

TALL PINES CONSERVANCY

WINTER 2006

TPC'S VISION FOR NORTHWEST WAUKESHA COUNTY

by Jeff Harris, President

**"WE ENVISION A COMMON LAND ETHIC THAT
RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN SPACE AND
PROTECTING KEY NATURAL RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN
OUR COMMUNITY'S RURAL CHARACTER"**

This newsletter is TPC's first since I became president of the organization in August. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ted Rolfs, my predecessor, for his hard work and leadership in the journey toward realizing the vision, set out above, which he first articulated. Rest assured, though, that we have not let Ted off the hook. He continues to toil away as a Board member and as an active member our Conservation Committee.

TPC's vision is also a product of our consultation with many of you as we developed our Strategic Plan in 2003. We plan to continue our pursuit of this vision, primarily by accepting easements on land that restrict development and purchasing development rights. We work with

landowners who share our vision by helping them find ways to meet their individual conservation goals while providing significant public benefit.

Because of the significant resources required, however, we can realize our vision and the associated benefit to all of us, only if the vision is shared by you. Significant resources are needed on an ongoing basis to maintain and monitor the development restrictions on conservation properties, and of course ever more resources are needed to acquire or restrict increasingly valuable development rights.

We thank those of you who have shared our vision through your time and treasure, and look forward to continuing the journey. ▲

VOLUNTEERS SLIP INTO HIP WADERS

Tall Pines Conservancy has begun reaching out to area schools. Dan Burkwald, TPC Board Member and Commissioner of the North Lake Management District who oversees the committee for water quality and environmental issues, was instrumental in initiating the Oconomowoc River cleanup with the NLMD and University Lake School. Jim Muehl the NLMD Committee head planned the project with ULS school personal and recruited the students to remove logs and tree branches from the river. The ULS students are studying about water this year and the cleanup work gives them hands on experience. They hope to continue the Oconomowoc River cleanup effort year to year removing debris and



Volunteers help restore shoreline by removing debris and rearranging fallen trees to aid the flow of water while slowing the movement of silt.

rearranging fallen trees to help the flow of water while slowing the movement of silt. Agricultural runoff has mixed both fertilizer and animal waste into the Oconomowoc

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Our mission is to preserve farmland, open space and water resources in north west Waukesha County through open space preservation techniques and smart growth planning.



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE...
NOSTALGIC MEMORIES OF
4TH OF JULY PARADE**

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P.O. Box 65 • Nashotah, WI 53058
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ask
JEFF & A



Jeff Kante
Village Forester

QUESTION:

Is there an insect being studied that will eat Garlic Mustard?

ANSWER:

Anyone who has spent a time pulling, cutting or spraying Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria Petiolata*) knows how overwhelming the job can be. Help may be on the way!

Originally from Europe, this highly invasive plant has spread into our woods and yards crowding out



our native plants. As with other aggressive non-native plants, they gain control because they lack a controlling agent such as animal and insect feeding or disease.

The journal "Ecological Restoration" published by the University Wisconsin – Madison Arboretum reported that the testing of several insect species which will feed exclusively on Garlic Mustard is near completion.

Back in 1998 US researchers and scientists from the CABI-Bioscience Centre of Switzerland combined to find a biological control to be used

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OUR FIRST PDR AGREEMENT

by William D. Biersach

Tall Pines closed its first purchase of development rights (PDR) in December. Purchasing development rights on a property is an effective way to preserve an environmentally sensitive piece of land, without having to purchase it out right. A PDR is most often utilized when the owner of the property wishes to remain on the land, but needs some current financial payout from it. The cost to purchase development rights is usually below the full market value for the property since the owner retains his ownership of the land and the right to maintain a homestead on it.

The Tall Pines PDR covers 43 acres of the Kieckhefer property just outside the Hartland village limits, off Hwy K, in the town of Merton. In this transaction Tall Pines acquired a Conservation Easement restricting development on the 43 acre parcel, which includes an important environmental corridor. The Kieckhefer family will be able to maintain their current home on the property with restrictions on improvements and expansion. The Conservation Easement placed on the land runs in perpetuity, restricting the development rights of any future owners as well.

