

Our mission is to preserve our rural heritage by protecting remaining farmland, water resources, natural areas and open spaces impacting Northwestern Waukesha County.



FALL/WINTER 2010

## PROFILES OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION LEADERSHIP

### KOEPKE FAMILY PROVES FARMING VIABLE IN URBAN SHADOWS

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The Koepke family of rural Waukesha County has been a voice for farmland preservation for a long time. With Wisconsin's still-new Working Lands Initiative in place, they're finally seeing the fruits of their labors.

Father Jim Koepke has been a long-time member of the town plan commission, a voice for wise land use and protection of agricultural lands.

Son John Koepke has taken up the torch and become a staunch advocate of farmland preservation, serving on local and state boards and committees.

The Koepkes have been so engaged in farmland protection that they find themselves a bit boxed in.

They'd consider an easement on their property under the new state Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) program, but John believes his involvement on state bodies makes it prudent for them to wait a bit.

The Koepkes are partners with other family members in a 330-cow Town of Oconomowoc dairy farm. Once known as "Cow County, USA" for its many dairy farms, Waukesha County in populous southeastern Wisconsin has seen suburban growth devour farmland in recent decades.

John Koepke faced that head-on after earning a degree at Cornell College in New York 1995 and coming back home to farm. "Our neighborhood in Waukesha County changed a lot from 1990 to 2000. We suffered a large loss of farmland. The 'front' of houses got a lot closer. I remember one of my employees described them as 'ominous mushrooms.'

"It became obvious that farming was going to be hampered by limits on our ability to either grow or buy feed or recycle nutrients in the form of manure if there wasn't enough farmland."

Then, in 2005, a subdivision was proposed near their farm. Neighbors and friends asked the Koepkes for help. They agreed, which led to many trips to the town and county meetings. One thing led to another. "One person on the Town Board was anti-agriculture and pro-development," John says.



*Koepke Farm*



*John Koepke*

*(continued on page 2)*

## KUDOS AND THANK YOU

The second annual Tall Pines Awards were a highlight at Fall Harvest. Jill Bedford was recognized for her outstanding commitment to TPC through her numerous volunteer activities on the conservation committee with the “Volunteer of the Year” Award. The Towns of Ashippun and Oconomowoc were honored with TPC’s first “Partnership” Award for working together as an unprecedented example of governmental cooperation between two Towns and two Counties on the Agricultural Enterprise Area application. The awards were accepted on behalf of the Town of Ashippun by Town Chairman, Steve Panozzo, and for the Town of Oconomowoc by John Koepke of the Town Board.



*Jill Bedford accepts Volunteer of the Year Award. Chef Jack Kaestner (left)*



*John Koepke (left) accepts Partnership Award for Town of Oconomowoc. Truman Schultz (right)*



*Chairman Steve Panozzo accepts Partnership Award for Town of Ashippun.*

In addition, we would like to recognize Amishi Kumar, our summer intern who helped us with various activities including the Ride to the Barns and our database. Amishi is an Arrowhead graduate who is currently a sophomore at Vanderbilt University studying Environmental Science. Amishi volunteered at Tall Pines to gain more experience in the field of conservation and to help out at a grass roots level. A great big thanks and good luck to you, Amishi! ▲



*Amishi Kumar, Summer Intern*

## PROFILES OF FARMLAND...

*(from page 1)*

“I decided I should run against him. At the last minute, I filed papers. Much to our surprise, we won with a 70 percent majority.”

Both the town and county boards denied the developer’s rezoning request. “It became pretty heated. We’d win one battle and lose the next,” John recalls. “It was an adventure, let’s put it that way. I remember my wife and me going to testify at the county courthouse the morning of the vote and the developer going out to the land and having Digger’s Hotline out there.”

It was a significant victory, Koepke says. “Maybe not in acres-wise thinking, but in long-term thinking. We made the County Board realize there were farmers in Waukesha County, and they wanted to stay in farming. While the county is very diverse, we do contribute to the county’s economy and just as much to the character, open space, water recharge, all the good things that go with farming. It was very encouraging.”

