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Jean Tobin: Memories of the Founders The Moment Glacial Lakes Began for Me



Jean and Jim Tobin

AS I TYPED the very last word of my book--first draft--I looked up from my typewriter and saw a birch tree fall. Not a moment for celebration. As I watched, incredulous, a second tree went down. The corner lot next door was wilderness, owned by a widow who hadn't wanted to sell. We and other neighbors had wanted it to remain wild. Apparently the lot had sold. I put on my shoes and raced outside and around the corner. There I met a woman in tears: Terrie Cooper, who was working at that time at Maywood and who had very recently moved to the neighborhood. We hugged, then exchanged names. There was nothing we could do.

Looking back, it seems to me quite wonderful that eight strangers could get so much work done together so quickly.

So we decided to try to keep the destruction of small pockets of wilderness from happening again--at least in areas we loved. The large groups, like the Nature Conservancy, had big things to do, saving huge tracts of land. As we stood on the road, we decided to fill in the gap locally. Jim Tobin joined us--thus a third of our founding group came into being. Terrie had contacts, and so we talked with Brian Hotz of the statewide

GLC's
25th
Anniversary!

land conservancy umbrella, Gathering Waters, someone who became the guiding spirit of Glacial Lakes. Elsewhere, Mike and Kristi Sorenson and Lester Laack were having their own epiphanies. So were Beth and Gary Kiela, who became another third. Brian Hotz invited us to a Fischer Creek public meeting to be run by Rolf Johnson, and there we met Brian in person. He told Jim, Terrie and me about the two other "thirds"; we sought each other out and introduced ourselves. Looking back, it seems to me quite wonderful that eight strangers could get so much work done together so quickly.

Tobin Continued on PAGE 2

Message From the President

THE PAST YEAR has been a memorable year for all of us. As one year ends and a new year begins, we are reminded of life's cycles and the continuity of life.

For Glacial Lakes Conservancy, 2021 brings our 25 year anniversary. We celebrate our success with 1700 acres of land in five counties in protection. We look forward to protecting additional land in the new year.

We plan for the future with its opportunities and challenges. We give thanks for the continued support and generosity of our members and donors. To quote Michael J. Fox: "With gratitude, optimism becomes sustainable."

Cynthia Northup, Board President

The Land Registry Program

Jim Tobin recalls early stewardship efforts



Registry signs still on display

A RECENT DISCUSSION with GLC co-founder James Tobin focused on the early Registry Program for the emerging group. The Program encouraged, educated and honored land owners for their voluntary stewardship efforts in protecting and restoring native features of their land. Per historical records, they had already enrolled twelve properties and 500 acres during late 1996, basically with a verbal commitment and a handshake. By 1998 it had grown to over 20 properties and 750 acres enrolled.

Landowners pledged to protect their land and water to the best of their abilities; they would notify the Conservancy of any threats to the land as pollution, right of ways, erosion/drainage; they would tell the Conservancy before they decided to sell or transfer ownership.

“A good number of folks in the Black River area, along Lake Michigan, still proudly display their signs...the sign committed them, showed that they valued wild land,” said Tobin.

For a property to qualify it generally had to include significant woodland and/or wetland and have habitat for animals or plant communities native to Wisconsin. The owners received a weatherproof plaque to post, acknowledging their participation. “Those green signs may have even helped discourage realtors and

developers,” chuckled Tobin, who’s wife, Jean, chaired the program.

To assist landowners, Jean edited and largely wrote a series of green newsletters titled *Registry Notes*. These included extensive lists of native trees, shrubs and plants compiled by environmental educator Terrie Cooper, also a GLC co-founder, and ardent volunteer Gene Lemmenes. The program was not binding and an owner could cancel at any time, but down the road some might consider going a step further with a legal conservation easement or other tool. Though the program was set to conclude in five years, “A good number of folks in the Black River area, along Lake Michigan, still proudly display their signs...the sign committed them, showed that they valued wild land,” said Tobin. He also noted that early Black River Forest had contained a Boy Scout camp; Jean added that much of the original canopy and ground cover was thus preserved, a remnant of the South Eastern Wisconsin Forest. “The woods were increasingly valued,” Jim concluded, “in part due to the Registry Program.”

Fast forward to August, 2020, where several current board members discussed reestablishing a Registry to create a visible group of landowners dedicated to land preservation. Stay tuned!



The Registry Notes booklet was given to landowners and used as a Fundraiser

Tobin Continued

Jim called the first meeting, and it was held on November 5, 1995 in the Tobin living room.

We worked immensely hard hosting public programs, running a successful Registry Program and establishing a good number of easements, among other accomplishments. Eventually we began to burn out; as we reached the last months of our six-year limited terms of office (written into our by-laws at the start), we were determinedly hanging on by our fingernails. We needed more people for the Board. But then Rolf Johnson and Judith Perlman and others joined us, and Gene Lemmenes became a fellow traveler. With them, we successfully raised the money and completed the 1.9 million dollar project of Point Creek. Others joined; others took over; Glacial Lakes changed its name from Sheboygan Area Land Conservancy and expanded into five counties; it became—and this makes us so happy—the robust land conservancy it is today.

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU to DREW MORRIS

for five plus years of service to GLC’s Board of Directors, including four years as the Board President. His dedication to the mission is obvious to anyone who knows him, and his leadership has propelled many aspects of the organization forward. Drew continues to provide support and wisdom to GLC and volunteers through his time as a member of various committees as well as a board member. In his honor, a Bur Oak tree has been planted at the Willow Creek Preserve, a place that he has played a critical role in protecting.