TPC also has an option to purchase additional development rights, over 11 years, covering the 22 acres of open space adjoining the 43 acre parcel to the east.

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A good portion of the Kieckhefer land is designated as an environmental corridor and is also included as an important open space property in the county's land use plan. As such it is a high priority for conservation and very deserving of our efforts to keep it in its present state. With development moving in all around us,

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HIP WADERS... (from page 1)



Anne Seidel, TPC Board of Director, (right) helps guide volunteers in the Oconomowoc River clean up.

River's flow. Man made dams for a closed grain mill and a small electricity utility have created silt filled millponds that worry individuals living down stream. Restoration and preservation for the river which contains more than 30 species of fish in it is advancing with the help of the NLMD, area schools and the Conservancy. If you're interested in helping with the restoration and cleanup effort, please contact us at 262-369-0500. ▲

TPC REPRESENTED IN THE STONE BANK 4TH OF JULY PARADE

by Terry Gehl

Growing up in Stone Bank gave me the opportunity to either watch or participate in the 4th of July parade for 30+ years. I have vivid memories of my friends and me decorating our bikes with streamers, flags, and playing cards in the spokes for the cool noise that we hoped they'd make. Back then we had several categories in our blink-and-you'll-miss-it parade: bicycles, dogs, kids dressed in patriotic wear (it seemed that we always had a Betsy Ross and an Uncle Sam), and possibly a tractor or other piece of farm equipment. My friends and I paraded down Hwy K in our red, white and blue, brimming with pride and recognizing nearly every face that smiled back at us.

This past June, with feelings of nostalgia stirring, I wanted a parade entry to say something of value. I felt that Tall Pines Conservancy would send an important message to our community as well as getting some much needed exposure. My husband John and daughter



Katie were in support of the idea and eager to help. Within days, John purchased a hay wagon solely for the parade, and we had scouted out and purchased our flags and candy. Herb and Mary Rasmussen of Sandy Bottom Nature Center generously agreed to loan the beautiful, airy Tamarack trees which are native of Wisconsin. Tall Pines supplied the t-shirts and signage. Katie, John and I decorated our float, putting on the final touches in the rain that Fourth of July

morning. A special thank you to the parents and children who sat on hay bales waving Old Glory and smiling to the crowd presented before us.

Our organization should take advantage of any opportunity that presents itself to educate the public about the important work that were doing. I thank the board members of Tall Pines Conservancy for allowing me to create an entry for a small town parade that has a very special place in my heart. ▲

“LAND TRUSTS ARE IN THE BUSINESS NOT JUST OF CONSERVING LANDS, NOT JUST OF PROTECTING ECOSYSTEMS AND ECOLOGICAL SERVICES, NOT JUST OF PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY... BUT OF CONSERVING THE HUMAN VALUES THOSE LANDS EMBODY. WE PROTECT PRESERVES AND NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE BECAUSE THEY STAND FOR SOME OF OUR MOST DEARLY HELD VALUES.”

Bill Cronon, UW Professor

PDR... (from page 2)

such parcels become ever more important for preserving the natural habitats, settings and water resources which make our community so unique.

But we need your help.

Tall Pines financed the PDR on the 43 acre parcel with a combination of donations from individuals and a loan. We need your help to repay the loan and to finance the purchase of the additional development rights covered by our option. Please contact the Tall Pines office to find out how you can participate. ▲

IS YOUR TREE STRESSED OUT?

Have you been noticing early fall color in the trees? This is symptom of our summer rainfall being 50 % below normal and the temperatures being above normal. While the early change may be pleasing to eye, you will need to take extra precautions to ensure that the drought does not cause more harm to your trees than it already has.