The victory also propelled John into a number of other farmland preservation efforts. He has worked with a local land trust, the Tall Pines Conservancy, to develop local interest in purchase of conservation easements.

In addition to serving on the Town Board, Koepke is also now a member of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Board. He was also appointed to the state’s Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements Council, which is implementing the state easement program.

Interest in farmland preservation continues to build in Waukesha County and neighboring Dodge County, where the Koepkes farm some land.

John’s advice for farmers interested in farmland preservation is to get involved. “There’s a lot of fear out there about doing things: Fear about how easements work, fear of what the neighbors will think, general concern about going first, will this work, and that sort of thing. The more people get together and the more it’s discussed, we realize it’s a good idea and it will work in short-term and long-term. We have hope.” ▲

*Reprinted from “Protecting Wisconsin’s Farms and Forest Lands” by American Farmland Trust and Gathering Waters.*

## 2011 SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup>  
**Full Moon Madness:**

**Candlelight Ski & Snowshoe at Camp/Quad**

Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>  
**Family Day**

Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup>  
**Ride to the Barns**

Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Fall Harvest**

# SNAP SHOTS—LOCAL PEOPLE, LOCAL LAND



Once again, Tall Pines is proud to have continued support from our community which made 2010 a very successful year for TPC! The generosity of all our wonderful members, family and friends helps provide TPC the support it needs to further its mission of preserving natural areas in Northwestern Waukesha County. Together we can, and do, make a difference!



## Fall Harvest • September 28, 2010

A great time was had by all at Fall Harvest, hosted by Newstone Farms and Equestrian Stables, Town of Oconomowoc. Guests enjoyed a farmer's market with fresh local foods for tasting and purchase. A barn raising band knocked the socks off to all hours.



## WGBA • September 21, 2010

TPC hosted the Wisconsin Green Building Alliance Board for dinner at the Zwieg Maple Acres in Ashippun.

## Mussel Monitoring • September 21, 2010

Guided by biologist, Jason Dare, North Lake students and faculty donned their waders to locate freshwater mussels in the Little Oconomowoc River at Camp/Quad.



# SNAP SHOTS—LOCAL PEOPLE, LOCAL LAND



## North Lake Country Farmer's Market • Summer/Fall 2010

TPC supported the first North Lake Country Farmer's Market held on the Tyme Out grounds. Having a great blend of friendly local vendors who sell homegrown produce and homemade products made the market a big success.



## Ride to the Barns • August 28, 2010

Over 100 cyclists road 30 and 60+ miles through Lake Country in support of land conservation. Along the route, riders visited historical barns to taste locally grown foods.

## Polo Match & Dinner • June 18, 2010

A few rain drops didn't keep many away from watching the Milwaukee Polo Club compete in an action-packed match. Guests mingled with players, enjoyed dinner and live music.



## Family Day • May 23, 2010

It was a simply gorgeous spring day at the second annual Family Day at Camp/Quad. Activities like nature crafts, kettle drumming and critter catching filled the day with a variety of fun for everyone.

# FROM THE... EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Susan Buchanan*

Wow, what a busy Spring and Summer we had at Tall Pines! Our spring started with an Earth Week work day out at Camp/Quad with 20 hearty volunteers diligently working to remove buckthorn and garlic mustard on a blustery spring day.

And in late May we hosted our second Annual Family Day, a full Saturday jam-packed with outdoor activities for families out at Camp/Quad. As a FREE friend raiser, it was very well received with an attendance over 200.



*Family Day at Camp/Quad*

## Agricultural Enterprise Area Update

Later in the Summer we learned that the Town of Oconomowoc and the Town of Ashippun's Agricultural Enterprise Area proposal was selected by Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection for the first pilot program! This means that 31,000 acres in the two Towns, will be set aside as an "AEA" for agricultural uses, and landowners can VOLUNTARILY enter into farmland preservation agreements with the State qualifying them for tax credits per acre in exchange for agreeing to keep their farms in agricultural use for at least 15 years.