Bur Oak in honor of Drew Morris

The very First Easement in 1999

Becky Summers: The Ann Knauf Trust



Jim Tobin and Rebecca Summers

TWENTY ONE YEARS AGO, on November 8th, 1999, GLC (at that time called the Sheboygan Area Land Conservancy) finalized our very first easement – the Ann Knauf Trust. Located in Plymouth, adjacent to the Kettle Moraine State Forest, the property came to us from Becky Summers. Becky was a successful business owner in the Plymouth area and an environmental advocate. She chose the name of the easement to honor her daughter, who had passed away from cancer. We were lucky enough get an interview with Becky on September 26th, 1999, just a few months before finalizing the easement paperwork.

Becky and her property are very special to GLC as our first easement. Back in 1999 Becky predicted that protecting the land was going to become more important to people. Since then Glacial Lakes has added 24 more easements

Becky had a history of environmental activism in Plymouth. She met a community of people while opposing a proposed four-lane highway parallel to Highway 57 as being unnecessary. She and her friends met with officials and picketed the governor when he visited Sheboygan. Eventually Becky and some friends set up a card table and sat down in the middle of Highway 57 to demonstrate that there wasn't enough traffic to justify another highway. Their point was amply demonstrated as the

cars simply drove around the table. While getting involved with this project soon after moving to Wisconsin, Becky met a community of people who valued the environment.

Located next to the nearly 150-acre property were Becky's businesses. Country Crafts was a successful shop that sold artisan crafts, and the Shady Lane Restaurant was a popular dining spot. Becky moved to the Sheboygan area in 1970 to be closer to her daughter, Ann, and her two grandsons. The easement and businesses were both on the original property Ann purchased. Her daughter got involved in the Country Crafts project and eventually ran both the kitchen and the dining room of the restaurant. After her daughter's death, with the rest of her family having moved out of the area, Becky wanted to preserve the land for other people to enjoy in her daughter's honor.



The 149.75 acre easement features two beautiful kettles.

The Ann Knauf Trust is in the Mullet River watershed and the Lake Michigan Basin. About 70 acres of the land are rented out for agricultural use. There are two small kettles, one of which hosts beautiful wildflowers in the spring. There's a small section of old wood on the property, mostly untouched, that contains maple, oak, poplar, and some birch. Becky liked to walk among the trees and see the signs the animals have left behind. There appears to be an esker going across the property and onto the neighboring land.

Becky worked to naturalize the property over the years. A year after purchasing the property in 1970, Becky brought in a forester to help determine what trees to put in, and they planted about 40 acres of trees. In 1997, with the

help of the DNR, she converted about five acres of the property to prairie. A variety of tall grasses, black eyed susans, asters, and other wildflowers have come up. She said, "It's just amazing what's come up in the last year."

Becky and her property are very special to GLC as our first easement. Back in 1999 Becky predicted that protecting the land was going to become more important to people. Since then Glacial Lakes has added 24 more easements.

Asked what she envisioned for the property in 150 years, Becky said, "Well, I hope it's just about the way it is right now...it will just be a little oasis around here."

GLC welcomes new members to the Board



Pete Pittner, Scott Larson, and Elizabeth Victor

Peter Pittner - Pete has accepted the nomination to be GLC's Vice President and is also serving on the Fundraising/Membership committee. He holds a bachelor's degree in Soil Science from UW-Stevens Point and master's degrees in Environmental Science and Policy from UW-Green Bay and Business Administration from Cardinal Stretch University. Pete brings with him expertise in consulting, engineering, and project management. His current professional focus is land planning for surface water quality management, including wetland and habitat conservation and enhancement, restoration design, and coastal pollution abatement. Pete enjoys camping, hiking, bicycling, running, fishing, hunting, and canoeing.

New Directors Continued PAGE 4



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Address Service Requested

Glacial Lakes Conservancy is a private, nonprofit land trust that provides enduring solutions for land conservation in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Basin and serves Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Calumet, Kewaunee, and Fond du Lac Counties. Contributions to further our efforts are appreciated.



Valentines Outing

Saturday, Feb 13, 2021, 1:00 PM

Join us for hiking, snowshoeing or skiing at privately owned, 83-acre Gooseville Creek Preserve near Adell. For more information contact abbey@glaciallakes.org or 920-917-0939.



New Directors *Continued*

Scott Larson – Scott recently relocated to Sheboygan and works at Johnsonville Sausage as a Sr. Brand Manager. He has a bachelor's degree in Advertising/Public Relations / Marketing from the Northern Colorado University and has a strong passion for the outdoors. We welcome Scott as a member of Board of Directors as well as the Fundraising/ Membership committee.

Elizabeth Victor – Liz has served for four years as an active member of GLC's Outreach committee and in 2019 she took on the role of project manager for the Willow Creek Preserve. Liz is a professional geologist with over 25 years of experience in soil and groundwater contamination and remediation. She holds a bachelor's degree in Geology with an emphasis in Hydrogeology from UW Oshkosh, and graduate studies in Hydrogeology, University of Akron, Akron, OH. Liz lives in her hometown of Fond du Lac with her two cats and one dog. Some of her hobbies and interests include knitting, spinning wool, making baskets, rock hounding, being outdoors, and camping.

Special thanks to those who helped with the content and editing of this issue of **Landscapes**:

Jim and Jean Tobin
Hilary Hawley
Martha Schott
Rose Phillips

Mary Kohl
Abbey Vizelka
Cynthia Northup