Just like people, trees get stressed out too. When a tree has gone through drought conditions or a summer with lack of rainfall, it is under great stress. The symptoms of the stress may appear quickly or take up to two years to reveal any signs of a problem. The stress of the drought may not kill the tree, but it will make it susceptible to problems such as insects and diseases.

“My tree doesn't seem to be complaining. How do I know if it is stressed?” you may ask. Woody plants such as trees and shrubs show drought symptoms through dull green needles or leaves. Their foliage may also wilt or droop and show fall color earlier than normal. Rolled leaf margins in deciduous trees may deceptively appear to have disease or insect problems, while the damage is actually due to drought.

“Yes, my tree is stressed! What shall I do?” To help a tree through drought conditions, the best thing you can do is to water it properly. If you've neglected it so far, it's not too late to start now because it will need tender care right up until hard frost sets in.

A tree one inch in diameter needs ten gallons of water per week. This water must be applied deeply and thoroughly, for shallow watering discourages the roots from growing deep in search of water. The resulting shallow root systems will be more susceptible to drought and stress and more likely to blow down in a windstorm. You should water in early morning, evening, or even at night,

(continued on page 4)

Ask the Expert! **GARDENER'S**

Yvonne Bleck
Garden Gate Nursery

CORNER

THE TALL PINES CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THANKS OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

The Tall Pines Conservancy wishes to recognize and thank the following individuals for their outstanding support. In the past 7 years, TPC has preserved over 205 acres! Without this support, TPC would not have accomplished such significant success.

2 0 0 5

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Katherine Kouba

In Honor of Caran & Joel Quadracci
Angela & Allen Frater

***WELCOME
TPC NEW
MEMBERS!**

Once Unique, Soon a Place Like Any Other

It's heartbreaking to watch the Appalachia I love disappear under endless condos and cabins.

BY ABE WHALEY

I GREW UP IN THE MOUNTAINS OF East Tennessee, on a modest farm where we raised a lot of what we ate, watched sunsets on the porch and had supper together every night. For nine generations, mine included, both sides of my family have lived and died in the shadows of the surrounding peaks.

My formative years were spent listening to Papaw (my grandfather) saw away on an old fiddle and Dad flat-pick his six-string guitar as they taught me the songs of Southern Appalachia and handed down a centuries-old musical tradition. A great-great-great-great-great-grandfather of mine was baptized into the Forks of the Pigeon River Baptist Church in 1796, which he later pastored for 31 years—we are still faithful members, though the name has changed. No one ever really moves away from here and no one ever used to move in. Lately, though, they've been coming in droves.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where my family lived before 1933, and Dollywood, Dolly Parton's theme park, draw year-round crowds. New home construction has been climbing steadily for years, and the rental housing market, mostly overnight log-cabin outfits, has exploded. It seems that no ridge is too steep, no mountaintop too high, no creek too pristine to bulldoze and build on.

I haven't been home much since I graduated from high school six years ago. College, a "real" job, extended international travel, the Tennessee Air National Guard, and work on a master's degree have kept me pretty busy. As much as I love visiting, I hate the trip back. Every time I drive the road into town I see more ridges in the distance that have fallen to construction.

Do not misunderstand me, it is not the simple single-family homes that are so ir-

ritating; I have framed up quite a few of those over my summer breaks from school. What bothers me is the way developers feel the need to put a subdivision on the most beautiful piece of mountain farmland they can find. Of course, the farmers cannot be



THE VIEW FROM DOWN HERE: No ridge is too steep, no mountaintop too high, no creek too pristine to build on

blamed much—a million-dollar buyout sounds a lot better than trying to make ends meet for another 20 harvests and then losing it all to the bank during their retirement years. But the land magnates, most of whom are from out of town, have no excuse. They wreak wholesale destruction on the surrounding mountaintops and ridges as they build their rental cabins and condominiums. They ruin the views that make our piece of Southern Appalachia so enviable in the first place.

