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Kristi and Mike Sorenson Come Full Circle in Caring for the Land



Kristi and Mike say they have come full circle. They started meeting with a small group of like-minded folks in 1995, established a land trust in 1996 which evolved into Glacial Lakes Conservancy, and they finally created their own conservation easement in 2018.

IMAGINE spending a good share of your honeymoon deciding if you can afford to buy a 40-acre farm. That is what Kristi Pietsch Sorenson and Mike Sorenson did 35 years ago. That farm, which they have owned since shortly after their wedding, is now part of the history of Glacial Lakes Conservancy.

Although some of the farm's acreage is leased for alfalfa and soybean production, Kristi and Mike continue to work a small segment as a food plot for deer and turkey. The couple also manage a small woodlot often used for providing firewood. They enjoy doing this work using an antique Ferguson tractor which they inherited from the former farm owners.

*"I've always felt that land conservation was my way of caring for God's creation."
 - Kristi Sorenson*

Their farm, with its historic old stone-wall fences, is in conservancy because of the Sorenson's devotion to nature. Kristi's first encounter with the problems of development vs. conservancy occurred when a large subdivision was proposed on land near their

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The old stone fence at Stone Fence Haven, the Sorenson property in the Waldo area, is now a protected habitat for wildlife.

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beloved farm. Kristi's opposition to this development prompted her to run for and get elected to the Town of Lyndon Board. She served on the planning commission and town board for many years. Her diligence earned her the affectionate title of watchdog/historian of the town.

In the mid 1990's, the Sorensons attended a Gathering Waters land preservation presentation at Lakeshore Technical College. There they came together with others of mutual interest and founded the Sheboygan Area Land Conservancy. This project evolved into our current Glacial Lakes Conservancy.

Fast forward to 2017 when the Sorensons met with Abbey Vizelka, the Glacial Lakes Conservancy Land Project Coordinator. Abbey was able to show them the funding procedures for creating a Conservation Easement - a legal agreement that leaves the land in private ownership but limits development and protects important conservation values.

Twenty-four years ago the Sorensons joined in founding the Sheboygan Area Land Conservancy, a Land Trust. They are now using one of the Land Trust's tools to protect their own land, which they call Stone Fence Haven.

"I've always felt that land conservation was my way of caring for God's creation," said Kristi. Indeed, the early founding of a Land Trust and the subsequent establishment of a Conservation Easement has brought the Sorensons full circle.

Wildcrafting Workshop

Saturday, September 7, 2019 10 a.m. - noon
Wild food and medicine are often overlooked, underappreciated, and misunderstood. Foraging expert John Holzgart, from Plant Based Services, will lead us on a two hour, low-impact hike through a conserved property along the Pigeon River in the town of Sheboygan. This free workshop is open to the public and appropriate for all ages.

Willow Creek Land Celebration

Saturday, September 28, 2019 1-3 p.m.

See Upcoming Events at
www.glaciallakes.org

Changes to our GLC Board



Cindy Northup

We welcome Cindy Northup to the GLC board. Cindy is a retired family practice/palliative care physician. She has previously served on various community boards as well as church and hospital committees. Cindy and her husband Cole live on a hobby farm in the Town of Sheboygan which has been placed in a conservation easement with GLC since 2011. Our board will benefit from Cindy's wisdom and passion for nature.



Greg Zahn

We also welcome Greg Zahn to the board. Greg spent 30 years in Washington D.C. as the head of his own architecture firm. He returned to Wisconsin in 2014 and has established Circle Union Farm. He is also involved with natural building and historic farm preservation. He is on the board of the Wisconsin Local Food Network and is involved with both the Lakeshore Local Food Network and HUB Studio Café. He has earned his LEED certification, Permaculture Design certificates, and an Environmental Policy degree. We look forward to his expertise.



John Durbrow

We welcome John Durbrow back to the GLC board. John's background is in architecture and he has taught at the Illinois Institute of Technology and in other programs. He is the president of the Manitowoc County Lakes Association, a director of the Manitowoc County Fish and Game Protective Association, a member of the Manitowoc County Soil and Water Conservation Department Local Advisory Committee, and a member of the Calumet County Upper Manitowoc River Task Force. John has properties in conservation easement in the Driftless Region and in Manitowoc county. Welcome back John!



Melanie Romas

Thank you to Melanie Romas. She served on the board for two years and led our fundraising committee. We appreciate all of her efforts and contributions to our board. Good luck Melanie in your next adventures!

Point Creek Natural Area: Volunteers help speed the process toward an old-growth forest

“We’d like to thank Ron Shaper and John Durbrow for their leadership, the team that came out to prep the areas for planting, and the dozens of volunteers who showed up throughout the weekend of May 4th ready to work hard and get dirty” said Abbey Vizelka, GLC Land Project Coordinator. “It was inspiring to see so many working together for a vision of what the younger, next generations will be able to enjoy as the trees mature.”

