

The Hunner Preserve

By Mark Hunner

On a summer evening in 1989, a green and white poster on the wall of a pizza restaurant in Mishicot reached out and grabbed my wife Sally and me. It proclaimed:

For Sale, Tisch Mills Area, 77 Acre Tree Farm, Will Divide;
Trout Stream, Good Hunting & Fishing

Although we weren't interested in the 22 acres that included the home of Bernard and Lillian Finnel and we are not trout fishermen or hunters, a strong urge pulled us forward. After walking the property with Bernie we were smitten!

A crystal clear spring-fed stream meandered diagonally across the 55 acres. The land comprised approximately 50% plantations of red & white pine as well as white cedar. The other 50% was native conifer & hardwoods and forested wetlands. Bernie had done a beautiful job of planting and maintaining the plantation areas which had previously been cropland, while preserving the native areas.

We had no idea what we would do with the property other than continue to care for it and enjoy skiing and hiking in addition to studying the creatures in the stream with our kids and grandkids and testing the water purity.

I must admit that the straight rows of planted pine and cedar plus the barren ground covered only by needles was very pleasing to the human eye. However, as a professional landscape architect and a student of why some plants flourish and others suffer and die, I knew this was not sustainable.

We became aware of the Managed Forest Land (MFL) Program sponsored by the DNR. Through conversations and observations with the county forester we became convinced that, with a plan spanning 25 years which included about 3 selective cuttings, and with nature's help, the plantation could have the beginnings of a young but diverse native forest. We have also become acutely aware of the differences between nursery-raised plants and those created in nature as well as the interdependence all plants have on each other.

On January 1, 2004, we enrolled the westerly 40 acres in the Managed Forest Land Program with the DNR of Wisconsin; the program will terminate on 12/31/28. The first managed harvest occurred in 2005, the second in 2015, and the third will be in 2025.

For years it has been our plan to sell the easterly 15 acres in order to recoup some of our investment, but to find a way to preserve the westerly 40 acres with the stream and surrounding native growth. With my 80th birthday in February of 2021, we wanted to be prudent about having our lives in order. In the serendipity of life, a wonderful local family expressed interest in, and purchased, the 15-acre parcel.

Meanwhile, we had heard about Glacial Lakes Conservancy through Gary Drohman, a fellow volunteer at Hope House. With the blessing of our kids, we opened up conversations with Rose and Abbey at GLC. Our hope was to permanently preserve and protect the land and water resources on the westerly 40 acres which fit well with the goals of GLC. In December 2020, Sally and I happily deeded the property to GLC.

FOR SALE

TISCH MILLS AREA



**77 ACRE TREE FARM
- WILL DIVIDE -**



*TROUT STREAM

*GOOD HUNTING AND FISHING



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