I traveled extensively in New Zealand last year and I was amazed by the environmental ethos that seems to be shared by its

government and citizens. I rarely saw mass development that went higher than halfway up the mountains that surrounded any given town. The locals I talked to told me that most places had laws that limited construction. What a novel idea—to zone in such a way as to minimize the environmental havoc that developers can impose. Our planners and decision makers could use a lesson in that kind of logic. But so often government officials seem more interested in privately investing in land deals than publicly regulating them.

Those of us seeking to preserve the countryside in Tennessee were dealt another blow by the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Kelo v. City of New London*. The court upheld the government's power of eminent domain, which allows it to take private land for public purpose.

Unfortunately, the court ruled that public purpose can be interpreted as economic growth. The chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which acquired most of its waterfront property through eminent domain years ago, has already stated that the fate of 181,000 acres of wild land set aside for natural-resource conservation is negotiable. This has developers licking their lips in anticipation as they dream of building houses on top of hiking trails. It is obvious that nothing is sacred. It scares me. It scares me a lot.

Though native Appalachians like me are gradually being outnumbered by newcomers, we remain tied to the land in a way outsiders will never understand. It provides for us physically, socially, spiritually and emotionally. Without it, we lose our cultural identity and, ultimately, ourselves. This is not a new fight; it has raged in these mountains for generations as our land has been exploited again and again. For too long, we have suffered the effects of clear-cutting, strip mining and unscrupulous land grabs by timber companies, coal companies and even the federal government. Developers are simply the latest to try their hand at making a buck.

My home is fast becoming a place like many others in this country, homogenized and prepackaged. My roots are neither of those things, and the land I grew up on deserves something better than the reckless development now disgracing its rugged beauty.

WHALEY lives in Knoxville, Tenn.

ASK JEFF... (from page 2)

against Garlic mustard. The researchers found 69 insect species from Europe which feed on the plant. The field was reduced to four, because the group is thought to feed exclusively on Garlic mustard. Further tests were done at CABI and at the University of Minnesota – St. Paul to check for possible collateral damage to North American plants species.

The most promising candidate is a species of weevil and testing was to expected to be completed fall 2005. Pending approval from the U.S Department of Agriculture, introductions may be as early as 2006. Studies

are still being conducted on the other insects as well as long term study plots in several states including Wisconsin.

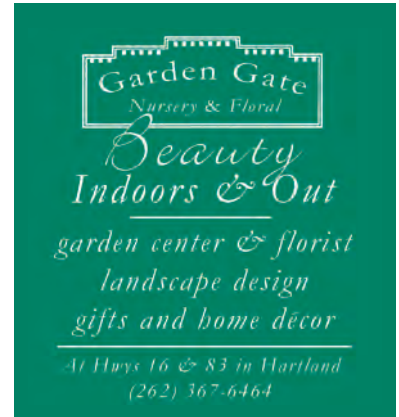
Introducing a biological control is often controversial. However, several types have been used in our area with great success. The Galerucella beetle has been used for Purple Loosestrife control and both a fungus (Entomophaga Maimaiga) and a virus (nuclearpolyhedrosis virus) are used against Gypsy Moths.

If you have a question that you would like answered in the Ask Jeff column, please email him at jkante@chenequa.org or write to the Tall Pines Conservancy, P.O. Box 65, Nashotah, WI 53058. ▲

ASK THE EXPERT... (from page 3)

to reduce evaporation and ensure that the plant can use as much of the water as possible. If you water during the heat of the day, the sunlight passes through the water droplets and is magnified, causing burns on the leaves that resemble fungus.

As a guideline, a small tree, less than three inches in diameter, should be watered every two weeks. A medium sized should be watered every three weeks, and a large once a month. So give your trees a break from their stressful summers: practice good watering habits right up until the ground freezes for the winter. ▲



WANTED: volunteers who have professional experience in Public Relations or Fund-Raising to work with the Tall Pines Conservancy. If you or someone you know fits the bill, please call us at 262-369-0500 or e-mail us at info@tallpinesconservancy.org.

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