



## COMING FULL CIRCLE: A FARM IS TRANSFORMED BACK TO PRAIRIE



**WITHOUT FAIL, EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE MINNESOTA LAND TRUST'S 508 (AND COUNTING) CONSERVATION EASEMENTS** started with the story of a landowner's deep relationship with their family's land. Dave Jacobson's story is no exception.

Dave's grandparents, August and Albertina Jacobson, broke sod on their 158-acre homestead near Sauk Center in 1885. Never changing boundaries over the years, it was designated as a Century Farm in 1985 around the time that Dave bought the land from his parents.

Shortly after he purchased the land, Dave hatched a plan to transform the land back to its original prairie roots, imagining oak savannah and tall grass prairie flourishing where corn fields and cow pastures once dominated.

Fast forward to 1997. When the Jacobson Farm became the Minnesota Land Trust's 63rd conservation easement, Dave was well on his way to completely transforming and "re-wilding" his farm.

With help from local conservation agencies, Dave revived wetlands that had been drained decades before. He planted a variety of prairie flowers and grasses, and meticulously managed encroaching softwood trees and invasive plants.

He planted hundreds of burr and red oak, ash and a variety of pines. Today, his farm thrives with wildlife and waterfowl thanks to his enduring vision. When asked about this incredible act of optimism and forethought, Dave smiles and says, "You know what the Chinese proverb says: The best day to plant a tree is yesterday."

Being able to visualize one's land generations ahead is something that every Minnesota Land Trust landowner shares. Dave knew that he wanted to protect his commitment into

OUR PRAIRIE HABITAT IS NEARING CRISIS. EXPERTS ESTIMATE THAT TWO-THIRDS OF MINNESOTA'S CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP) CONTRACTS THAT EXPIRED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS HAVE BEEN LOST.

**"THE LOSS OF CRP WILL HAVE DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON PRAIRIE WILDLIFE,"** ACCORDING TO MINNESOTA DNR COMMISSIONER TOM LANDWEHR. A **PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION STRATEGY IS ESSENTIAL** TO SECURING THESE PRAIRIE LANDS WHILE WE STILL CAN.



perpetuity, which was why he donated a conservation easement on his family farm to the Minnesota Land Trust.

### THE PUBLIC BENEFITS OF PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION

The rebirth of the Jacobson farm was important to Dave's own dream, but it carries an even greater impact for the ecosystem—and Minnesota—as a whole.

Today the re-established wetlands allow rainwater to slowly absorb into the soil, cleansing the water and maintaining shallow pools for wildlife and migrating waterfowl. And prairie grasses have formed deep root systems that hold water and lessen the effects of erosion downstream.

Wildlife thrives in this rejuvenated landscape. A sandhill crane family nests in his oak savannah. Pheasants hide in the prairie grasses. And wood ducks loaf in the wetlands.

Dave's story reminds us that many of the most important lands for wildlife habitat and water quality are privately owned but vulnerable to loss.

Fortunately, unlike the hundreds of thousands of acres of prairie and grasslands in the federal CRP program that have been destroyed in the last few years because of expiring contracts, Dave's land is secure forever thanks to the private land protection strategies employed by the Minnesota Land Trust.

This is why the work of the Minnesota Land Trust is so different, and so important. The conservation work that we're doing is thoughtful and science-based, but most importantly, it's *perpetual*.

