuity, safe from development or degradation—the work of KMLT should be held in the highest esteem, according to Jim.

And, Jim wants everyone to know “that we’re out there, working for the benefit of all to improve, restore and protect.” Join us!



Jim serves as KMLT’s vice president and frequently lends a hand at stewardship workdays and education events.

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

“Connecting with nature, that special moment that you remember your entire life—that doesn’t always just happen.”

Discussing the recent Bluff Creek Field Day, Maggie Zoellner, KMLT Program Manager, explained how the Trust tries to deliver that special moment to young people. In early October, two classes from Whitewater High School had the good luck to see nature through Maggie’s eyes. Hands-on learning is always the best learning, and Maggie, a biologist and expert on our local environment, worked the kids hard. They cut and removed invasive shrubs. They collected seed from threatened plants. They sampled Bluff Creek’s water to determine its quality.

The annual Field Day is science in the field, an opportunity most young people never experience. Environmental education, especially youth education, has long been a priority for the Trust. Field Day is a good example of how the Trust seeks to fulfill this important goal.

One of the students, Jorge, explained what he took away from this year’s Field Day: “I learned a lot the whole day! I learned about the water bugs and the procedures to check if the water was livable for creatures. I also learned about seed picking and harmful plants, and how to protect the land.”



Whitewater High School classes at Bluff Creek on October 9, 2014.

KMLT would like to thank this year’s Field Day partners: the Rock River Coalition, We Energies Foundation, the Coburn Company, and the Wisconsin DNR’s State Natural Areas Volunteer Program. Maggie summed up Field Day this way: “We need a community that cares about natural resources and wants to keep nature close to home. That’s why we invest in local high schools.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

BEULAH BLUFF PRESERVE OPENING

JUNE 19th

Join us in celebrating this

new nature preserve overlooking beautiful Lake Beulah. Ribbon cutting ceremony followed by light refreshments, 5-7 PM Please register for this event at our website.

CANINES’ WILD COUSINS—COYOTES

AUGUST 26th

A WDNR Wildlife Biologist will speak about coyotes and their status in southern Wisconsin. Bring your best friend and celebrate National Dog Appreciation Day with a romp at Price Park in East Troy. Check our website for details after Aug. 1st.

SWAN LAKE RAMBLE

OCTOBER 3rd

Enjoy this unique opportunity to participate in a guided hike of a pristine natural area that is part of Girl Scout Camp Alice Chester, East Troy. Registration available after Aug. 1.

www.kmlandtrust.org

MEET OUR BUSINESS SPONSORS

Kettle Moraine Land Trust is proud to announce that the following companies have become Legend Business Partners. For information on how your business can become a Legend Business Partner, contact KMLT President Jerry Petersen at jerry@kmlandtrust.org.

BK Property Management (www.bkpropertymanagementllc.com)

The Boat House of Lauderdale Lakes (boathouseh2o.com)

The Coburn Company (coburn.com/Coburn.htm)

Kunes Country of Elkhorn (kunescountry.com)

Lauderdale Landings (lauderdalelanding.com)

Peoples Bank of Elkhorn (peoplesbankwi.com)

Rauland Agency (raulandagency.com)

Reed's Marine, Inc. (boatreeds.com)

Thelen Total Construction (thelenconstruction.com)

STEWARDSHIP

Prescribed Burn at Jackson Creek Preserve

Introduction of fire into wetlands like the sedge meadows at Jackson Creek Preserve is a welcome disturbance. Without fire, woody shrubs like invasive Buckthorn become established and eventually force native plants out.



When the native plants die out, the food they provided for wildlife disappears and the birds, butterflies and other native wildlife soon follow. Planned, controlled burns are an important disturbance event in wetlands that recycles nutrients, rejuvenates plant growth, and keep non-native plants from gaining a foothold.

This April, KMLT successfully completed a controlled burn of Jackson Creek Preserve's western section. The Trust's management plan calls for only certain sections of the preserve to be burned at one time. This rotational burning results in unburned patches of refuge that mimic the conditions that would occur from a natural fire. Wild fires periodically burned through this part of Wisconsin prior to settlement, and were in part responsible for creating the native plant communities we have today.

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Dave Weiner

— CALENDAR OF EVENTS —

JUNE 19 **BEULAH BLUFF
PRESERVE OPENING**
East Troy

AUGUST 26 **CANINES' WILD COUSINS-
COYOTES**
Price Park, East Troy

OCTOBER 3 **SWAN LAKE RAMBLE**
Camp Alice Chester
East Troy

OCTOBER 17 **OKTOBERFEST 5K FUN RUN**
Elkhorn, Wisconsin

**For more information see our website
www.kmlandtrust.org**

KETTLE MORAINES LAND TRUST
SUMMER 2015

NATURE NEWS