*AEA Celebration Picnic*

The program will be official in January. A great time was had by all involved and the 25 petitioners at a celebration picnic for all of those involved at the Town of Oconomowoc Community Center in July. DATCP has the farmland preservation agreement applications available for interested landowners.

## Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Update

At the same time, Tall Pines submitted an application for the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program (PACE) on the 233-acre Zwieg Maple Acres Farm in the Town of Ashippun. We were notified in July that our application was one of 16 selected for funding by the State program! This program will provide 35% of the funding to purchase the development rights on the farm with another 30% being donated by the Zwiigs. Tall Pines has agreed to fundraise the remaining 35%, and that fund drive will kick off before the end of 2010. This is a significant achievement in our work to preserve farmland and water resources! The State will be putting out the second round of applications in November and they will be due sometime in February of 2011.



*Zwieg Maple Acres*

## TPC Events

The rest of the Summer and into the Fall was extremely busy with the Polo Match hosted by the Brumders, Bradts and Harris' at the Milwaukee Polo Club in July, the Second Annual Ride to the Barns in August and Fall Harvest in September. We also had our information booth at the North Lake Country Farmers Market every other Thursday that we co-hosted together with Tyme Out Center, the Merton Library, and SunSeed. Our little market was a big success, with 15 vendors and drawing over 200 patrons per

market! Ride to the Barns is growing and attracted over 100 cyclists to ride 30 and 62 miles through our area to taste local food at local farms.

It was a gorgeous summer day for a ride and we received rave reviews from all who attended. A great BIG thank you to Caran and Joel Quadracci who hosted the ride, and the rest stop hosts: the Zwiigs at Zwieg Maple Acres, Diane Johnson and Earl Engle at Home Farm Gardens, Tizza and Glen Meyers at Stone Fences, and John Gehl at the Faye Gehl Conservation Foundation. See fun event photos on page 3 and 4!

## Fall Harvest Featured Speaker



*Randy Romanski, Secretary of DATCP and Barb and Truman Schultz, President of Tall Pines*

We wrapped up our 2010 events with our annual fundraiser, Fall Harvest, this year hosted by Becky and Kate Bomgaars, at Newstone Farms in the Town of Oconomowoc. A highlight of the evening included our award ceremony honoring Jill Bedford as Volunteer of the Year, and the Towns of Ashippun and Oconomowoc for the Partnership award. Randy Romanski, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection spoke at the event, and recognized Tall Pines as a leader in the State for our work in farmland preservation!

If you're interested in learning more about any of these programs, please contact me. ▲

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Susan Buchanan".

*Executive Director*

# IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

New Member    Renewing Member    Address Change    Gift Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please enroll me as a member at the following level:**

- \$15 Advocate    \$50 Sentry (Individual)    \$75 Guardian (Family)  
 \$250 Supporter    \$500 Protector    \$1000 and above Stewardship Society  
 \$\_\_\_\_\_ as a gift to the Capital Fund

*Gifts are tax deductible!*

**Memorials & Honorariums:**

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Options:**    Check    Mastercard    Visa

Print Name (as it appears on credit card) \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_

- Add my name to the list of volunteers  
 Please send me info about bequests and other planned giving options

**Total Enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you prefer, we accept credit card information over the phone at 262-369-0500

**Please make checks payable to:** Tall Pines Conservancy • P.O. Box 65 • Nashotah, WI 53058

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We have many new exciting projects always in need of extra hands and help. Even if you can only spare a little time, **WE NEED YOU!** If you love the outdoors... have fun while working toward protecting open space, farmland, lakes and streams. Or serve on one of our committees. Please give us a call at 262-369-0500 or visit [www.tallpinesconservancy.org](http://www.tallpinesconservancy.org).



*North Lake students volunteer at Camp/Quad.*

Visit & Join Us! [WWW.TALLPINESCONSERVANCY.ORG](http://WWW.TALLPINESCONSERVANCY.ORG)



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