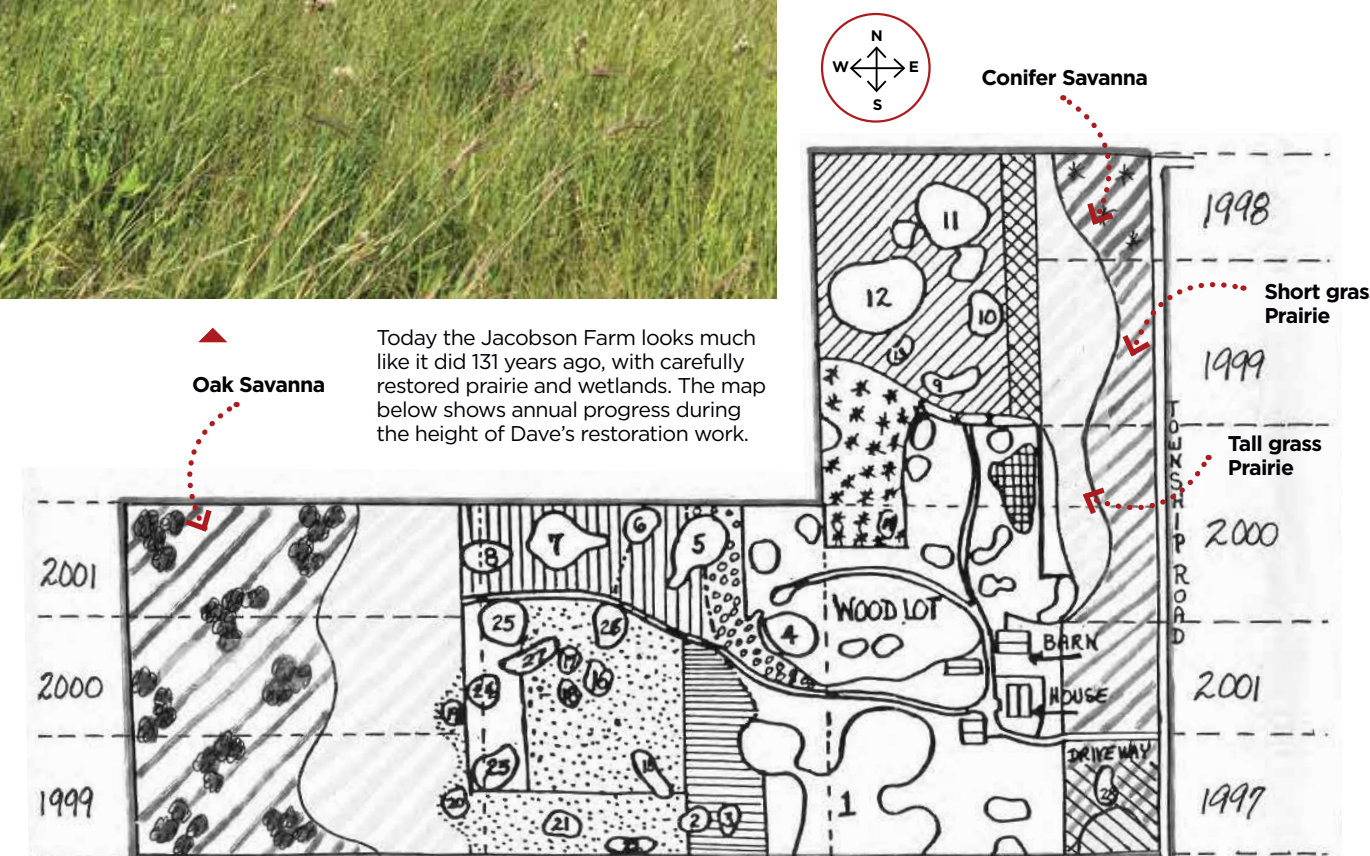
### PERMANENT MEANS PERMANENT

In order to preserve great Minnesota stories such as Dave Jacobson's Century Farm, The Minnesota Land Trust takes its obligations very seriously. With our proven track record in defending easements, The Minnesota Land Trust stands alongside hundreds of other land trusts nationwide to set the standard for enduring conservation success.

Our most effective way of ensuring permanence is by visiting each and every conservation easement annually, which we accomplish with the assistance of over a hundred trained and certified volunteer monitors. We communicate regularly with all landowners and address any issues immediately.

And now we've added the extra layer of protection by participating in the Land Trust Alliance's TerraFirma program, which provides legal assistance to bolster the Land Trust's existing resources. And because we're accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, landowners like Dave can rest easy knowing that we're in it for the long haul and have their seal of approval.

With more than 75% of Minnesota's landscape in private ownership, we owe it to future generations to protect the best of these lands—forever.



## Updates & News

from the Minnesota Land Trust

### ▶ KEN AND TERRY VISGER HOST CONGRESSMAN WALZ' CONSERVATION POTLUCK



The Minnesota Land Trust and landowners Ken and Terry Visger hosted a Conservation Potluck with guest of honor 1st District Congressman Tim Walz.

Walz, who serves on the House Agriculture Committee, is a knowledgeable proponent of finding ways to support the kind of positive results that can come from crafting farm policy in harmony with good conservation practices.

We're grateful to the Visgers for generously hosting this event, and for providing such a great example of positive land management that benefits water quality, wildlife habitat and scenic views.

### ▶ WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR LAND?

You're invited to a Legacy Land Transfer Workshop hosted by the Minnesota Land Trust, the University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Forestry Association.

You'll learn how to start this conversation with family members, plus you'll receive resources that will help you plan a successful transfer.

**Minnesota Landscape Arboretum**  
**Friday, October 7 from 9-4**  
**Go to [mmland.org](http://mmland.org) for more information**

### ▶ LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

"What better way to reflect our love of Minnesota's natural and scenic heritage?"

That's the reason why landowners and volunteer monitors Carter and Florence Hedeon planned their legacy gift to the Minnesota Land Trust.



After all, we are in the "forever business," and will be around far into the future ensuring that conservation easements protecting our wildlife habitat, scenic views and water resources are as rock solid as the day they were signed.