Over 2,000 various species of trees were planted with the help of 65 volunteers at the Point Creek Natural Area along Lake Michigan and Point Creek.

In June 2002, Point Creek Natural Area became a part of the Manitowoc Parks System with a conservation easement with Glacial Lakes Conservancy, preserving it and providing public access. Local Citizens received funds and received grants from Wisconsin’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and Coastal Management Fund for its purchase. This 39-acre pine plantation was planted 55 years ago, has 2,800 feet of frontage with 40-60 foot bluffs on Lake Michigan and 1000 feet of frontage on Point Creek.

The park is being actively managed to become one ecological unit with the mature 45-acre northern hardwood forest on the south side of the creek, owned by University of Wisconsin Green Bay. Eventually it will become like the virgin old-growth



Over 2,000 various species of trees were planted with the help of 65 volunteers over the weekend of May 4th.



forest at Lakeshore Technical College, which represents 3% of old-growth forests remaining in Wisconsin.

During the summer of 2018, Point Creek Natural Area was logged to thin the pines, remove most of the ash, clear invasive brush, and create several openings to make way for planting native trees.

The newly planted tree species and their ratios to each other were selected to be congruent with the old-growth and mature forests in the area. It is anticipated this selection of trees will bypass several hundred years of succession and speed the process of attaining a climax forest. In the future, there will be continued invasive control, and pines will be thinned and replaced with plantings of native trees and vegetation that is present in a mature hardwood forest.

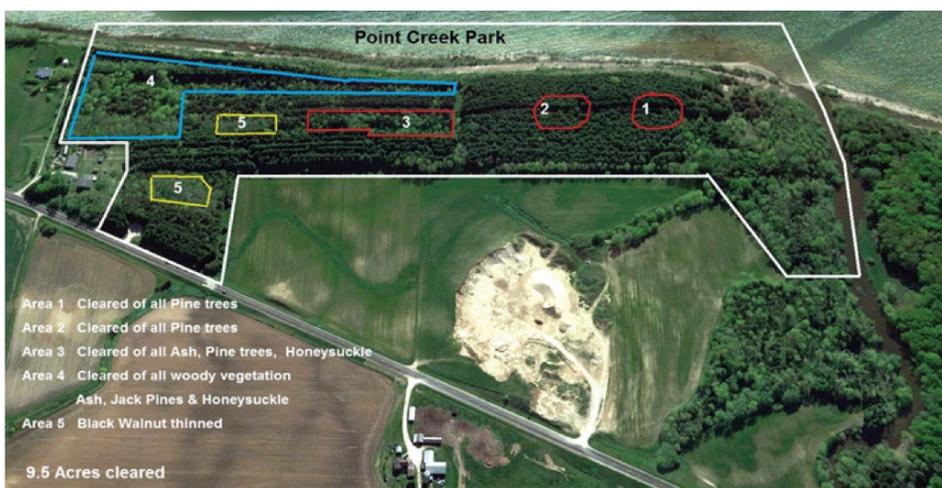
In 30 to 50 years planted trees will begin producing seeds and a canopy will develop. The canopy’s shade controls all of what grows. It will shade out invasives, promote introduced ephemerals to thrive, and influence a second generation of trees that becomes a self-sustaining hardwood forest.

Thanks to the work of volunteers, the Point Creek Natural Area will provide food and habitat for local wildlife and migrating bird species and enjoyment for the users of the natural area.

Van der Brohe Arboretum: from Golf Course to Flyway Sanctuary

John Durbrow has always been driven by a passion for nature and design. His interest was piqued when he discovered a listing for the property previously known as the Emerald Hills Golf Course in Two Rivers. John believed that he could turn this fallow golf course into a diverse and thriving forest that would serve as a public amenity as well as an important stop-over site for migratory birds along the Lake Michigan flyway. He purchased the property in 2018 and immediately began pursuing his vision of protecting the land and creating an educational arboretum.

John had previous experience working with the land trust community as he already had gone through the conservation easement process with the Mississippi Valley Land Conservancy for a property he owns in the Driftless Region. John had also served on Glacial Lakes Conservancy’s



Point Creek Natural Area on Lake Michigan and Point Creek

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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.

Address Service Requested

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The former Emerald Hills Golf Course in Two Rivers is now the Van der Brohe easement, an important stop-over site for migratory birds along the Lake Michigan flyway

(GLC) board of directors in the past, and had recently rejoined. John had confidence that GLC could help him protect the conservation values of his property in perpetuity by placing a conservation easement (CE) on the land.

On Winter solstice (Dec. 21st) 2019, John Durbrow's property became GLC's 25th conservation easement! He cleverly named the easement Van der Brohe,

a play on words referring to his own last name "Durbrow" and the last name of a famous architect he was inspired by in college, "Van der Rohe."

With this legal protection in place, John feels secure that as lakeshore development pressures continues to rise, he has contributed to a legacy of land protection, avian sanctuary, and public enjoyment.

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

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