Your land legacy can be in the form of retirement plan assets, life insurance policies, and land or cash gifts.

For more information, please call Barbara at 651-917-6289.

REGISTER TODAY!

# TREASURED PLACES

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2016 1-4PM  
GALE WOODS FARM

We have a fun-filled afternoon planned at Gale Woods Farm, a Three Rivers District Park in western Hennepin County that is permanently protected by the Minnesota Land Trust.

After a short program that kicks off our year of celebration as well as recognition for landowner, volunteer and partner of the year, you'll be treated to your choice of free activities led by Minnesota Land Trust partners and staff:

- Family wagon rides
- Fall photography hike
- Guided bird walk
- Working lands restoration tour
- Shoreline restoration tour

Please visit [www.mnland.org](http://www.mnland.org) for more information and a link to register.

**Space for individual activities is limited, so we encourage you to sign up today!**



**MINNESOTA LAND TRUST**  
2356 University Avenue West  
Suite 240  
St. Paul, MN 55114

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Celebrating 25 Years of Land Conservation



**LANDOWNER OF THE YEAR** As third-generation patriarch of Bailey Nurseries, Gordon Bailey has spent his entire life thinking about plants.

Along the way, Gordon nurtured the idea that native plants would improve wildlife habitat at the retreat he and his wife Jo purchased several years ago in Dodge County. Today acres upon acres of row cropland have been transformed into a sea of wildflowers and big bluestem.

"My granddaughter loves to explore the fields to find bugs and bring them back for us to see," Gordon recalls. "Jo and I donated this conservation easement because we wanted to see this land protected for future generations."

And ever since he's been enhancing the wildlife habitat for future generations of bug gatherers.



### PARTNER OF THE YEAR

This year's honoree is the Three Rivers Park District, which owns and manages two conservation easements held by the Land Trust.

Gale Woods was permanently protected in 2000 by Alfred and Leona Gale, who conveyed the land to the Park District.

Nearby Kingswood Park was protected in 2011 prior to being purchased by the Three Rivers Park District.

Both properties would have been prime targets for development in western Hennepin County and now preserve open space, scenic views, wildlife habitat and water quality.

The Land Trust has worked with local governments, park districts and willing landowners to protect parkland through conservation easements. Similar projects have been completed with the cities of Red Wing, Grand Marais, Lake Elmo and others.



### VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Robert Axtmann, 2016 John Peck Volunteer of the Year, has been involved with the land trust movement since he worked as an appraiser for the Finger Lakes Land Trust in New York decades ago.

Once he moved to Minnesota and heard about the Minnesota Land Trust, Rob knew he wanted to help. He's been monitoring for the Minnesota Land Trust since 2003.

We rely on Rob to help train new volunteer monitors, ensuring landowners receive high-quality monitoring visits.

The Minnesota Land Trust is able to track changes to the land and build strong partnerships with landowners because of the quiet professionalism of volunteer monitors like Rob.

Rob loves monitoring: "It's an excuse to go for a walk in the woods."

## Wild Rice: What's cooking these days?



Staff members Daryl Peterson and Pat Collins are adjusting test barriers that prevent geese from damaging tender wild rice on beds that were planted last year.

Minnesota Land Trust Director of Restoration Programs Daryl Peterson is cooking up ideas for wild rice, but he's working on recipes for seed success, not hot dish.

Wild rice was once an important food source for humans as well as migratory birds, and the St. Louis River Estuary was a nexus of production in the Upper Midwest.

Working in partnership with the Minnesota and Wisconsin DNRs, 1854 Treaty Authority, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Minnesota Land Trust has 120 acres in active restoration, and another 50 acres being prepped and planted for the first time this fall.

Successful wild rice beds will require 3-5 years of reseeding, and must withstand a range of potential threats such as hungry geese and carp. To improve results, Daryl and his team are experimenting with a variety of tactics that keep these competitors at bay.

He'll share the results with partners in the hopes that wild rice cultivation practices will improve statewide.

"Once the wild rice plants have become established, they become excellent self-sustaining habitat for migratory birds," observed Daryl Peterson, "as well as visible indicators of clean and healthy water."



### CONTACT US:

[WWW.MNLAND.ORG](http://WWW.MNLAND.ORG) | EMAIL: [MNLAND@MNLAND.ORG](mailto:MNLAND@MNLAND.ORG)  
PHONE: 651-647-9590 | TOLL FREE: 1-877-MLT-LAND  
OFFICES IN DULUTH | ST. PAUL

FSC



# FARMLAND TO PRAIRIE



MINNESOTA LAND TRUST  
MID-YEAR REVIEW | SEPTEMBER 2016

**JOIN US!**  
Treasured Places

Join us for a fun-filled afternoon celebrating a quarter century of conservation in Minnesota. See inside for details! ▶

